

Establishment of the Church

The Church was predicted by the prophets of the Old Testament (Isa. 2:2,3; Dan 2:44) as well as by Jesus, Himself. (Mat. 16:18) Jesus told His apostles that they would receive power from the Holy Spirit to guide them into the truth. (Luke 24:49; John 16:13; Acts 1:4-8) The apostles received this power on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), and the church was formed by those who believed the message, repented, and were baptized. (Acts 2:38,41,47) Contrary to modern day use of the term, "church" refers to the people of God, not to the building in which those people assemble. The Lord adds people to His church when they obey His word.

Matthew 16:18,19	
Luke 24:49	
John 16:13	
Acts 1:5,8	
Acts 2:1-4	
Acts 2:37-39	
Acts 2:41-43	
Acts 2:47	

Organization of the Church

The Bible is our guide for the organization of the church. The church will have Christ as the head, elders (bishops, shepherds, overseers) to oversee the flock, deacons to help with the duties of the church, as well as preachers (ministers, evangelists, teachers) to preach God's word. Elders and deacons must meet certain qualifications and each congregation is independent of all others.

Ephesians 5:23	Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.
Acts 14:23	And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.
Titus 1:5-9	
1 Timothy 3:12,13	
1 Timothy 3:8-10	
1 Peter 5:1,2	
1 Timothy 2:7	

Number of Churches

In the Bible, there is only one church, and that is the body of Christ. This body has many congregations, but all follow the same commands, examples, and conclusions drawn from God's Word, accepting it as the only authority and not adding to it or taking away from it. The reason there are so many churches today is that men get away from bible teachings and draw disciples after themselves. Note the letters to the churches. The writers did not have to distinguish which church the letter was addressed to in each city. Unless the city is very large, there is no reason to have more than one church in a city. The seven churches in Asia (Revelation chapter 2) were divided by geography, not doctrine.

Matthew 16:18,19	
Ephesians 1:22,23	
Galatians 1:2	
Acts 15:31	
Romans 16:16	
Acts 2:47	

Terms for the Church

In the Bible, the terms used for the church always refer to deity. Examples are the church of Christ, the church of God, My church (Christ), the church of the Lord, God's building, the body of Christ, the church, etc. Denominational names and practices were never used in naming the church.

Matthew 16:18,19	
Romans 16:16	
1 Corinthians 3:9	
Colossians 1:18	
Acts 20:28	
1 Corinthians 1:2	

Acts 2:47	

Membership in the Church

According to the Bible, one does not simply join the church. God adds people to His church when they believe, repent, confess, and are baptized into Christ. The church is the body of Christ. Christ is the head, and the individual believers make up the members of His body.

Acts 2:47	
Ephesians 1:22,23	
Ephesians 4:4-6	
Ephesians 5:23	
1 Corinthians 12:12-28	

Names for Members

It is a common practice for followers to be named after the person they follow or what they practice. In the first century, the followers of Christ were called Christians, saints, brethren, disciples, the church, the body of Christ, etc. They were never given exalted names like "reverend" or "father". They were never named after denominations or their practices because there were no denominations in the first century church.

Acts 11:26	
Acts 11:1	
Colossians 1:2	
Matthew 23:9-12	
1 Corinthians 1:12,10	
Philippians 3:17	
1 Corinthians 10:17	

Work of the Church

Preaching the Gospel: Preaching the word of God is a part of the work of the church.

Mark 16:15,16	
Acts 5:42	
Acts 2:42	
2 Timothy 4:2-4	
Colossians 1:23	
Matthew 28:19,20	

Edification: Edify defined: "to instruct or improve spiritually, build, establish, to instruct and improve esp. in moral and religious knowledge" (Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary). According to the Bible, an important function of the church is the mutual edification of its members.

Acts 9:31	
Romans 14:9	
Ephesians 4:11-16	
1 Thessalonians 5:11	
Jude 1:20,21	
2 Corinthians 12:19	

Church benevolence: Benevolence is "disposition to do good; an act of kindness; a generous gift." (Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary) The New Testament has many accounts of benevolence. In the majority of the examples and commands, the individual Christian is responsible for the benevolent acts. The church as a whole only provided benevolence to needy saints.

1 Corinthians 16:1,2	
Romans 15:26	
Romans 12:13	
Romans 16:2	
1 Corinthians 16:15	
1 Timothy 5:9-11,16	
2 Corinthians 8:4	

Worship in the Church

Learning God's Word: Proclaiming and hearing God's word are parts of true worship.

John 8:47

Acts 2:42

Acts 20:7

2 Timothy 4:2-4

Colossians 1:23-29

2 Timothy 2:15

Romans 10:17

Prayer: We have numerous commands and examples throughout the New Testament of prayer to God as worship.

Acts 2:42

Acts 12:5

1 Timothy 2:8

1 Thessalonians 5:17

1 Corinthians 14:15

Matthew 26:41

Matthew 6:5-15

Singing: According to the Bible, singing is a required part of worship. We are to sing and make melody with our hearts, not musical instruments. In the days of the apostles, the church didn't use instruments in worship. Today, instrumental music is a tradition in most churches. That does not make it acceptable to God. "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition." Mark 7:9

Ephesians 5:19

Colossians 3:16

James 5:13

Matthew 26:30

1 Corinthians 14:15

Revelation 5:9

Revelation 15:3

The Lord's Supper: According to the Bible, the saints came together on the first day of the week to partake of the Lord's Supper. We are commanded to partake of this Lord's Supper every Sunday in remembrance of Jesus until he returns. The Lord's Supper consists of unleavened bread and fruit of the vine.

Acts 20:7

Acts 2:42

Matthew 26:26

Matthew 26:27-29A

1 Corinthians 11:24,25

1 Corinthians 11:26

1 Corinthians 11:27-29,33,34

Contributing: In the Law, the Jews were required to pay a tithe (tax). Christians are not required to pay a tithe, but we do have New Testament examples of free will offerings to support the needy saints. We don't have any examples in the New Testament of people taking advantage of Christians to gain wealth.

2 Corinthians 8:4

Romans 16:2

1 Timothy 5:16

1 Corinthians 16:1,2

Romans 12:13

Galatians 2:10

Romans 15:26

Church Attendance

In order to edify one another and worship in spirit and in truth, it is necessary that we attend worship services.

Hebrews 10:25,26

John 4:24

Acts 11:26

Acts 20:7

1 Corinthians 16:1

1 Corinthians 5:4,5	
James 4:17	

Church Discipline

Church discipline is a necessary action. Although it is not a pleasant event, God commands the church to withdraw itself from members who will not repent of certain conduct.	
Matthew 18:15-17	
1 Timothy 1:10	
Romans 16:17	
1 Corinthians 5:9-13I	
2 Thessalonians 3:13-15	
1 Thessalonians 5:14	
James 5:20	

Related articles:

Related subtopics:

Under the Law of Moses, the Jews were required to pay a tithe (a tenth). In this Law, Israelites were required to give to God one tenth of all their produce and animals. This could be either an actual tenth of the possessions or a sum of money equaling the value of one tenth of the possessions plus a fifth. The things and money that were given as tithes were given to the Levites as a source of income. The Levites were also required to pay tithes, which were given to the high priest. Since Christians are not under the law of Moses (see When the Law was ended), we are not required to pay a tithe. Although, we do have new testament examples of free will offerings to help needy saints.

Leviticus 27:30-34 And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD. And if a man will at all redeem ought of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof. And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD. He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it: and if he change it at all, then both it and the change thereof shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed. These are the commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses for the children of Israel in mount Sinai. Numbers 18:24 But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave offering unto the LORD, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance. Numbers 18:25-29 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the LORD, even a tenth part of the tithe. And this your heave offering shall be reckoned unto you, as though it were the corn of the threshing floor, and as the fulness of the winepress. Thus ye also shall offer an heave offering unto the LORD of all your tithes, which ye receive of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof the LORD'S heave offering to Aaron the priest. Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave offering of the LORD, of all the best thereof, even the hallowed part thereof out of it. Deuteronomy 12:5-7 But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come: And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks: And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee. Deuteronomy 14:22-23 Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always. Deuteronomy 26:10-13 And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which thou, O LORD, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the LORD thy God, and worship before the LORD thy God: And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the LORD thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you. When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled; Then thou shalt say before the LORD thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them: 1 Corinthians 16:1,2 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

Frequency of the Lord's Supper

Robert Turner

The early Christians met on every first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:2). [Greek: Kata Mia, every first day. Compare Kata Men, every month (Rev. 22:2) and Kata Polis, every city (Acts 15:21)].

In 1 Corinthians 11:20, Paul censures what these Corinthians did "when you meet together" (every first day, 16:2), and explains what they should do, viz. partake of the Lord's Supper (vv. 23ff). It's a "left-handed" argument, but it is clear and strong.

Acts 20:7 says the disciples met upon the first day of the week to break bread. "The" is the definite article, expressive of a stated or fixed day. There is certainly no authority for the Lord's Supper on any other day. Further, here is equal authority for the Lord's Supper on each and every "first day" that rolls around. (Example: "Remember the Sabbath . . ." Ex. 20:8. Which Sabbath Day? The Jews had no difficulty in recognizing that this was authority for every 7th day that came). These are scriptural arguments which I hold to be sound.

Reasonable evidence is found in the fact that all commemorative institutions which God ordained in prior times (Law of Moses) had a fixed and regular time for observance (The Passover, Feast of Tabernacles, Purim, Pentecost, etc.). If the Lord's Supper is not to be observed every first day, there is no way to determine a fixed time (with divine authority) and this vital memorial (1 Cor. 11:23ff) is left to wander aimlessly.

Finally, secular history vindicates our conclusion. For the first three centuries, all the churches broke bread once a week. The weekly communion was prepared in the Greek church until the seventh century. We give one quote for those interested: "But every Lord's Day do ye gather yourselves together, and break bread . . . etc." (from a writing called "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" dated about 120 A.D. Taken from Vol. 7, p. 381, Ante-Nicene Fathers).

Why do I observe the Lord's Supper every week? Because of the word of God which makes it clear that this is God's will for His people.

Now, be honest with yourself. Can you give as good a reason for observing this memorial less frequently? And how can you justify the common Thursday night observance?

Robert F. Turner

As we "edify in love" (Eph. 4:16), or "teach and admonish" in singing, or study, pray, and sacrifice together; we are assisting one another to be faithful to the Lord. We have need of one another (1 Cor. 12:14-f), and the more we recognize and supply that need, the closer will be our fellowship, the more effective our day by day "discipline by example." Our spiritual brothers must become our peers, whose approval or disapproval mean the most to us. This is the sort of communion that gives meaning to the various scriptures on corrective discipline, and without which they lose their effectiveness.

Disfellowship HAS meaning only to the extent that fellowship HAD meaning to us. Would you rather your social companions go to hell than for them to be embarrassed by the truth? Are you embarrassed by the truth? Are you embarrassed that God's people are different from those of the world? Is your relation with Christ and the saints of secondary, or thirdary, importance in your life? If "Yes," then you will balk at church discipline. You will neither be profited by it, nor will you profit others in its application. Discipline works only with those who try to serve the Lord.

I can hear it now. "Those people do not need discipline." I fear this comes from brethren who view discipline as a means of forcing people to serve the Lord. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal." (2 Cor. 10:) We cannot force the discipline of the gospel call, nor of Christian service, upon anyone. We deal with adult men and women whose hearts must be made captive to Christ.

Consider our first example. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained by brother" (Matt. 18:15-17). The object is to gain the man, not your way. The clear message is that he is in the wrong, and you, your helpers, and finally the whole church speaks in an effort to bring him back into fellowship with God. The church can neither put him in, nor take him out, of such fellowship except as he is persuaded to act. Failing in this, they recognize him for what he has made himself--"as one of those without." Neither hate, spite, nor vindictiveness is indicated here. Do you "hate" or "spite" a non-member when you fail to call upon him for public prayer or service??

In 1 Thess. 4:10-12 Paul "besought" those brethren to quietly work and tend to business, but apparently some gave no heed. So in 2 Thess. 3: he "commands" them to "withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly" or "out of step" with apostolic teaching. "Note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (vss. 14-15).

"That he may be ashamed" shows the effectiveness of their action would be contingent upon an earlier fellowship. If he "didn't give a hoot" this withdrawal of approval and company would not benefit him. "Count him not as an enemy" shows no hostile feeling was to accompany the correction, and "admonish as a brother" describes the attitude to be maintained. Expositor's comment: "Disapproval, as a means of moral discipline, loses all its effect if the offender does not realize its object and reason, or if it is tainted with personal hostility." If a church cannot demonstrate this attitude it is incapable of exercising scriptural discipline.

It is to our shame and discredit that our next example more clearly describes current situations in churches of our day. In 1 Cor. 5: Paul uses one verse to define a sinner in Corinth; and devotes the remainder of the chapter to upbraiding those innocent of the first sin, because they had made no effort to correct it. "Ye are puffed up" (we are too holy to discuss such things), "and have not

mourned" (business as usual--funeral spirit kills our 'enthusiasm'), "that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you" (Oh, that would be interfering with his personal life). Haven't you heard it??

Paul says, "when ye are gathered together.." This thing has, through neglect, passed the earlier stages. All members are involved--not just the elders, though they should lead. 2 Cor. 2:6 states the punishment was "inflicted by the many." In Matt. 18: it was "tell it to the church." In 2 Thess. 3: Paul commanded "brethren." The "spiritual" among the Galatian brethren had obligations (6:1-f). NO PASSAGE puts these matters into the hands of some episcopacy which represents "the church." We can not escape responsibility by saying "Our elders won't do anything about it." Elders have leadership responsibilities, but their judgment is not divine mandate.

"Deliver unto Satan" means publicly recognize and declare the sinner for what he is. The declaration does not make him a child of the devil; his actions have done that (Jn. 8:44). Paul "delivered unto Satan" Hymeneus and Alexander (1 Tim. 1:20), and had no hesitancy in saying so. Even in such radical treatment the purpose is "that they may learn not to blaspheme" or, "for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved..." In coming to Christ the "old man" of the flesh should have been put to death--but such flagrant proof that old ways yet live cannot be tolerated. If the "gospel call" discipline did not "put to death" such conduct, corrective discipline must be exercised. If the offender has a "spark" of concern for fellowship with God, the withdrawal of fellowship by those who are trying to "walk with God" may cause him to see his lost and undone condition.

And finally---if it doesn't, such evil leaven must be removed from the church. This is not the first consideration, but it is certainly not an element of discipline to be ignored. THE SPIRITUAL NATURE AND GOAL OF EACH LOCAL CHURCH, ITS SPIRITUAL CHARACTER, IS HIGHLY DEPENDENT UPON THE EXERCISE OF DIVINELY ORDAINED DISCIPLINE.

Related subtopics:

Truman Smith

OFTEN THERE ARE THOSE who desire to know when the Lord's church had its beginning. Please consider the following:

If you were to start reading your Bible from the very first book (Genesis) and continued reading right on through the Bible, you would find that every time you read about "the kingdom" it would be spoken of as yet in the future, until you reached the second chapter of Acts of the Apostles. Then, after you pass the second chapter of Acts, it is spoken of as already in existence. Please notice Acts 2:47 where it says, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." It is in the second chapter of Acts that we find the establishment of Christ's kingdom. Acts 2:33 speaks of Christ seated at the "right hand of God," which is to say that He is king in His kingdom, the events of which took place about A.D. 33. Please observe also that "kingdom" and "church" refer to the same institution. One reason we know this is because Jesus speaks of His church and kingdom all in the same breath in Matthew 16:18,19. (Cf. Also Hebrews 12:23,28).

For further proof that the church of Christ had its beginning on the first Jewish Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ, as recorded in Acts chapter 2, one might consider Mark 9:1, which tells us that the kingdom would come "with power" before some of the apostles died. Just prior to His ascension, Jesus gave the Great Commission to His apostles, and then commanded them to return to Jerusalem and tarry there until they received "power" from God (read Luke 24:49). The "power" would come when the Holy Spirit came upon them (Acts 1:1-8). Jesus then ascended to heaven and they returned to Jerusalem as He had commanded (Acts 1:9-14). So, it was while they were there, waiting in Jerusalem, the "power" came (Acts 2:1-13). Remember, the kingdom was to come "with power" (Mark 9:1).

Briefly we have shown the church that we read about in the Bible is almost 2,000 years old. But because men were not satisfied with the church as God established it, many denominational bodies have spread upon the earth. However, these religious bodies are not the true church of which we read in the New Testament of Jesus Christ.

<Picture>

Growing
Reproductive

Believers in
Christ
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GRBC Sermon Listening Guide
Sunday Evening, October 18, 1998

"Quality Control"
1 Timothy 3:1-13

"Quality Control"

(1 Timothy 3:1-13)

Introduction:

The two offices of the New Testament Church are that of Overseer or Bishop (also referred to as Elder or Pastor) and that of Deacon.

Because those who hold these offices will be central to the ministry of the church, the Lord gives clear qualifications for those who desire to serve in these positions. It is a noble aspiration for godly men to desire to serve in an office of the church (vs. 1, 8).

Key Idea: Pastors and Deacons must meet certain qualifications in order to serve in the church.

Qualifications for Pastors and Deacons:

I. Common Qualifications for Pastors and Deacons

<Picture>Blameless (vs. 2, 6) – The word means "above reproach" or "not able to be held." It implies a morally pure lifestyle.

<Picture>Husband of one wife (vs. 2, 12) – The Greek text literally reads "a one-woman man." A one-woman man is devoted in his heart and mind to the woman who is his wife. The Bible gives three instances in which a divorced man could be a one-woman man:

1. Divorced prior to salvation (2 Cor. 5:17)
2. Divorced due to spousal adultery (Matt. 5:31-32; 19:9)
3. Divorced due to abandonment by a non-Christian spouse (1 Cor. 7:12-15).

<Picture>Temperate or not given to wine (vs. 2, 3, 8) – The Greek word means "wineless" or "clear-headed." In our day abstinence from alcohol would be implied.

<Picture>Respectable, good behavior, or reverent (vs. 2, 8) – This would require a lifestyle of integrity and piety.

<Picture>Not greedy for money or covetous (vs. 3, 8) – The love of money or materialism is prohibited. Good stewardship including tithing and paying one's bills would apply.

<Picture>Good managers of family (vs. 4-5, 12) – Overseeing the discipline of one's children and the general well being of one's home is a necessity.

<Picture>Not a new convert (vs. 6, 10) – One must be a mature Christian whose faith has been tried and found true.

<Picture>Good reputation outside the church (vs. 7, 13) – In community and business dealings he must be respected as a good, fair, and honest man known for his integrity.

II. Special Qualifications for Deacons

<Picture>Not double-tongued (vs. 8) – The word implies saying one thing with one person and another with another. It prohibits divisiveness and calls for honesty.
<Picture>Holders of spiritual truths (vs. 9) – Men who spend time in the Word and guard the sacred truths of scripture with a pure conscience. Not shallow in the Word.

III. Special Qualifications for Pastors

<Picture>Disciplined or self-controlled (vs. 2) – Pastors must exercise a disciplined lifestyle and manifest the spiritual fruit of self-control.
<Picture>Hospitable (vs. 2) – The word means generous to guests.
<Picture>Able to teach (vs. 2) – The word means skillful or gifted in teaching.
<Picture>Gentle and non-violent (vs. 3) – The words suggest a meek temperament—a strength under control.

IV. Special Qualifications for their Wives

<Picture>Honorable or reverent (vs. 11) – One who walks with honor and respect toward God and her husband.
<Picture>Not a slanderer or a malicious gossip (vs. 11) – One who does not tell secrets or talk behind others backs.
<Picture>Temperate or sober (vs. 11) – One who abstains from alcohol and is clear minded.
<Picture>Faithful in all things (vs. 11) – One who is faithful to her husband, her God, and her church.

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