

ORDER AND OVERSIGHT OF THE HOUSE OF GOD

Titus 1:5

INTRODUCTION

- We live in an age where the Lord's churches are held in low regard, not just by the world, but by those who profess Christ.
- Many believe they belong to an invisible universal church, and see no requirement to be faithful to a true church.
- The individualism that characterises our culture has infected the minds of many professing Christians.
- Yet in God's view, there is no greater institution on earth today than the church
- The church is Christ's body, bride, and temple, in which He dwells and through which He performs His work.
- Outside of the church, no believer can experience God's full blessing, or reach his full spiritual potential.
- A gauge of a person's relationship to Christ is their relationship to the church.
- The pastoral epistles have a strong focus on local church polity.
- Paul visited Crete with Titus, probably after his first Roman imprisonment, then left Titus there to continue the work of establishing churches.
- Paul wrote these instructions to remind Titus of his role, and to provide authentication to others of Titus' authority.

I. THE ORDER OF THE CHURCH

A. God is a God of order

1. In the creation (Psalm 19)
2. In the nation of Israel (Hebrews 8:5)

3. In the government of the nations (Romans 13:1-4; 1 Peter 2:13-14)
 4. In the arts, we reflect God's order by adhering to ordered forms and structure, whether it be in visual art, literature or music
 5. In our lives and homes
- B. God requires order in the church
1. All things are to be done decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:33,40)
 2. If there is disorder and confusion, the devil is at the heart of it.
- C. The church must be ordered according to the New Testament pattern
1. "Two or three gathered in Jesus' name" (Matthew 18:20) is not a church
 2. A Bible study group is not a church
 3. A New Testament Church is "an assembly of baptised believers, organised to carry out the Lord's work"
 - a. Christ is its head (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 1:15-26)
 - b. Its officers are pastors and deacons (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-13)
 - c. Its ordinances are baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:41; 1 Corinthians 11:23-34)
 - d. Its members are subject to discipline (Matthew 18:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15)
- D. Godly church leaders are to "set in order" things that are lacking
1. The Greek word is a medical term used for the setting of a broken limb

2. It literally means “to set right, to set in order, to complete unfinished reforms.”
3. This process takes place when a new church is established
4. It is also a process that is continuous through the life of the church
5. Churches that are not careful to strictly maintain Biblical order will eventually become apostate

II. THE OVERSIGHT OF THE CHURCH

- A. The office of elder is described by different terms (Titus 1:5,7; Acts 20:17-28; 1 Peter 5:1-2)
 1. Pastor – denotes his role as shepherd (Ephesians 4:11; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter. 5:2)
 2. Elder – denotes his spiritual maturity
 3. Bishop/Overseer – denotes his authority and oversight
- B. Elders are to be *ordained*
 1. Some groups reject entirely the ordination of elders (e.g. the Plymouth Brethren)
 2. However, ordination by laying of hands is clearly biblical (Hebrews 6:2; Acts 6:3,6; 13:3; 1 Timothy 4:14)
 3. Ordination is not the conferring of a gift, but a public recognition of the candidate’s giftedness
- C. The New Testament advocates a plurality of elders where possible
 1. “Every city” means “every city with a congregation of believers”
 2. Note “elders” (plural), in every “city” (singular) (Acts 14:23; 15:6; 20:17; James 5:14)
 3. Where there are multiple elders, generally one is the senior pastor (cf. Acts 15:19; Revelation 2:1,8,12,18;3:1,7,14)

D. The responsibilities of the pastor

1. Model Christian maturity (1 Peter 5:3)
2. Shepherd the sheep (1 Peter 5:2)
3. Feed the flock (1 Timothy 5:17)
4. Refute the rebellious (Titus 1:9)
5. Manage church matters (1 Timothy 3:5)
6. Intercede for the ill (James 5:14)

E. A church without eldership:

1. Lacks order (Titus 1:5)
2. Lacks leadership (Matthew 9:35-36)
3. Lacks protection (Acts 20:28-32; Hebrews 13:17)

F. The duties of members to their pastors:

1. Respect and love them (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13)
2. Obey their teaching (Ephesians 4:11-12)
3. Follow their examples (Hebrews 13:7; 1 Peter 5:1-3)
4. Submit to their oversight (Hebrews 13:17)
5. Pray for them (Hebrews 13:18-19; Ephesians 6:18-19; Colossians 4:2-3; 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2)
6. Provide for their physical needs (1 Timothy 5:17,18)

CONCLUSION

1. Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it (Ephesians 5:25), can the same be said of you?
2. Does my relationship to the church foster order or disorder in the church?