

XXV. WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

LESSON TWENTY-FIVE

...ABOUT DIVINE ORDER FOR CHURCH GOVERNMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Scriptures teach us that God is a God of order. That His ways are not always our ways. That He has a way of doing things which does not leave things to chance. If we are to enjoy the full blessings of our Father God, then it is necessary that we let God's government (His way of doing things) be the rule and standard which governs each one of us individually, and the ekklesia (Church - Body of Christ) corporately.

In 1 Corinthians 14:33,40 the Apostle Paul reminds us that

"...God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints...Let all things be done decently (properly) and in order."

Therefore, in-order that His church be not in confusion and disorder, our Father God has established an order of government and authority for the churches collectively and individually.

DIVINE ORDER OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT

From the following Scriptures what is the DIVINE ORDER OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT, that is to say, the line of authority or leadership in the Body of Christ?

Ephesians 1:22

Colossians 1:18

1 Peter 2:6-8

Ephesians 4:8,11

Titus 1:5

1 Timothy 3:8

1 Corinthians 12:28g

1 Corinthians 12:28h

Conclusions: We would note from the above Scriptures the Divine Order of Church Government is according to the following ministries/servant positions.

- Head - Christ
- Five gifts of Christ - Apostles, Prophets, Evangelist, Pastors and Teachers
- Two anointed church ministries - Elders & Deacons

- Two additional church ministries - Helps & Government

Note: The relationship of these ministries to the Church is seen in Matthew 20:25-28.

But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be GREAT among you, let him be your minister (*SERVANT*); And whosoever will be CHIEF among you, let him be your servant (*SLAVE*): Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and TO GIVE HIS LIFE A RANSOM FOR MANY.

MINISTRY DESCRIPTIONS

1. FIVE GIFTS OF CHRIST TO THE CHURCH

Of the five gifts of Christ to the church, known also, as the five fold ministry, the ministry of apostles, prophets, evangelists and teachers is not just for one local church but is to a number of churches, specifically those churches which are submitted to their ministry.

- **MINISTRY OF APOSTLES**

Ephesians 2:20

Ephesians 3:2-9

Titus 1:5

Acts 14:23

1 Corinthians 9:1-2

2 Corinthians 11:22-23

2 Corinthians 12:12

Conclusions: We would note from the above Scriptures that the Apostolic Ministry consists: (1) of laying foundation truths in the local Churches, (2) establishing/raising up new assemblies, churches and (3) having a wide range of ministry in the power of the spiritual gifts.

- **MINISTRY OF PROPHETS**

Ephesians 2:20

Ephesians 3:3-5

Acts 11:27-28

Acts 15:32

Acts 21:10-11

Conclusions: We would note from the above Scriptures that the Ministry of the New Testament Prophet includes (1) along with the Apostles, laying foundation truths in the Churches, (2) fore-telling future events, (3) forth-telling, that is to say, speaking forth words of exhortation (warnings and encouragements from the Word) to confirm the Believers in the Faith, (4) confirm- ing God's Word concerning events, direction, or etc. spoken to other believers.

- **MINISTRY OF EVANGELISTS**

Note: The English word evangelist is not a translation, but is a transliteration of the noun form of euaggelizo, pronounced "yoo-ang-ghelee-on." This Greek word has the meaning of "a messenger of good" (eu - well, angelos - a messenger).

Euaggelizo in its verb form is most often translated preaching, preached, preach in the Book of Acts, chapter 8, verses 4,12,25,35,40. In each of these verses they were preaching the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Preached, in verse 5 is not a translation of euaggelizo but rather of kerusso which is a general term for proclaim, the message may either be good or bad news. An Evangelist then, is one who preaches, proclaims, announces the good news of the Gospel,

"... that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." 2 Corinthians 5:19.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16.

An Evangelist then is a "good news messenger."

The Ministry of an Evangelist is best seen in Philip's ministry in Acts, chapter 8.

Acts 8:5-8,12,26-40

Most often their ministry is confirmed with signs following

Mark 16:20

- **MINISTRY OF PASTORS**
Ezekiel 34:12-16
Revelation 2:2
John 10
Ezekiel 34:1-11
Jeremiah 23:1

Conclusions: We would note from the above Scriptures that the pastor is the shepherd of the local Body of Christ. A shepherd is one who cares for, is concerned about and gives his attention to the needs of the sheep placed in his care.

- **THE MINISTRY OF TEACHERS**
Matthew 28:19-20
2 Timothy 2:2

Conclusions: We would note from the above Scriptures that the ministry of the teacher is (1) to teach believers to observe to do all that Jesus commanded, and (2) to instruct others in the truth of God's Word, so that, they may teach others.

2. TWO ANOINTED LOCAL CHURCH OFFICES (MINISTRIES)

- **ELDERS**

- **Qualification of Elders**

- 1 Timothy 3:1-7

- Titus 1:4-9

- Conclusions:** We would note from the above Scriptures that an Elder must be:

- blameless, having no accusation against him;
 - the husband of one wife;
 - vigilant, that is watchful, wide awake, alert;
 - sober, having a sound. disciplined mind;
 - temperate. having self under control;
 - of good behavior;
 - holy, being modest, chaste, not conceited;
 - given to hospitality, that is generous, not a miser, or selfish, liberal;
 - apt to teach, that is to tend, rule, guide and lead the Flock of God into the green pastures of the Word;
 - not given to wine;
 - not a striker, not one who hits back, or gets even (vengeful), or strikes the sheep, or whips with the Word;
 - not after money, not a hireling;
 - patient with God and with the sheep - impatience breed disasters in the Church;
 - not a brawler; does not fight for himself or for his position;
 - not covetous; having ungodly/unlawful lusts;

- must rule his own house and family well; his home-order is a type of the Church-order; God's house;
- not a novice; not one newly come to The Faith;
- must have a good report of outsiders.
- **Ministry of Elders**
Acts 20:27-35
1 Peter 5:1-4
Hebrews 13:7
Hebrews 13:17
1 Thessalonians 5:12
Conclusions: We would note from the above Scriptures that the ministry of Elders includes:
 - taking heed of his own life, that is to say, to carefully watch over and rule his soul life;
 - taking heed to the Flock of God, that is to say, to carefully take notice of Flock, ruling, tending and shepherding the Flock;
 - ministry of the Word.
- **Note:** Elders is always used in the plural in relation to the local New Testament Churches; not a dictatorship, or lordship, or one-man rule, but the Eldership (Presbytery) - however, it is not a co-equal Eldership.
Acts 14:23 (elders)
Titus 1:5 (elders)
Acts 15:13-22 (James makes final judgment)
- **DEACONS**
 - **The qualifications** of a deacon are very similar to that of the elders, as in
1 Timothy 3:1-7.
Compare verse 8, "likewise" and verse 10, "also".
 - **The Ministry of a Deacon**
Acts 6:1-4
Though the word "deacon" is not specifically used here in these verses from Acts, it is clearly implied in the use of the Greek words in verses 1 and 2.
Verse 1. The Greek word "diakonia" is used for "ministration".
verse 2. The Greek word "diakonea" is used for "serve".
The Greek word for "deacon" is "diakonas". This Greek word "diakonas" is translated in the New Testament as follows:

- Deacon, 5 times
- Servant, 7 times
- Minister, 20 times

The word essentially means, "A servant, one called to serve, to wait (a waiter, one who serves tables), or an attendant."

- A Deacon is:
 - A servant of Christ.
 - A servant to the Church.
 - A servant to the Ministry.
- Conclusions: In the local church the ministry of deacons is a ministry of serving - especially taking care of the physical needs of the church as seen in Acts 6:2,3. The qualifications of a deacon are found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

3. TWO ADDITIONAL MINISTRIES OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

- MINISTRY OF HELPS
1 Corinthians 12:28
Romans 12:8
Exodus 17:12

Conclusions: Helps is the supporting ministry of the local church - every one in the local church has a ministry of helps. This ministry includes but is not limited to, the ministry of prayer, intercession, music ministry, giving, church cleanup, and etc.

- GOVERNMENTS (lesser governments)
1 Corinthians 12:28

Conclusions: This ministry includes such ministries as leaders in the men's groups, women's groups, Bible class teachers, teachers and leaders in the youth and children's ministry, and etc.

RESPONSE TO THE TRUTH

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 sums up for us the Godly response to God's order of church government.

"We beseech you, brethren, TO KNOW them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And TO ESTEEM THEM VERY HIGHLY IN LOVE FOR THEIR WORKS SAKE. And be at peace among yourselves."