

# General Principles of Local Church Government

*Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5*

## INTRODUCTION:

1. This will begin a series of Lessons concerning the Eldership in the local congregation. It is important because
  - a) As goes the shepherd / leaders, so goes the flock / church.
  - b) The great digression and apostacy from simple New Testament Christianity came about because of a failure to adhere to divinely authorized design for local church government.
2. **“Local”** church government! There is a distinction between the local and universal church.

## DISCUSSION:

### I. Practically necessary otherwise anarchy, 1 Cor. 14:33

A. Civil government, Romans 13:1-7

B. Home

**Ephesians 5:23**, For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

### II. Common misconceptions

A. Democracy

**Matthew 7:13-14**, Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

**Psalms 119:128**, Therefore I esteem all *thy* precepts *concerning* all *things to be* right; *and* I hate every false way.

**Romans 3:4**, God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

## B. Elders have legislative authority – Wrong!

- i. Once a matter of opinion or expediency is *legislated* it ceases to be a matter of opinion or expediency.
- ii. Elders may make decisions for the good, practical and expedient carrying out of the Lord's work but they cannot be spiritually binding.

**Revelation 22:18-19**, For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: **19** And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

**Deuteronomy 4:2**, Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

a) Elders' authority boundaried by SCRIPTURE!

C. Elders “make” or appoint other Elders – Wrong!

**Acts 20:28**, Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the **Holy Ghost** hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

i. How? Scripture!

a) Creates a desire in the candidate

b) Stipulates his qualifications

ii. At that point he may be an elder of a local congregation.

iii. The only “say-so” of the existing eldership is whether or not he meets the already existing scriptural qualifications.

iv. An eldership that forbids a qualified candidate is overstepping its bounds of scriptural authority and should repent.

D. Conclusion: Church is a *Theocracy*!

**Ephesians 1:22-23**, And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things*

to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

**Colossians 1:18**, And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

**Matthew 28:18**, And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

**1 Timothy 6:15**, Which in his times he shall shew, *who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

## **CONCLUSION:**

1. The importance of a qualified and effective eldership cannot be overstated. Without it....

**Matthew 9:36**, But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

2. Where from here?
  - (a) Study: 1 Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-11, 1 Peter 5:1-4
  - (b) Diligent prayer
  - (c) Meditation & reflection then self-examination.