



'And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till WE ALL come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in LOVE, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head - Christ - from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.
-Eph. 4:11-16

What is the Church?

"And He put all things under His feet and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Ephesians 1:22-23). "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. I Corinthians 1:27. We are the church.

The church universal is made up of every born again believer on the face of the earth. Every group of believers who worship together is a segment of the church (called out ones), otherwise known as the LOCAL church.



The Ministry Gifts

to the church are listed in Ephesians 4:11. They are called the five-fold ministry gifts (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) and are repeated in slightly different form in I Corinthians 12:28.

The Lord Jesus Christ, according to the Word, is the chief shepherd and is the source and giver of the ministry gifts. "God hath set some in the church...." I Cor. 12:28. "And He gave some.....". Eph. 4:8, 11.

To understand this we must look back to Psalms 68:18 which says "...when He ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men."

We can conclude then that for one to operate in the ministry gifts (offices), He must have been called of God.

Where do Bishops and Elders originate from in the Church?

Who chooses them and what is the relationship?

Notice that, as needful as they are in church government, bishops, elders and deacons are not listed with these ministry gifts. Acts 14:23 says, "and when they (Paul and Barnabas) had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." Paul and Barnabas ordained the elders. What office did Paul and Barnabas both stand in? They stood in the office of apostle. Paul declared as much in Galatians 1:1. Who chose Paul? There can be no controversy about Paul's direct call by the Lord Jesus Christ. Who had authority over Paul? Jesus, who called him, had authority over him.

The principle should be clear. Those in ministry offices choose the elders; therefore, they have authority over them. It's a clear scriptural pattern of delegation of authority.

Let's look at a second example. Paul raised up, under his ministry, a young man whom he used as a trouble-shooter by the name of Titus. If Paul had any trouble in a church, he was able to send Titus in and know things would get straightened out. Paul had sent Timothy to Corinth to try to bring order in the church but he failed. Then he sent Titus. We

see in II Corinthians 8 that Titus addressed the problems and began to work them out. The church straightened out. Remember the Jews didn't like Titus because he was an uncircumcised gentile, a Greek (Gal. 2:1-4). But the ministry gift of God was in him and the signs and wonders worked through him. This was God's seal of approval. Religious people have a hard time coming against the supernatural.

Another time Paul left him in Crete to pastor.

"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." Titus 1:5.

Philippians 1:1 "Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:"

There is only one pastor (shepherd) per congregation (flock) just as the body has only one head or a marriage has only one head. But there can be a plurality of bishops.

As a man's family grows, he doesn't get another husband or father. He simply delegates authority to the older children to watch over the younger. Notice in verse 1 the elders and deacons are mentioned with the congregation (saints) at Philippi.

Timothy 3:1 says "This is a true saying, If a man desires the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." THIS office DOES NOT come as a divine call from God. It is something a man aspires to, something he desires to be; a good work, but NOT something that can be equated with the call of God to the full time ministry."

What about Deacons?

Who chooses them and from where do they derive their authority and who exercises authority over them?

Acts 6:5-6 says “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, whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.”

It is clear from these verses that the congregation chooses the deacons in the local church. Then the ministers confirm their choice through the laying on of hands.

Who then has authority over the deacons? The congregation who chose them has authority over them. Notice that it doesn't say that the apostles or the pastor chose the deacons. If that were true, the deacons would serve the pastor.

The deacons are set in the church to serve the people. They are servants of the people. (See *I Tim. 3:13*).

Another point to notice is the manner in which the deacons were chosen isn't specified; therefore, each congregation may choose as they think best.

Qualifications

The most important thing regarding deacon and elder selection is that they meet the qualifications established by the Holy Spirit in God's Word.

Position–Function–Qualifications

- **Bishop (Episkopos) Oversee.**
Must first be an elder, then is given more responsibility.
- **Elder (Presbuteros) Rule and teach.**
Requires maturity & knowledge of the Word—*I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5- 9.*
- **Deacon (Diakonos) Minister\Serve.**
Full of Holy Ghost and Faith—*Acts 6:1-6; I Tim. 3:8-13; Romans 16:1-2*(Men or Women)

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Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!



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And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

Pastor Harlan & Doris Stilwell Snr.

