

LESSON 8

THE ORDAINED LAY MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WORSHIP AND SERVICE OF THE CHURCH

REVIEW – AREAS OF MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH

THE GOVERNMENTAL MINISTRIES IN THE CHURCH (EPH. 4:11-13)

¹¹So Christ Himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹²to equip His people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Eph 4:11-13 NIV)

Include five ministries that are needful for the edification of believers and for the enlarging of the Body of Christ everywhere.

- Apostles
- Prophets
- Evangelists
- Pastors
- Teachers

They have special authority in the church because:

- They must be divinely or sovereignly called by the Lord.

But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel." (Acts 9:15 NIV)

- They must be confirmed and raised up by the Holy Spirit in the local bodies to which they are assigned.

¹ Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: ... ² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. (Acts 13:1-3 NIV)

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The ordained lay ministries – elders, pastors, deacons and deaconesses – instituted to carry on the worship and service of the church.

The other leadership lay ministries – every outreach ministry known to the church.

ELDERS

In the Old Testament, from the very first time God called His people together and brought them forth in one body, He established the authority or authorities necessary for governing them.

- Moses was called by God to bring God's people out of Egypt, to make one body of them, and to lead them.
- When the workload became too overwhelming, then Moses, at the urging of his father-in-law, appointed 70 elders to assist Aaron and himself in their duties to the Israelites. This was done in order that:
 - Moses might not "wear away".
 - The people might not "weary in waiting" and therefore fail to receive the guidance of God. (Exodus 18: 13-26)

Paul, as he set up the first churches of the New Testament, appointed elders as directed by the Holy Spirit to carry on the work of the ministry in his absence in order that he, too, might not weary away from too much to do.

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. (Acts 14:23 NIV)

Duties of elders

- To oversee the spiritual life of the local church.
- To govern, instruct, and shepherd those in the body in which they serve.

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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. (Acts 20:28 NIV)

Certain elders were raised up in each body to act as heads or pastors.

- In Revelation 2 and 3, there is one pastor appointed for each of the seven churches.
- However, the leadership of each church body rested on the group of elders and not just one.

Qualifications for eldership (1 Tim. 3:1-7)

- Did not have to be divinely called to be appointed to the office of elder, but did have to desire it.

Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. (1 Timothy 3:1 NIV)

- Had to be righteous in lifestyle
 - The husband of one wife.
 - Vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality.
 - Apt to teach, not given to wine, fighting or brawling.
 - Not greedy or zealous of dishonest gain, not covetous.
 - Not a spiritual novice.
 - A patient man with his home in order and his life and family a witness to God, both in the church and among unbelievers.

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DEACONS

Even before supporting elders were appointed to assist in spiritual leadership after the church began in Jerusalem, young deacons were named to carry on the business of the church and to assist those who ministered the Word. (Acts 6:1-8)

- These men set precedent and example for all later deacons to follow.
- These men were not necessarily called by the Lord, but they were required to meet several qualifications. They had to be:
 - Full of the Holy Spirit.
 - Full of honest report.
 - Full of wisdom.
 - Full of faith.
 - Full of power.
- Other qualifications of deacons (1 Tim. 3:8-13)
 - They had to be serious in lifestyle, not double-tongued.
 - Not given to much wine, not greedy of dishonest gain.
 - Have a pure conscience, blameless.
 - Have one wife who is serious, sober and faithful.
 - Have their homes in order.
- Scripture indicates that both men and women served in the office of deacon.

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Cenchreae. ²I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of his people and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been the benefactor of many people, including me. (Romans 16:1-2 NIV)

CONCLUSION

Some elders and deacons of a local body could and did hold other offices in the universal church body as well.

- Timothy and Titus
- Deacons Phillip and Stephen served as evangelists

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God gifts the apostles with all the gifts.

- They train the elders, who stay home and consistently train the younger deacons and the lay members of the Body.
- At least some of these will be called to go out from the local body and serve universally.

Without those in supervisory and leadership roles, large groups of people like sheep without a shepherd will go into confusion and go astray.

- It is for protection of the flock that our Lord has instituted headship authority roles in the church – locally and universally.
- We should willingly and eagerly submit to those in authority over us, support them in every way we can emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

We ourselves should surrender to serve, should the Lord choose to so lead us.