

## Doctrine of Church

### Let's Build a Successful Church

#### Part 1

#### Some Things That Should Be Settled

1. Church leadership should agree on basic concepts if there is to be harmony and success in the local assembly.
  - The local church should be a Scriptural church. This means that the Bible is to be viewed as the Word of God. The Bible is authentic, trustworthy, reliable, and the final source of faith and practice. God must rule His people by His Word. *2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*
  - The local church should be a soul winning church. It is good for the church to be a witnessing church, but the effort must be given to winning souls to Christ, and stirring the waters of the baptism pool. Soul winning efforts must be taught, and modeled. *Proverbs 11:30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.*
  - The local church should be a steadfast church. The church should not run hot and cold. That is something God hates. *Revelation 3:15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*
  - The local church should be a separated church. *1 John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* Love the people in the world, but do not love the world. Accept people as they are, and let the Holy Spirit sanctify them.
  - The local church should have holy standards. When people begin to want to serve, then the church has the opportunity to share the standards it believes are Scriptural and reasonable. If they are Scriptural standards, they will be reasonable. Care should be taken not to impose religious scruples on individuals, but to follow the Biblical guidelines for service. For those in leadership positions, the standards are established in Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Timothy 3:1-7. For those who wish to serve, the Biblical standards are set forth in Acts 6:3, and 1 Timothy 3:8-11.

### **Biblical Standards For Those Who Lead**

*Titus 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: 6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; 8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; 9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.*

*1 Timothy 3:1 This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; 3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; 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. 7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.*

### **Biblical Standards For Those Who Serve**

*Acts 6:3 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.*

*1 Timothy 3:8 Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; 9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. 10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. 11 Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.*

#### ***Special Note.***

It is not wrong to teach people to groom themselves properly. People should be taught the concepts of masculinity for men, femininity for women, and modesty for all. If a godly example is set, people will respond because of the authority of the Word of God.

- The local church should be a singing church. There should be congregational music, as well as individual specials. Find a song leader with some life to lead the service. For the evening service, charge the service like you are going to assault the gates of hell with a water gun. Sing vigorously unto the Lord. *Psalms 30:4 Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.*

- The local church should be a sociable and sharing church. There should be some fellowship. Make ice cream, cut some watermelons, bake a pie, or make a cake for after the evening service. Teach people to be pleasant to strangers. Welcome people in the lobby and in the parking lot. People are lonely. *Acts 4:32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.*
- The local church should be a supplicating church, a praying people. The church should be interceding for other as people did for Peter. *Acts 12:5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.*

There is power in prayer if there is faith in prayer which is in the will of God. *Mark 11:24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.* Pray often. Pray immediately.

- The local church should be a spiritual minded church. People should have Biblical values and good gospel manners. If cheating, lying, stealing, backbiting, murmuring, gossip, and maligning is manifested, it should be challenged and exposed as carnality. Carnality leads to division as the church of Corinth illustrates. *1 Corinthians 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*
- The local church should be a sending church. “Why should anyone hear the gospel twice until everyone has heard the gospel once?” Send missionaries. Jesus sent out His disciples, and so must the church. *Matthew 10:1 And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.* Listen, for and hear the Macedonian call. *Acts 16:9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.*
- The local church should be a sharing church. *Galatians 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*
- The local church should be a studying church. *2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*
- The local church should be a stirred church. There should be much activity all the time, for activity is the vital sign of life. God’s people should be asking for things to do, and thinking of ways to serve the Lord. People should be excited about revivals, conferences, and special days. Be excited about it.
- The local church should be a structured church. There should be a proper, biblical leadership.

- The local church should be a sanctified church. There should be a sweet spirit in the assembly. Pastors should love the people. People need to love their pastor. Christians are not to be mean to one another. It is good to have a position in the church, but if the disposition is not right, the heart is still not right with God. African American gospel songwriter Doris Mae Akers (1923 – 1995) wrote,

“There’s a sweet, sweet Spirit in this place,  
and I know that it’s the Spirit of the Lord”

***Special Note.***

Lindsay Terry comments on the origins of this song in an interview with Doris Akers in the late 1980s:

"She related to me that one Sunday morning in 1962, while directing the Sky Pilot Choir, she said to her singers, 'You are not ready to go in.' She didn't believe they had prayed enough!

They were accustomed to spending time with her in prayer before the service, asking God to bless their songs. She said, 'I feel that prayer is more important than great voices.' They had already prayed, but this particular morning she asked them to pray again, and they did so with renewed fervor.

"As they prayed, Doris began to wonder how she could stop this wonderful prayer meeting. She said, 'I sent word to the pastor letting him know what was happening. He was waiting in the auditorium, wanting to start the service. Finally, I was compelled to say to the choir, We have to go. I hate to leave this room and I know you hate to leave, but you know we do have to go to the service. But there is such a sweet, sweet Spirit in this place.'"

- The local church should be a serving church. Shuck the ears of corn. Do whatever is needed.
2. Everything starts with church leadership. Establish the pastor as the leader. Biblically, each local church has a plurality of pastors, called elders.
    - *Acts 14:23 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.*
    - *1 Timothy 5:17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.*
    - *Titus 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:*
    - *James 5:14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:*

- *1 Peter 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:*
3. The role of the pastor, or elder, is to lead.
    - *1 Peter 5:2 Feed 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.*
  4. Committees, and Boards, are to be followers, helpers, assistants, supporters, and servants. That may assault their own view of their role in the church, but God has appointed elders to take the oversight of the church in all matters.

***Special Note.***

Until this concept is firmly established, instead of having leaders that serve, there will be servers who want to lead, and step into a holy office and role they are not authorized to exercise. If there is radical concern about the leadership role of the Shepherd, something is fundamentally and profoundly wrong somewhere. Care must be taken in proceeding.

- *1 Timothy 5:19 Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.*

As a general rule, committees ought to be established to serve for a specific time, and a particular event, and then be dissolved. The less committees, the better. Standing committees should be rare. Create a new group for a new situation. Give some people an inch, and they think they are a ruler.

5. Churches who will not establish the pastor as leader are wrong, and should not be served. If the sheep do not follow their shepherd, all will go wrong.
6. The matter of leadership should be settled, along with the other principles outlined. Never quit. Never negotiate principles away.
  - The pastor should manifest confidence, which is rooted in his call to minister.
  - The pastor should lead the service.
  - The pastor should chair church meetings, beginning, with prayer and sharing.
  - The pastor should lead in financial matters. Do not sign a church check. The pastor should be the financial administrator, not the treasurer. The treasurer is not to control the church. The pastor should make the church solvent. There should be accountability. Have integrity. Build confidence. If something cost \$300.00 and not \$100.00, and it happens only once in a while, confidence can still be established, provided there is openness. Raise money, account for money, and handle money.

*Acts 4:35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.*

*Acts 4:37 Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.*

- The pastor must lead and control the entire program of the church from Sunday Morning service, evening service, music etc.
- The pastor must dress well in order to lead well. Bill Clinton would run around in shorts to McDonalds until his managers made him look presidential. Pastors should look like men of God.