



God's Plan For the Church

Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. 1 Timothy 3:14-15 (NASB)

The Universal Church

Christians talk about going to church to worship God on Sundays. They leave their homes and travel to a building where they expect to sing and hear a pastor teach from the Bible. They look to the pastor as the church's leader and consider singing an act of worship. The people expect the pastor to be an excellent speaker as he teaches the Bible. Maybe the Lord's Supper is served at the end of the service and then most Christians would say they had gone to church. Would you agree with them? What does the Bible teach about the church? The following questions will help us understand the question.

1. According to Ephesians 5:23 and Colossians 1:18, who is the head of the church?

Jesus Christ

2. Read John 10:11 and Hebrews 13:20, and then explain who the Chief Shepherd is in 1 Peter 5:4?

Jesus Christ

3. Think about the answer to questions 1 and 2, and then explain who the leader of every church is.

Jesus Christ

4. Christians are members of the body of Christ. According to Colossians 1:18, what is another term for “the body.”

The Church

5. Who has placed believers into Christ’s body (1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Colossians 3:15)?

The Holy Spirit

6. Read Acts 20:28 below, and then explain what Christ did to purchase the church.

Christ died on the cross.

7. Romans 16:16 refers to the universal church, that is, all believers. How does this verse do that?

The verse states that all of the churches belong to Christ. Thus, all believers are members of Christ’s body, or family members.

The Local Church

The local church is different than the universal church. It refers to a smaller group of believers who live in a local area, such as a city, and assemble on Sunday and other days of the week to worship the living God.

1. Therefore, are the believers who attend your church the only Christians (Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14)?

No! Every person in every church who truly believes in Christ are Christians.

2. Explain the difference between the universal church and local church in your own words.

The universal church includes all of the believers in every church around the world since the time of Christ.

3. Where did the early Christians usually assemble for worship (Acts 2:46; Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Philemon 1:2)? **In homes.**

4. On what day of the week did the early believers meet together (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2)?

Sunday or the first day of the week.

God's Plan For The Local Church

The book of 1 Timothy was written so that believers and leaders can know how God wants every local church to function. In 1 Timothy 3:15, the apostle Paul says,

I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. 1 Timothy 3:15 (NASB)

Consequently, 1 Timothy warns us about false teaching, false doctrine in the last days, and people within the church who disagree with the teachings of Christ and with Scripture. We are also given an overview of the worship service and the type of sermons a pastor should preach. Extensive information is provided on the qualifications of leaders and when a sinning elder should be removed from office. Now, as you read each passage below, you will learn what the apostle taught us. Then summarize the principle.



Ruins of Houses In Capernaum Where Early Believers May Have Worshiped
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1 Timothy 1:3-7 — **Do not allow men to teach error to the church.**

1 Timothy 2:1-3, 8 — **In the worship service, entreaties, prayer, petitions, and thanks are to be given.**

1 Timothy 2:9-10 — **Women are to dress modestly and discreetly.**

1 Timothy 2:12-14 (list two things) — **Women are not allowed to be leaders over men or teach the Bible to men.**

1 Timothy 3:1-13 — **Qualifications of the leaders are given. They include overseers and deacons.**

1 Timothy 4:1-8 — **False doctrine is prohibited in the church.**

1 Timothy 4:11, 13-16 — **Pastors are to read, exhort, and teach. Instructions given to pastor.**

1 Timothy 5:1-2 — **Do not sharply rebuke but appeal to older and younger men and women.**

1 Timothy 5:17-22 — **Instructions given about honoring and disciplining elders.**

1 Timothy 6:3-5 — **Warnings given about those who disagree with Christ's teaching and the apostles.**

1 Timothy 6:6-14, 17-19 — **Warnings given about pursuing riches and admonitions to do good works.**

Principles of True Worship

The first principle the apostle Paul gave us in 1 Timothy 1-2 is how we are to worship God. Paul tells believers that worship includes the accurate teaching of Scriptures and prayer. Acts 2:42-47 reports that the early Christians did four things when they gathered together in homes for worship: teaching of the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. We should notice that singing is not mentioned in Acts 2:42 or in 1 Timothy, apparently because it was not as essential. But Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 seem to imply that singing was included in worship in the early church. Now answer the following questions to discover some spiritual characteristics of worship.

1. How are we to worship God according to John 4:23-24?

We are to worship God in spirit and truth.

2. How are we to worship in spirit (Matthew 15:8 and Isaiah 29:13)?

We will worship with our heart, that is, our minds since the Greek word for "heart" was used to refer to the mind (Luke 9:47).

3. What is the second element of true worship (Matthew 15:9)? What does this reveal should happen during the Sunday morning service?

The second element of worship is truth. Therefore, worship only occurs when truth is taught in the worship service. Worship is rejected when false teaching occurs.

4. Name two signs of false worship (Ezekiel 33:30-32)?

True worship occurs when the heart/mind receives the Word of God and our behavior changes.

5. Psalm 95:6 describes what some of the Old Testament believers did when they worshiped God. What did they do?

They bowed down to the ground.

6. How will the earth worship God in the future (Psalm 66:4)?

All the earth will worship by singing praises to the Lord.

Heart Problems

Ezekiel 33:31-32

They come to you as people come, and sit before you as My people and hear your words, but they do not do them, for they do the lustful desires expressed by their mouth, and *their heart* goes after their gain. Behold, you are to them like a sensual song by one who has a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument; *for they hear your words but they do not practice them.*

Principles of Fellowship

The second principle the early believers practiced was fellowship, as described in Acts 2:42. The Greek word for "fellowship" is *koinonia*. It refers to sharing common interests, joint participation, or doing something together. True fellowship can only occur between people who believe in Jesus Christ and hold to the same doctrine (1 Timothy 6:3-5; Philemon 6; 1 John 1:3, 6). The following questions will provide some important information.

1. When a believer attends a local church, who is benefited (Hebrews 10:24-25)? Why should we attend?

Everyone! We should attend to encourage others.

2 What command has God given to every local church (1 Corinthians 1:10)?

Strive for agreement and to be of one mind.

One-Anothers — The New Testament has a series of “one anothers.” God uses them to teach us how we should behave towards others. Describe the “one another” in the blanks.

John 13:34-35 — **Love one another.**

Romans 12:16 — **Be of the same mind toward one another.**

Romans 14:13 — **Do not judge one another.**

Ephesians 5:21 — **Submit to one another.**

Colossians 3:9 — **Do not lie to one another.**

Hebrews 10:25 — **Encourage one another.**

James 5:16 — **Confess sins to one another.**

1 Peter 5:5 — **Be humble toward one another.**

Spiritual Gifts — God has given believers spiritual gifts. The following questions will help you understand the purpose, function, and types of spiritual gifts. The exercise of spiritual gifts is important in the life of the church.

1. What is the purpose of spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-7)?

For the common good.

2. Who gives the spiritual gifts to every believer (1 Corinthians 12:7-11)?

The Holy Spirit.

3. List five gifts that existed in the early church 1 Corinthians 12:27-30 but are not listed in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11?

Apostles and teachers

Spiritual Gifts

Romans 12:6-8		1 Corinthians 12:7-10, 28	
Exhortation	Ruling	Administration	Interpretation of tongues
Giving	Leading	Discerning of spirits	Knowledge
Helps or serving	Mercy	Faith	Miracles
Prophecy	Teaching	Healing	Prophecy
		Helps or serving	Tongues

4. What do believers accomplish by faithfully using the spiritual gifts given to them (1 Peter 4:10-11)?
Believers glorify God.

5. What spiritual gift do you think Timothy had in 1 Timothy 4:13-16?
Timothy most likely had the spiritual gift of teaching.

6. What promise is given to believers for their service to other believers in the local church (Hebrews 6:10)?
God will not forget the work and love that was shown.

Unity in the Church — Many churches have conflicts between the members and leaders. God does not want the church to be a place of conflict. So, He has given us some commands.

1. What is the common message of Romans 12:16 and 1 Corinthians 1:10? How can believers fulfill the two commands?
Believers are to be of the same mind. That is, they are to be in agreement.

2. What is the message of Ephesians 4:2-6, and how are we told to accomplish it?
Believers are to preserve the unity in the local and universal church. They are to do this by being humble, gentle, patient, tolerant with other believers in love, diligently striving to maintain peace.

3. Philippians 2:1-5 gives some commands that we are to perform. That implies they are choices. List five of them.
Any five of the following: 1) Be in agreement, 2) maintain love, 3) united in spirit, 4) intent on the same purpose, 5) do not be selfish, 6) do not be conceited, 7) be humble, 8) consider others more important than yourself, and 9) be concerned about others.

4. What do Romans 12:16 and Romans 14:19 tell us to do and what to avoid?
Pursue peace, build up one another, and avoid conceit.

Ordinance of the Lord's Supper

Third, the early church celebrated two ordinances: baptism and the Lord's Supper (communion). The Lord's Supper was established by our Lord Jesus Christ in the night He was betrayed by Judas (Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:19-20), and before He was crucified on Friday. The apostle Paul gives us more information in 1 Corinthians 11:23-34. The following questions will help us understand what Jesus did on that night when he instituted the Lord's Supper.

1. What did Jesus do after taking some bread (1 Corinthians 11:23-24)?
Gave thanks.
2. What does the bread symbolize (1 Corinthians 11:24-25)?
Christ's body.
3. What does the cup symbolize (1 Corinthians 11:26)?
Christ's blood.
4. What warning are we given (1 Corinthians 11:27-32)?
Believers are not to eat of the Lord's Supper if they have not repented and confessed their sins.

Acts 2:42, 46 teaches us that the early believers often celebrated the Lord's Supper. But Scripture does not tell us they celebrated the Lord's Supper every Sunday. There is no special blessing associated with the Lord's Supper.

Ordinance of Baptism

The early church also practiced baptism of new believers in Jesus Christ. This is the second ordinance given to the church. The early believers were baptized very soon after they believed in Jesus Christ. It is "believer's baptism." Their sins were forgiven because they believed in Christ, and then baptism followed which declared to others that they were Christians. Baptism cannot save a person, since salvation is by faith in Christ alone, nor does it confer a spiritual blessing on a believer. Baptism simply symbolizes our death and burial with Christ, and our resurrection to new life in Christ.

1. What was the third thing Jesus commanded the disciples to do in Matthew 28:19-20?
Teach the new disciples to obey the commands Christ gave to them.
2. Did the early church practice baptism of new believers (Acts 2:41; 8:35-39; 10:44-48; 16:31-33; 18:8; 1 Corinthians 1:13-17)? **Yes.**
3. Romans 6:3-4 says that baptism symbolizes being baptized into Christ's death with Christ, then being buried with Christ, and finally being raised from the dead through the glory of the Father.
4. Therefore, what are believers to do (Romans 6:4)?
Walk in their new life.
5. The Greek word for to baptize is *baptizo*. This word, a Koine Greek word, means "dipping," "to dip under." How do Matthew 3:4-6, John 3:23, and Acts 8:35-38 reveal that *baptizo* means to dip or immerse into water?
John the Baptist needed deep water for the baptism. The Ethiopian and Philip went down into water.

Principles of Church Leadership

God’s design for the leadership team in the local church is that it will be a team of righteous, loving men. Consequently, the qualifications they must satisfy to be in office are very high. Each elder must continue to meet the qualifications in order to remain in office. God has also given us a list of their responsibilities, which they are to fulfill willingly and eagerly. The leaders of the church are the overseers (elders) and the deacons. Answer the following questions to learn more about the leadership team of the church.

1. Philippians 1:1 is a unique verse in the New Testament because it refers to the congregation and all of the leaders. What are the titles of the church leaders?

The overseers or elders and the deacons.

2. Who cannot be elders and who cannot teach men (1 Timothy 2:12)?

Women

3. Explain why the elders of the church must be men according to 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:5-6.

Overseers or elders must be the husband of one wife.

4. 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:5-9 give us a list of qualifications that overseers (elders) must satisfy. Can a new believer become an elder?

No! The reason is that they might become proud.

5. In Acts 20:17, we are told that Paul asked the elders to come to him. After they arrived in Miletus, Paul referred to them by another name (Acts 20:28). What are those names?

Overseers.

Qualifications of An Elder

1 Tim 3	Meaning	Titus 1	Meaning
v. 2	one who cannot be validly accused	v. 6	cannot be validly called to account
v. 2	completely devoted to his wife	v. 6	children believe in Jesus
v. 2	avoids extremes and excesses	v. 6	children are not in rebellion
v. 2	wisely establishes priorities	v. 7	not self-serving
v. 2	respected	v. 7	long suffering
v. 2	loves strangers	v. 7	does not seek dishonest gain
v. 2	skillful teacher	v. 8	a lover of goodness
v. 3	not addicted to wine	v. 8	one who is a believer & consistently fair
v. 3	not given to physical violence	v. 8	one who is holy
v. 3	forbearing - yields his rights	v. 8	restrained in mind & over fleshly desires
v. 3	not an arguer	v. 9	faithful to the Word
v. 3	does not love money	v. 9	able to defend the truth
v. 4	manages his family well		
v. 4	children obey him with respect		
v. 6	not a new believer		
v. 7	good testimony with the world		

6. What is one of the most important responsibilities of an elder (1 Timothy 3:2; 5:17)?

Teaching.

7. What is one of the second important responsibilities of an elder (1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Peter 5:2)?

Oversight or leading (rule).

8. The members of the church are to submit to the elders according to Hebrews 13:17. What words are used to teach us that principle?

Obey your leaders and submit to them.

9. Deacons are also leaders in the church, and their role is to serve the elders and the congregation. List five of their qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:8-9.

Any five of these: Men of dignity, not double-tongued, not addicted to wine, not fond of money, believe in Christ, be tested, husband of one wife, good managers of their children and home.

10. Name some deacons listed in Acts 6:5 and Romans 16:1.

Any of these: Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, Nicolas, and Phoebe.

Biblical Duties of An Elder

Duties	Passage	Reference
Oversight of the church	Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers . . .	Acts 20:28
Share authority with others	Therefore, I exhort the elders among you . . . nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge . . .	1 Peter 5:1, 3
Shepherd the church	Therefore, I exhort the elders . . . shepherd the flock of God among you.	1 Peter 5:1-2
Teach the Word of God and pray	But we will devote ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.	Acts 6:4 1 Tim 5:17-19
Resolve doctrinal issues	And the apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter.	Acts 15:1-6
Godly example to the church	Therefore, I exhort the elders . . . be examples to the flock.	1 Peter 5:1-3
Pray for the sick	Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him . . .	James 5:14
Church Discipline	And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church . . .	Matt. 18:15-17

Principle of Teaching and Defending the Truth

1 Timothy 3:14-15 tells us that the church is the pillar and support of the truth. That means the church supports and defends the truth, which is the Scriptures. It is God’s will for the church to teach the truth (1 Timothy 6:3-5, 20-21). Thus, the elders, who include the pastor, are to teach. Consequently, elders will have the spiritual gift of teaching (1 Timothy 3:2), and those elders who function as the pastor of the church will be especially skilled in teaching the Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:2; 5:17). All of the elders are required to have a strong knowledge of the Scriptures so that they can defend the Scriptures against false teachers and be able to teach sound doctrine. Titus 1:9 says this about every individual elder,

... holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. Titus 1:9 (NASB)

Therefore, elders must have a strong knowledge of the Scriptures so that the local church can fulfill its mission to be the “pillar and support of the truth.” They must be able to teach (1 Timothy 3:2) and defend the Scriptures (Titus 1:9). Such elders are the ones the congregation is to imitate (Hebrews 13:7). The elders are to be examples to the flock of a godly man who knows the Scriptures and has an intimate relationship with the Father and Christ (1 Peter 5:3).

1. Why is the teaching of Scripture so very important (1 Peter 2:2)?

That is how believers grow spiritually.

2. How does a believer become spiritually mature (Ephesians 4:11-14)?

Believers grow in maturity as the pastor-teachers teach Scripture.

3. What type of teaching must a believer desire (Hebrews 5:11-14)?

They must desire solid teaching. That is, they must desire to seriously learn every verse, every chapter, and every book of the Bible. They must desire to learn all of the Bible as if they were in a Bible class. They must seek to be seriously taught verse-by-verse. Otherwise, they will be baby Christians.

4. Does your church teach the Bible verse by verse and in depth?

NOTE: answer depends upon the person . . .

Things To Ponder

1. Do you belong to a local church? If so, which one?

NOTE: answer depends upon the person . . .

2. What four things did the early church do when they gathered together (Acts 2:42)?

Devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, the Lord's Supper, and to prayer.

3. If you are a believer in Christ, have you been baptized since you believed?

NOTE: Answer depends upon the person . . .

4. What is your spiritual gift? Also, how are you using that gift in the church?

NOTE: Answer depends upon the person . . .

5. Do you celebrate the Lord's Supper? If yes, how often?

NOTE: Answer depends upon the person . . .

6. What are the two elements of true worship?

We are to worship in spirit and in truth.

7. In order for a person to worship in spirit, what must be true (Isaiah 29:13-14; Ezekiel 33:30-32; Ephesians 5:19-21)?

The heart (mind) must receive the Word of God and obey it in a spirit of submission and thankfulness.

8. What does Matthew 15:9 reveal must be true when the church sings and the Scriptures are taught in order for true worship to occur? This corresponds to the second element of worship.

Everything that is read, sung, and taught must be true.

God's Plan For the Church

Answer true (T) or false (F) to each of the following statements:

1. God does not care what day of the week believers meet for worship. F
2. 1 Timothy reveals God's plan for the local church. T
3. It is God's will that women be elders and pastors in a church. F
4. If the Word of God was not accurately taught, then biblical worship did not occur. T
5. A church should be devoted to teaching, fellowship, Lord's Supper, and prayer. T
6. Singing is the most important way to worship God. F
7. It is not important for believers to celebrate the Lord's Supper. F
8. When a believer does not attend a local church, only he or she is affected. F
9. Elders must be able to teach and defend the Word of God. T
10. If you were asked to be an elder of the church, are you qualified according to 1 Timothy 3:2-11 and Titus 1:5-9? T/F