

CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Lesson 18

Introduction: When it comes to church government you can have anything from an Ecclesiastical form to a Democracy (where the people vote on most things) ... from a Deacon board running the church to Elders being over the church. So, which one is Biblical? Does it even matter to God? More importantly, does it or should it matter to me?

***IN THIS CLASS WE WILL DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING POINTS...**

PART A:

- WHY CHURCH GOVERNMENT MATTERS
- FOUR GENERAL AREAS OF AUTHORITY
- THE BIBLICAL MODEL – PLURALITY OF ELDERS
- FOUR IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES

PART B:

- THE POSITION OF ELDER
- THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF ELDERS
- THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BODY

“NO ONE SHOULD BE IN AUTHORITY THAT CANNOT BE UNDER AUTHORITY”

***PART A:**

1. WHY CHURCH GOVERNMENT MATTERS

A. IT MATTERS TO GOD

1 Cor 3:10 – “By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be **careful how he builds.”*

Heb 8:5 – “...See to it that you **make everything according to the pattern shown you...”*

B. IT MATTERS TO THE CHURCH *(GOD’S BLESSING & FAVOR)

Eph 1:22 – “And God ... appointed Him to be head over everything **for the church...”*

C. IT SHOULD MATTER TO YOU

**When considering church membership, you should know who the leaders are and feel comfortable with their leadership and where they’re heading.*

2. FOUR GENERAL AREAS OF AUTHORITY *(DIAGRAM)

A. GOD IS THE SUPREME AUTHORITY!

**Mt 28:20 – “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me?”*

**Eph 1:22 – “And God place all thing under His feet and appointee Him to be head over everything...”*

John 19:10-11 – “Pilate said, “Don’t you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?” Jesus answered, ‘You would have no power over me if **it were not given to you from above.”*

B. FOUR AREAS OF AUTHORITY

1. GOVERNMENT

**Romans 13:1 – “Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established.*

**Romans 13:2 – “Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.”*

2. FAMILY

**1 Cor 11:3 – “Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of every woman is man...”*

**Eph 5:22 – “Wives submit to your husbands as to the Lord”*

**Eph 5:23 – “Husbands love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her...”*

**Eph 6:1 – “Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.”*

**Eph 6:2 – “Fathers do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord”*

3. JOBS / EMPLOYMENT

**Eph 6:3, 7 – “Slaves (Employees), OBEY your earthly masters with respect ... just as you would obey Christ ... SERVE WHOLEHEARTEDLY, as if you were serving the Lord.”*

**Eph 6:9 – “And masters (employers) TREAT your slaves in the same way. DO NOT THREATEN them ... NO FAVORITISM...”*

4. CHURCH *(SEE MODEL BELOW)

3. BIBLICAL MODEL OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT

A. FIVE-FOLD (THE CHURCH AT LARGE)

**Ehp 4:11 – “It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists and some to be pastors and teachers.”*

B. ELDERS (LOCAL CHURCH)

**Acts 14:23 – “Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church...”*

**Acts 20:17 – “From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church.”*

C. DEACONS (LOCAL CHURCH)

**Acts 6:1-6 / 1 Tim 3:8-13*

4. FOUR IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES

A. TO SUBMIT TO EARTHLY AUTHORITY IS TO SUBMIT TO GOD

B. UMBRELLA OF PROTECTION & SAFETY

C. WHEN ASKED TO DO SOMETHING WRONG – FIRST APPEAL

**Dan 1:11-12 – “Daniel then said to the guard ... ‘Please test your servants for ten days; give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare...’”*

D. ULTIMATELY THOUGH – YOU MUST OBEY GOD

**Acts 4:19 – “But Peter and John replied, ‘Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God’s sight to obey you rather than God.’”*

*PART B –

1. THE POSITION OF ELDER

A. CALLING

Acts 14:23 - “Paul and Barnabas **appointed elders for them...”*

1 Tim 3:1 / Acts 20:17,28 – “If anyone sets his heart on being **an overseer, he desires a noble task.” / “Paul sent ... for the elders of the church ... ‘Keep watch over ... all the flock of which **the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.**’”*

B. COMMITTED

1. THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS
2. THE CHURCH – VISION, ATTENDANCE, FINANCES, SERVICE

C. CHARACTER

1 Tim 3:2-8 – “2Now the overseer must be **above reproach, the husband of **but one wife**, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3**not given to drunkenness**, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4He must **manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect.** 5(If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) 6He must **not be a recent convert**, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. 7He must also have **a good reputation with outsiders**, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.*

D. CAST

1. NO DEFINITIVE BIBLICAL GUIDELINES GIVEN
2. WE PRESENTLY HAVE 3, BUT WILL ADD MORE AS WE GROW

2. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF ELDERS

A. HUMILITY & SERVITUDE

Mt 23:11-12 – “The greatest among you will be your **servant. ... and whoever **humbles himself** will be exalted.”*

B. LEAD

1. BY EXAMPLE

1 Cor 11:1 – “Follow **my example as I follow the example of Christ.”*

2. BY DIRECTION (CASTING VISION / ONE VOICE)

Prov 29:18 – “Where there is **no vision the people are unrestrained.”*

3. WITH TEACHING

1 Tim 5:17 – “The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is **preaching and teaching.”*

James 3:1 – “Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that **we who teach will be judged more strictly.”*

4. WITH DECISIONS

- Heart for the people (their interest in mind)
- But in the fear of God (answer to Him)

Hebrews 13:17 – “... as men who **must give an account.”*

C. CARE

1 Peter 5:1-2 – “To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder ... **be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers...”*

Acts 20:28 – “Keep watch** over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers. Be shepherds** of the church of God which He bought with His own blood.”*

Ez 34:2, 7-10 – “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: ‘Woe to the shepherds ... who only care for themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock?**’ 7 “Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD : 8 As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, because my flock lacks a shepherd and so has been plundered and has become food for all the wild animals, and because my shepherds did not search for my flock but cared for themselves rather than for my flock, 9 therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the LORD : 10 This is what the Sovereign LORD says: **I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock. I will remove them from tending the flock...**”*

3. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BODY (PEOPLE_

A. RECOGNIZE: IT’S A THEOCRACY, NOT A DEMOCRACY

B. SUBMIT & OBEY

Hebrews 13:17 – “Obey your leaders and submit** to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.”*

C. IMITATE

Hebrews 13:7 – “Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and **imitate their faith.”*

1 Cor 11:1 – “Follow my example**, as I follow the example of Christ”*

D. SUPPORT

1. PRAYER

Heb 13:18 – “Pray for us.**”*

2. GIFTS / SERVING

1 Peter 4:10 – “Each one of us should use whatever **gift he has received to **serve** others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.”*

Neh 2:17-18 – “Then I said to them ... “Come, let us rebuild” ... They replied, ‘Let us start rebuilding.**’ So they began the good work.”*

3. FINANCES

1 Tim 5:17-18 – “17The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of **double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. 18For the Scripture says, “Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain,” and “**The worker deserves his wages.**”*

CONCLUSION: Church government matters much to God because, when it is operating Biblically it offers direction, protection, covering and care. Has God called you to leadership in the Body of Christ? Are you preparing yourself for that good work? If you’re not called to leadership, are you a supportive member? Remember, we will all answer to God one day for how we responded to what He gave us.

