

Church Leadership – A Summary of Biblical Principles

4 Biblical Principles of Church Leadership:

1. Jesus is Head of the Church.
2. Churches are to be led by a plurality of godly pastors/elders/overseers.
3. Deacons serve by meeting the practical needs of the church.
4. The congregation has the final authority to protect and promote the gospel.

Summary: Churches are to be congregationally governed yet led by a plurality of pastors who are freed up by servant-hearted deacons to devote themselves to the ministry of the Word and prayer.

1. Jesus is Head of the Church.

Colossians 1:18, Colossians 2:18-19, Ephesians 1:22, Ephesians 4:15, Ephesians 5:23

What do we mean when we call Jesus the Head of our church?

- a. **Jesus is inseparably linked to His Church.**
- b. **The Church is totally dependent on Jesus.**
- c. **Jesus is the supreme authority of the Church.**

2. Churches are to be led by a plurality of godly pastors.

There are 3 terms the Bible uses interchangeably to refer to a church's spiritual leaders: elders, overseers, and pastors.

As far as we know, every New Testament church had multiple pastors. There is no example in the New Testament of one elder or pastor leading a church as the sole spiritual leader.

Titus 1:5, Acts 14:21-23, Acts 20:17, Philipians 1:1, James 5:14:

8 practical benefits of a plurality of pastors in an individual local church:

1. **It balances weaknesses and adds strengths.**
2. **It adds pastoral wisdom.**
3. **It solidifies leadership in the congregation.**
4. **It increases unity.**
5. **It spreads the workload and burden of pastoring.**
6. **It increases pastoral accountability.**
7. **It increases boldness and courage.**
8. **It cultivates humility and dispels arrogance.**

What is the role of pastors/elders? What has God called them to do in the church?

Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1-4, Ephesians 4:11-12

Pastors are not dictators or rulers with absolute authority. Rather, they are shepherds.

So, using this picture of shepherds, here are 3 roles of pastors:

Pastors lead God's church; Pastors feed God's church; Pastors protect God's church.

What are the Biblical qualifications of pastors/elders/overseers?

1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9

3. Deacons serve by meeting the practical needs of the church.

Acts 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 3:8-13

The word "deacon" literally means "servant." So, the biggest clue as to what deacons are supposed to do is in their name. Deacons are recognized, qualified, servants.

4 truths about deacons from Acts 6:1-6:

- a. **Deacons care for the physical needs of the church.**
- b. **Deacons work for unity in the church.**
- c. **Deacons support and enhance the teaching of the church.**
- d. **Deacons set an example of godliness for the church.**

4. The congregation has the final authority to protect and promote the gospel.

Jesus has given all Christians a job to do in the church (Eph 4:11-12). We are a congregational church. Which means, that we believe the Bible teaches that the members of this church have the final authority to protect and promote the gospel (Matthew 18:15-17; Acts 6:1-6; 1 Cor 5; 2 Cor 2:6). Under Christ and His Word, the decisive court of appeal in the local church is the gathered church assembly.

What are the responsibilities and privileges of church membership?

1. **Attend Church Regularly.**
2. **Guard the Gospel.**
3. **Know, Love, and Serve Other Church Members.**
4. **Attend Members' Meetings.**
5. **Disciple Other Church Members.**
6. **Give Time and Resources Cheerfully.**
7. **Share the Gospel with Unbelievers.**
8. **Follow and Support Your Leaders.**

Conclusion: The Scripture points to churches that affirm qualified pastors and follow those pastors' leadership. These churches are served by qualified deacons who free the pastors up to lead the church. The members of these churches are passionate about remaining pure and carrying out the principles and commands of our Head: King Jesus.