

## **190424-4 Doctrine Series, The Church Offices–CThurman**

### **39. Churches: the Elders and Deacons\***

Every church has power given them from Christ, for their wellbeing, to choose for themselves men that are qualified according to the word for the offices of elders and deacons, as the gospel shows Christ appointing his servants during his earthly ministry. Elders feed, govern, serve, and build up that church, while deacons primarily serve and build. No other entity has any power to impose elders, deacons, or any other thing on any church. The elders and deacons, lawfully chosen, ought to continue in their office and place according to God's ordinance. Elders should carefully feed the flock of God committed to them, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. The deacons must not be greedy of filthy lucre, but use the office of a deacon being found blameless.

*Ac.1:23, 26, 6:3, 15:22, 25; Ro.12:5-8; 1Ti.3:2-13; 1Co.12:8, 28; He.13:7, 17; 1Pe.5:1-4; Jn.10:3, 4; Ac.20:28, 29.*

*\*Formerly Article 36, 37 of 1644 COF*

### **40. Churches: Elders and Church Order\***

Christ, for the keeping of this church in holy and orderly fellowship, placed certain men over the church; who by their office are to guide, oversee, and visit. In like manner, for her wellbeing, the Lord commands the members to watch over one another.

*Ac.20:27, 28; He.13:17, 24; Mt.24:45; 1Th.5:2, 14; Jude 3, 20; He.10:24, 25, 34, 35, 12:15.*

*\*Formerly Article 44 of 1644 COF*

### **41. Churches: Supporting their Elders\***

The ministers of Christ ought to have whatsoever they shall need supplied freely by the church, that, according to Christ's ordinance, they that preach the Gospel should live of the gospel by the law of Christ.

*1Co.9:7, 14; Gal.6:8; Phl.4:15, 16; 2Co.10:4; 1Ti.1:2; Ps.110:3.*

*\*Formerly Article 38 of 1644 COF*

First, at the outset some say that there can be no church without a pastor. How do we answer this? By the word of God.

*Tit 1:5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting (in what? in a church), and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee ...*

Before there can be an officer of a church there must first be a church to which he may be appointed. When the evangelists, Paul and Barnabas went forth at the commandment, not of a church, but of the Lord, to undertake the very first missionary expedition into the nations, they preached the word wherever they came. In response to this preaching there were evidently Gentiles which believed the word of God concerning Jesus being the Christ of God, the Son of God made flesh, and they followed in obedience to the commandment to be immersed in water. They received Baptist baptism. Then having also heard enough in the very short time that Paul and Barnabas was with them these Gentiles formed into a New Testament church. Now, when Paul and Barnabas decided that it was time to turn around they backtracked their way to those same churches and *confirmed them*. This is all recorded in the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of Acts. Beginning at verse 21 we read,

*Ac.14.21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch (of Pisidia, not of Syria),*

*22 Confirming*

*ἐπιστηρίζω, strengthening; ἐπί + στηρίζω, to fix, establish, stablish, and so to 'reinforce'*

*the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*

*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.*

Churches exist without pastors. And brethren, these churches, with or without pastors are to obey the commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are to observe the two ordinances given them by Christ. The ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper belong to the church, not only to special men of it.

Brethren, the false notions that so many Baptist churches have received over so many years, that there can be no church without pastors, that they cannot keep the ordinances without pastors, and that churches have mother churches, all have root in Catholicism. Very early in church history men began to set up a diocesan episcopate, where bishops began to preside over churches by districts. The whole matter is flawed. There is no such thing as a diocesan episcopate in the true churches of Jesus Christ; well, at least there shouldn't be. Almost daily I try to pray that the Lord would open the eyes of so many pastors today that are unknowingly affected by opinions of men.

Brethren, I want to point out also as we consider the offices of a church that the work of evangelizing has become sidelined by many today. Schools, orphanages, hospitals, all good things, but these are not the business of the churches. If it is, why stop there? Why not set up retirement homes, unemployment offices, soup kitchens, and on and on and on? This care was for relieving the saints of the church. There is no such thing done by the churches of Christ in the Bible. Now to the main point of this lesson which concerns the two offices of a church.

A church has only two kinds of offices to which it may appoint men to serve. One is generally called a pastor, and the other, deacon. These offices are *servant* offices, and those appointed to serve in them must satisfy the prerequisites of Scripture.

*1Ti 3:2 A bishop then must be ...*

*1Ti.3.8 ¶ Likewise [must] the deacons be ...*

The word *likewise* carries forward to the deacon the idea established earlier for bishops.

### **Defining terms: pastor & deacon**

The terms *pastor*, *bishop*, and some places where the word *elder* is found, refer to the same person. These two offices have their origin in the church *after* the Lord Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Heavenly Father. The Holy Spirit gave these offices to the church to help govern a body.

*Eph 4:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (see immediately below what some of those gifts were)*

*pastor (Eph.4.11), ποιμήν, poimēn; KJV tss. shepherd, pastor. Sometimes ποιμήν is with reference to one who tends flocks of sheep and goats; and other times with reference to Christ who tends to His flock of disciples; and once it refers to those pastors who tend to the members of that church under their care.*

*Eph 4:11 And he gave some (by context some means ... some of us in this kind of a church), apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

*12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

*13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:*

*14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*

*15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:*

*16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

We can see the important role of a pastor in a church

*bishop, ἐπίσκοπος, episkopos, lit. meaning to look upon; a noun, KJV tss. overseers (Ac.20.28); bishop (Phl.1.1; 1Ti.3.2; Tit.1.7; 1Pe.2.25); another noun, ἐπισκοπή, KJV, visitation (Lk.19.44; 1Pe.2.12); bishoprick (Ac.1.20); office of a bishop (1Ti.3.1); the verb ἐπισκοπέω, KJV, looking diligently (He.12.15); taking the oversight (1Pe.2.12)*

*Ac.20.28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over (ἐν, **in** or where) the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

*1Pe 5:2 Feed (ποιμάνετε) the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind ...*

*elder, πρεσβύτερος, presbuteros, a noun, KJV tss. elder; esp. beginning with the gospels and through to Acts ch.6 references the aged leaders of Israel; then, of those in the church (Ac.11.30), particularly the aged men of the congregation (1Ti.5.17), but it can refer to those appointed to guide the church (1Ti.5.17; Tit.1.5; 1Pe.5.1); πρεσβύτερος, by context is also tss. old women (1Ti.5.2)*

*In Tit.1.5 elders is synonymous with bishops in 1Ti.3.1.*

*Tit 1:5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee ...*

*1Pe 5:1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed ... (here elder, πρεσβύτερος, is coupled with the preposition συν, fellow, a fellow elder, συμπρεσβύτερος)*

The Greek διάκονος, diakonos; KJV tss. minister, servant, deacon; is always used with reference to special service, and sometimes it does refer to pastoral service.

*1Ti 4:6 If thou (Timothy, a pastor/bishop) put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.*

*1Ti.3.13 For they that have used the office of a deacon (or served) well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

### **The pastoral office**

Pastors tend to the flock. They have the oversight of a church. Their main concern is to feed the congregation sound doctrine.

*Ac 20: 27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.  
28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed (ποιμαίνω) the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

*1Pe 5:2 Feed*

ποιμάνατε, 2ppl. aor. imper. of ποιμαίνω, shepherd, plural pastors commanded to attend to their own flocks ...

*the flock (ποίμνιον) of God which is among you, taking the oversight (ἐπισκοπέω) thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind (forward, proactive, προθύμως, your goals, aspirations are always moving in that direction) ...*

*filthy lucre, αἰσχροκερδῶς, adv. of αἰσχροκερδής, αἰσχρός, filthy, αἰσχρόν shame + κέρδος gain, profit (Tit.1.11 uses both words rather than the compound here, filthy lucre, αἰσχροῦ κέρδους); refers to gain gotten through dishonorable means, rather than honorable. There is nothing sinful about gain unless it is through dishonorable means whether it is a pastor, Christians, or any other person. Dishonorable means of gain is dishonorable by every man, but pastors are warned by the word of God, perhaps because it is to many a snare.*

*1Ti 6:9 But they (any Christian ...) that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.*

A pastor must keep to the word of God and thereby contend against false teachings that would mislead the member and congregation as a whole.

*1Ti 4:16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.*

*Tit 1:9 Holding fast*

ἀντεχόμενον, ἀντί against + ἔχω to possess, have, acc. sing. masc. part. pres. of ἀντέχομαι

*the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.*  
tell the fault [of] contradictors

*exhort, παρακαλεῖν, pres. infin. act. of παρακαλέω, παρά by, near, with + καλέω to call; and so to call beside or near; KJV tss. to beseech, comfort, exhort, desire.*

*convince, ἐλέγχειν, pres. infin. act. of ἐλέγχω; KJV, to tell the fault, to reprove, to convict, to convince, to rebuke.*

*gainsayers, ἀντιλέγοντας, acc. pl. masc. part. pres. act. of ἀντιλέγω, ἀντί against + λέγω to say; tss. to speak against, deny, contradict, answer again.*

*10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers,*

*deceivers, φρεναπάται, φρήν understanding + ἀπατάω to deceive; lit. to deceive the mind.*

*specially they of the circumcision:*

*11 Whose mouths must be stopped,*

*mouths ... be stopped, ἐπιστομίζειν, pres. infin. of ἐπιστομίζω, ἐπί upon, on, at + στόμα mouth; so to block or*

put *upon the mouth* of that old tomb the great Stone so that the stench of the doctrine of the dead go no further among the children of God.

*who subvert (ἀνατρέπουσι, rout up, up end) whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.*

That's what a pastor does. But he makes no one believe anything. He must depend upon the Lord to truly instruct the hearts of his people. He must allow the congregation to do as they will in their lives. That right! He shouldn't make anyone do anything that they aren't convinced to do in their own hearts and minds. And every member is free to do as he and she will. Those who act against Christ and his church to offend are purged out of the body. The pastor doesn't do that. The church does.

It is correct to say, it is Biblical to say that pastors rule in a church, but I should explain what that means. It means that their job is to govern in it. Three times in the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book of Hebrews the word *rule*, Greek ἡγέομαι, which in the KJV is tss. *Governer, chief, to rule*. Other forms of this word are tss. *prince* (Mt.2.6), *governor* (1Pe.2.14), *ruler* (Lk.21.12), and *reign* (Lk.3.1). The idea is that these men *govern* in a church. (cf. Lk.2.2; 3.1)

*Heb 13:7 Remember them which have the rule over (ἡγουμένων, acc. pl. part. pres. of ἡγέομαι) you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.*

*Heb 13:17 Obey (Trust ye)*

πείθεσθε, 2ppl. pres. imper. mid. of πείθω; the middle voice calls special attention to the subject, which in this case is understood as *ye*; emphasis is laid upon the subject to *obey* or *trust* ...

It is not because of the person, but because of the Lord. My opinion is that this will help maintain order in the body. This forms part of the government of a church body. This become more important as the membership comes into various disagreements among themselves.

them that have the rule over (ἡγούμενοις, dat. pl. masc. part. pres.) you, and submit yourselves:  
give place [to them]

submit yourselves, υπείκετε, 2ppl. pres. imper. of ὑπέικω, ὑπό among, by, from, **under**, with + εἰκω like (2), and **give place** (Gal.2.5); ὑπέικω only this once in the N.T. and so to yield, give place under their governance.

*for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*

This does not mean that the pastor gets the say or even the final say as if he were a dictator or [C]hief [E]xecutive [O]fficer. Rather, especially as it relates to judgments around the word of God and doctrine, to give way as they lead with Scripture. The membership is not blindly following a pastor. But as he lays out the word of God before their understanding they should give heed to it as one called of God for this special work in the body. He is not flawless or impeccable.

Listen, the pastor cannot answer every single question that a member might come up with. He can't spend his days trying to disprove every straw-man argument that is raised by every member in the congregation. Personally, just when I think something is settled it seems like there's always someone that stands up and says, 'but what about ...?' There's just no end to it. But he brings those things he has tried to prove by the grace of God and the Scriptures hoping it will settle the minds of the saints so that we can act in unison on the main points of truth. But you know well that pastors aren't infallible. That said, pastors (and all of us) need to be *swift* to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath. (Ja.1.19) There will be times when he must be able to be corrected.

*Heb 13:24 Salute all them that have the rule over (ἡγούμενους, acc. pl. masc. part. pres.) you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.*

Paul instructed the Thessalonians to acknowledge those that labor among them with a certain regard, esteem, the same Greek above, ἡγέομαι.

*1Th 5:12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord (who have the business of leading you in the Lord), and admonish you;*

*13 And to esteem (count, judge) them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.*

With these things in mind, it is important that pastors remain devoted to their work. And if he will not manage his time correctly you, this congregation need to remind him of his charge. The temptation is constant to be distracted from the main work of the word of God and doctrine.

### **The office of a deacon**

Like the pastoral office, the office of a *deacon*, δίακονος, originated because of a need which required the church's attention. This office is designed to help the church by helping those who minister in the word and doctrine to remain devoted to their service. The church decides who will serve at this kind of table.

*Ac.6.1 ¶ And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations (διακονια).*

*2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve (διακονειν) tables.*

*3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.*

*4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry (διακονια) of the word.*

*5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:*

*6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.*

Clearly, not every member is called to labor in the word and doctrine, and not every member is called to serve tables.

*1Co 12:17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?*

Not every member is qualified. When I say qualified I don't mean to say that one man is better than another man. I don't mean that one is necessarily more knowledgeable in the word of God than another. But the wisdom of God said that only men of such character and background shall serve in these offices.

The qualifications for pastors and deacons are very close to the same for either office, but there are some differences. Particularly, pastors must be *apt to teach*, whereas that is not a requirement for deacons. Deacons should know what these truths are.

*1Ti 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.*

Now concerning the work of deacons, it is only my opinion that these men manage the affairs of the congregation which would otherwise draw pastors away from being able to do their work as well as they should. Whether deacons do the work themselves or manage it so that there is order, the point is whether pastors are becoming drawn away from their labor. The first deacons were called upon to help minister to the needs of *widows indeed* that were in the first church at Jerusalem. Perhaps this serves as a pattern for the body to recognize that if things draw pastors too much from their work it might be time to appoint men to fill that need.

### **A church decides who will serve them**

A church, if they will have any servants, determines who its servants are. No person or entity beyond the membership of that church should dictate who these servants should be.

*2Ti 2:2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*

*Tit 1:5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee ...*

These texts might appear to show that someone outside of the body appoints to the church their officers. But that is not quite correct. Let me explain something about the books of Timothy and Titus. These are commonly called *pastoral epistles*. Properly these are letters written to evangelists. Evangelists are men who go to other places preaching the gospel of Christ. As soon as 2-3 baptized believers will agree together to carry out the commandments of Christ a church is begun. Consequently these evangelists will become pastors of this church and help them become ordered according to the word of God. 2Co.8.23 refers to these men as the apostles *of the churches*. They were of and in a church. And as the Lord leads, the evangelist leaves to another place after another man, if the Lord will, assumes that pastoral office. This is all that Paul had Timothy and Titus do. Brethren, we need to understand that the Bible does not support a ruling class of elders, an episcopate that rules over a district, a diocese, where a number of churches are located.

That perception arises from an incorrect view of the work of the apostle Paul as he had men going to various places to help him manage the churches which were under his care as an apostle. And these men reported back to him.

*2Co 11:28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.*

This charge belonged to the apostles. No other but the apostles had such a charge. When the apostolic period expired this activity expired with them. So, how did this supra-church government originate? Certain men set up a bishop over an area, a dioceses. And then they decided to set up an archbishopric. And then they decided to set up a cardinal. And then they decided to set up a pope. This is the system which the Catholic church erected, and the Protestants imitated, to govern over their organizations. And sad to say, even true churches have set up smaller forms of this system to govern the Lord's churches: associations and convention. The Lord's

churches have no other over them but Jesus Christ. This should not be the kind of government over the Lord's churches. Each body is a separate, living organism. These evangelists were, not to set up a hierarchical government over the churches, but to help the churches select men of their own number that would govern from within, with Christ as Head.

*Ac 6:3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you ...*

*...*

*5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose ...*

### **A church decides how many servants**

What about the number of pastors or deacons in a church. How many servants should a church appoint to serve? It is true that there may be a plurality of pastors and deacons in a church. That is the prerogative of that congregation.

*Php 1:1 Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons ...*

*Tit 1:5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee ...*

*Ac 15:2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.*

*Ac 20:17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.*

A church freely decides how many servants it will appoint to serve them. I think necessity will determine the number. We have two pastors and three deacons. I am so glad for these. Brethren, I can only imagine what serving alone in this church would be like.

I'm praying for laborers. By that I mean that churches need men up to the task, in their personal lives, in their homes, in their public life, and in their studies. These

men must be doctrinally sound. Their age isn't the concern, but they must prove that they have an aptitude to teach. That means they can demonstrate an ability to dig down and dig out the truths of God's word for their own benefit and for the benefit of those that hear them. They should be able to dig out great, standard truths like salvation by grace, regeneration and conversion, election, and more; by so doing they should be able to defend the truth against error. Errors against the Person of Christ, baptism (immersion), why we believe in Baptist baptism rather than sprinkling; christening, pouring, & paedo-baptism; against the errors of Pentecostalism: prophecies, tongues, knowledge, and healings. In the main these men lay before the congregation the ability to hold fast to sound words. Are you a God-called laborer? Let me ask you this, Does what I have described above describe you? Is this what you are doing at this present time? If so, it's a good indication that the Lord has worked in you to be a laborer.

### **These offices are for men**

These offices are only to be filled by men. This is a matter, like other issues, that is not subject to change with time and culture.

Pastors:

*1Ti 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband ...*

*Tit 1:6 If any be blameless, the husband ...*

Deacons:

*1Ti.3.12 Let the deacons be the husbands ...*

*Ac 6:3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men ...*

Women are to be silent in the congregational setting whereas men that God calls into the pastoral office must be apt to teach.

*1Ti 2: 11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.*

*12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.*

All servants of a church are to be of a good behavior, perhaps the pastor is to be more restrained than a deacon (1Ti.3.3, *not given to wine*, comp. to 3.8, *not given to much wine*), married only once, and their wives of good behavior and faithful.

Scripture requires that pastors and deacons be married, and that only once. (refer to study *'The Husband of One Wife, The Wife of One Man'*) This does not mean one woman at a time. It means true monogamy. Most people confuse monogamy with digamy. Digamy is marrying after the termination of the first marriage (whether the termination was because of divorce or death isn't relevant to the issue).

*1Ti 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife ...*

*Tit 1:6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife ...*

cf. 1Ti.5.9 which shows that a woman that is indeed a widow must have been married to only one man during her lifetime. And this is the point of 1Ti.3.2.

*1Ti 5:9 Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man ...*

If this woman, after having been received by the church to be responsible for her care, remarries, the church would no longer be liable for caring for her, but her husband. And so, a church, once a man that is pastor or deacon, remarries, is dismissed from his office and the care of the body.

The wives of the servants of a church are to be faithful: faithful to the Lord, their husbands, and their children.

*1Ti.3.11 Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.*

These servants must have children so that they can demonstrate an ability to govern their houses according to the word of God.

*1Ti.3.4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;*

5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

*Tit.1.6 ¶ ... having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.*

*1Ti.3.12 ... ruling their children and their own houses well.*

These are some of the things that precede men being appointed to service.

*1Ti 3:10 And let these also first be proved; then let them (pastor and deacon) use the office of a deacon (or simply, serve), being found blameless.*

Otherwise such men would be *novices* ...

*1Ti.3.6 Not a novice ...*

*novice, νεόφυτον, acc. sing. masc. of νεόφυτος, νέος young, new (and so inexperienced) + φύω to spring up; English idiom green, a young sprout; novice would refer to one that is green, like a young sprout, not yet established. Certainly a pastor and deacon **must** prove that they can manage a home before they are appointed to manage the *house of God*. (1Ti.3.15) Maturity comes through experience.*

*‘The Jews teach a priest should be neither unmarried nor childless, lest he be unmerciful (Bengel).’ J-F-B Bible Commentary, vol. 3. p. 487*

There has been some question in my mind over the years about whether pastors and deacons are permitted to continue in their offices after their wives died. So in that vein let's consider the following.

- Are men that serve in these offices disqualified from further service when their children leaven the home?

- Are men that serve in these offices disqualified from further service when their children leave the home and live like the world?

I believe the correct answer to these questions is, No. They are not disqualified from their offices. Should the death of the wife be treated any differently? Hasn't the man proved himself to be the husband of one woman, until he remarries? I think so.

### **Supporting those appointed to servants**

The Bible teaches that the congregation should communicate of their means to support those who serve them as pastors and deacons. Listen, I want to be careful here.

Voluntary service and sacrificial giving is excellent. Every member of this church should be contributing something to help this church in the things that it does. Some of that contribution begins with the pocketbook, or wallet, but it doesn't end there. We should all be willing to contribute our time and resources to help this church do what it does. Many of you jump right in with both feet, roll up your sleeves, and you get to work. Praise God! But I want to remind you about the great work in which all of us cooperate because you chose to support brother King and me in the ministry.

Brethren, there's no telling what will come of this in eternity, but through your sacrifice we have been allowed to discover and share the truths of God's word in ways that we could not have done otherwise. We are working together in the gospel of Christ, and that word is reaching into every state of this great United States of America, and into many countries. This little congregation in this little corner of the world, by the grace of God, is touching thousands of souls with the word of God every month.

As a very brief reminder, the Bible teaches that the congregation should support their servants so that they can minister as freely as they can. There have been many ministers of the gospel that have labored supporting themselves. Paul and those that served with him did that.

*Ac 18:3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.*

*Ac 20:34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.*

*35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

*1Co 4:12 And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it ...*

But those who receive the immediate benefits of such service should be willing to help them continue devoted to that service.

*1Ti 5:17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.*

*18 For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.*

*rule, προεστῶτες, nom. pl. masc. part. perf. of προϊστημι, πρό before, above + ἵστημι to stand, set, establish; referring to those set above or over others; the perfect verb gives the sense that it is a past act established ... let these first be proved.*

(Read 1Corinthians 9.1-18)

*1Co 9:11 If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?*

*1Co 9:14 Even so hath the Lord ordained (appointed, ordered, commanded) that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.*

*hath ordained, aor. ind. of διατάσσω, διά by, through + τάσσω to appoint, determine; KJV, tss. command (7), appoint (4), ordain (3), order (2)*

*power, ἐξουσία, is found 6 times in this chapter (vss.4, 5, 6, 12, 18); KJV, tss. authority, power, jurisdiction, liberty, right, strength.*

Paul lived to help the churches in his day. These churches should have supported him for his efforts, but many did not. He didn't demand they support him, though if any man could have, he had the right.

*1Co 9:6 Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?*

But he certainly commended those that did help him.

*Phl.4.13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

*14 Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.*

*15 Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.*

*16 For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.*

*17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.*

*18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.*

*19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

*20 ¶ Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

*Php 1:7 Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.*

This should suffice for the things needing to be brought before us tonight. We considered that there are only two offices in the church. They are servant offices, called pastors and deacons. The church must have prior evidence of qualification before appointing anyone to these offices, and the church should be willing to support these men as they labor to preach the whole counsel of the word of God.