

## Congregational Church Government Matters 2 Ephesians 4:16

### The Local Church Matters, part 4

- A well known summary of “Baptist(s)” distinctives:
  - (1.) **Biblical Authority:** 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20,21.
  - 2.) **Autonomy of the local church:** Acts 13:1; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Revelation 2-3.
  - (3.) **Priesthood of the believer:** 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6; 5:10.
  - (4.) **Two Ordinances:** Matthew 28:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–32.
  - (5.) **Individual soul liberty:** Romans 14:5, 12; 2 Corinthians 4:2; Titus 1:9
  - (6.) **Saved Church membership:** Acts 2:41–47; Acts 8:12.
  - (7.) **Two offices:** The Bible mandates two offices in the church—pastor and deacon. 1 Timothy 3:1–13; Acts 20:17–38; Philippians 1:1.
  - (8.) **Separation of Church and state:** Romans 13:1-7; Matthew 28:19,20.
- This morning let’s consider why we practice a congregational form of government based on Biblical example and seek to have transparency in our “Kingdom” decisions:

#### **1. Disciplining of Disobedient Members**

- The church body is involved in the disciplining of disobedient members and forgiving them if they repent, Matthew 18:15-18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Corinthians 2:1-11.

#### **2. Electing Officers in the Church**

- The church body elected men for deacons and pastors who met the qualifications and their decision was then approved by the apostles by the laying on of hands, Acts 6:1-6; 14:21-24.

#### **3. Sending Forth Missionaries**

- Decisions related to missionary outreach, commissioning and sending missionaries was the united ministry of the church, Acts 13:1-5

A. The church corporately fasted and prayed, v.2

B. The church is the environment to prepare and send forth laborers into the harvest field of the world, v.2a

C. God the Holy Spirit called the missionaries by speaking and separating them, v.2b

D. The local church functioned in perfect unity with the Holy Spirit and sent forth the missionaries, v.3.

E. The missionaries went forth by the authority of the Holy Spirit but also under the authority of the church, v.4

#### **4. Providing Accountability in Ministry**

- We see that the church who sent them was also the group to which they were accountable at the conclusion of the missionary journey, Acts 14:26-27.

#### **5. Managing of Finances**

- Decisions related to dealings with money were decided upon by the church to do things honestly in the sight of God and man; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; 2 Corinthians 8:18-19.

#### **6. Handling of Doctrinal Controversies**

- The whole local churches of Antioch and Jerusalem, with the Apostles leading, decided the first major doctrinal dispute, Acts 15
- Conclusion: In all of these passages we see the whole church active, involved, praying, fasting, voting, and fully engaged in the work of bringing the Gospel to a lost world.

(Note: There are at least sixteen New Testament examples of church decisions: Acts 1:15-16; 6:1-6; 8:14-17; 11:22; 11:30; 13:1-3; 14:21-23; 15:1-3; 15:4-29; 15:22; 15:36-41; 16:9-11; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 / 2 Corinthians 2:5-11; 1 Corinthians 16:3-4; 2 Corinthians 8:18-19; 1 Thessalonians 3:1-5)