

# A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON CHURCH STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION

Select Passages • September 2, 2007 • Pastor Mike Newman

August 19, 2007 .....	"God's Word to His Church"
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**Acts 1:15 (NLT)** <sup>15</sup>During this time, when about 120 believers were together in one place, Peter stood up and addressed them.

**Acts 2:41 (NLT)** <sup>41</sup>Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.

**Acts 6:1-6 (NLT)** <sup>1</sup>But as the believers rapidly multiplied, there were rumblings of discontent. The Greek-speaking believers complained about the Hebrew-speaking believers, saying that their widows were being discriminated against in the daily distribution of food. <sup>2</sup>So the Twelve called a meeting of all the believers. They said, "We apostles should spend our time teaching the word of God, not running a food program. <sup>3</sup>And so, brothers, select seven men who are well respected and are full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will give them this responsibility. <sup>4</sup>Then we apostles can spend our time in prayer and teaching the word." <sup>5</sup>Everyone liked this idea, and they chose the following: Stephen (a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit), Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas of Antioch (an earlier convert to the Jewish faith). <sup>6</sup>These seven were presented to the apostles, who prayed for them as they laid their hands on them.

**Acts 14:23 (NLT)** <sup>23</sup>Paul and Barnabas also appointed elders in every church. With prayer and fasting, they turned the elders over to the care of the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

**1 Timothy 3:1-13 (NLT)** <sup>1</sup>This is a trustworthy saying: "If someone aspires to be an elder, he desires an honorable position." <sup>2</sup>So an elder must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be able to teach. <sup>3</sup>He must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He must be gentle, not quarrelsome, and not love money. <sup>4</sup>He must manage his own family well, having children who respect and obey him. <sup>5</sup>For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church? <sup>6</sup>An elder must not be a new believer, because he might become proud, and the devil would cause him to fall. <sup>7</sup>Also, people outside the church must speak well of him so that he will not be disgraced and fall into the devil's trap. <sup>8</sup>In the same way, deacons must be well respected and

## Four Observations:

1) The Bible does not lay out a specific \_\_\_\_\_ that a church should use.

- ✓ See Acts 1:15, Acts 2:41, Acts 6:1-6, Acts 14:23, Acts 15:1-35, Titus 1:6-9, Ephesians 4:11-13, and 1 Timothy 3:1-13

*The church structure of the early church evolved over time in response to its growth and circumstances.*

2) Throughout history, churches have adopted various organizational structures to \_\_\_\_\_ of the church.

## Three Categories of Modern Church Structure:

- \_\_\_\_\_ - authority and decisions are made by clergy, bishops, and the Pope in the case of the Roman Catholic Church.
- \_\_\_\_\_ - representative approach where leaders are either appointed or elected by the congregation to make decisions on their behalf. This structure usually has Elders, Deacons, or governing boards of some kind.
- \_\_\_\_\_ - authority and decisions are made by the congregation and rests in the members of the church.

*It is important to remember that no system or organization is perfect.*



**Otterbein Church & Ministry Center**  
801 Park Street • Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, 17268 • Rev. Michael Newman, Senior Pastor  
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have integrity. They must not be heavy drinkers or dishonest with money. <sup>9</sup>They must be committed to the mystery of the faith now revealed and must live with a clear conscience. <sup>10</sup>Before they are appointed as deacons, let them be closely examined. If they pass the test, then let them serve as deacons. <sup>11</sup>In the same way, their wives must be respected and must not slander others. They must exercise self-control and be faithful in everything they do. <sup>12</sup>A deacon must be faithful to his wife, and he must manage his children and household well. <sup>13</sup>Those who do well as deacons will be rewarded with respect from others and will have increased confidence in their faith in Christ Jesus.

**Ephesians 4:11-13 (NLT)** <sup>11</sup>Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. <sup>12</sup>Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. <sup>13</sup>This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

**Titus 1:5 (NLT)** <sup>5</sup>I left you on the island of Crete so you could complete our work there and appoint elders in each town as I instructed you.

**Ephesians 4:14-16 (NLT)** <sup>14</sup>Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. <sup>15</sup>Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. <sup>16</sup>He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. **As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.**

## How to Begin a Relationship with Jesus

**Believe** that Jesus is who He said He was, that He came and died on the cross, and that He arose from the dead three days later.

**Acknowledge** your sins and ask God to forgive you.

**Submit** yourself to follow God's teachings for life.

**Express** your desire to have this kind of relationship to God.

For more information about what it means to become a follower of Christ or what to do after you make a decision to follow Jesus, speak to one of the elders or pastors following the service today (they can be found by the prayer room in the church lobby) or contact the church office (717-762-7147) to set up an appointment. You may also request materials and find additional information to help you on your spiritual journey on our website by clicking on the "Beginning Your Journey" link.

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3) The Bible teaches that church should be \_\_\_\_\_.

✓ See Ephesians 4:11-13 and Titus 1:5

### Four Main Groups Who Give Leadership At Otterbein:

- \_\_\_\_\_ - responsible for the ministry programming and the day-to-day operation of the church.
- \_\_\_\_\_ - responsible for the spiritual oversight of the church.
- \_\_\_\_\_ - responsible for the "business" affairs of the church.
- \_\_\_\_\_ - non-staff persons who lead many of the ministries of the church.

***At Otterbein, our goal is to have ministry leaders and staff make all decisions related to their ministries while the Elders and Management Oversight Team focus their attention on the "big picture" decisions and "discerning God's will" for the Church.***

4) Whatever structure or organization a church chooses, it is essential that it helps the church to \_\_\_\_\_ of making disciples of Christ.

✓ See Ephesians 4:14-16

### Two Concluding Thoughts:

- Jesus is the Head and ultimate leader of the Church.
- We are all in this together and as each person does their part, the church will be "healthy and growing and full of love."



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