



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?

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

3. Think about the answer to questions 1 and 2, and then explain who the leader of every church is.
4. Christians are members of the body of Christ. According to Colossians 1:18, what is another term for “the body.”
5. Who has placed believers into Christ’s body (1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Colossians 3:15)?
6. Read Acts 20:28 below, and then explain what Christ did to purchase the church.
7. Romans 16:16 refers to the universal church, that is, all believers. How does this verse do that?

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)?
2. Explain the difference between the universal church and local church in your own words.
3. Where did the early Christians usually assemble for worship (Acts 2:46; Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Philemon 1:2)?
4. On what day of the week did the early believers meet together (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2)?

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 —

1 Timothy 2:1-3, 8 —

1 Timothy 2:9-10 —

1 Timothy 2:12-14 (list two things) —

1 Timothy 3:1-13 —

1 Timothy 4:1-8 —

1 Timothy 4:11, 13-16 —

1 Timothy 5:1-2 —

1 Timothy 5:17-22 —

1 Timothy 6:3-5 —

1 Timothy 6:6-14, 17-19 —

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?
2. How are we to worship in spirit (Matthew 15:8 and Isaiah 29:13)?
3. What is the second element of true worship (Matthew 15:9)? What does this reveal should happen during the Sunday morning service?
4. Name two signs of false worship (Ezekiel 33:30-32)?
5. Psalm 95:6 describes what some of the Old Testament believers did when they worshiped God. What did they do?
6. How will the earth worship God in the future (Psalm 66:4)?

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?

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

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 —

Romans 12:16 —

Romans 14:13 —

Ephesians 5:21 —

Colossians 3:9 —

Hebrews 10:25 —

James 5:16 —

1 Peter 5:5 —

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

Spiritual Gifts

Romans 12:6-8

Exhortation	Ruling
Giving	Leading
Helps or serving	Mercy
Prophecy	Teaching

1 Corinthians 12:7-10, 28

Administration	Interpretation of tongues
Discerning of spirits	Knowledge
Faith	Miracles
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)?

5. What spiritual gift do you think Timothy had in 1 Timothy 4:13-16?

6. What promise is given to believers for their service to other believers in the local church (Hebrews 6:10)?

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?

2. What is the message of Ephesians 4:2-6, and how are we told to accomplish it?

3. Philippians 2:1-5 gives some commands that we are to perform. That implies they are choices. List five of them.

4. What do Romans 12:16 and Romans 14:19 tell us to do and what to avoid?

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)?
2. What does the bread symbolize (1 Corinthians 11:24-25)?
3. What does the cup symbolize (1 Corinthians 11:26)?
4. What warning are we given (1 Corinthians 11:27-32)?

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?
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)?
3. Romans 6:3-4 says that baptism symbolizes _____ with Christ, then being _____ 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)?
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?

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?
2. Who cannot be elders and who cannot teach men (1 Timothy 2:12)?
3. Explain why the elders of the church must be men according to 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:5-6.

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?

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?

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)?

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

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?

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.

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

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)?

2. How does a believer become spiritually mature (Ephesians 4:11-14)?
3. What type of teaching must a believer desire (Hebrews 5:11-14)?
4. Does your church teach the Bible verse by verse and in depth?

Things To Ponder

1. Do you belong to a local church? If so, which one?
2. What four things did the early church do when they gathered together (Acts 2:42)?
3. If you are a believer in Christ, have you been baptized since you believed?
4. What is your spiritual gift? Also, how are you using that gift in the church?
5. Do you celebrate the Lord's Supper? If yes, how often?
6. What are the two elements of true worship?
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)?
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.

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. _____
2. 1 Timothy reveals God's plan for the local church. _____
3. It is God's will that women be elders and pastors in a church. _____
4. If the Word of God was not accurately taught, then biblical worship did not occur. _____
5. A church should be devoted to teaching, fellowship, Lord's Supper, and prayer. _____
6. Singing is the most important way to worship God. _____
7. It is not important for believers to celebrate the Lord's Supper. _____
8. When a believer does not attend a local church, only he or she is affected. _____
9. Elders must be able to teach and defend the Word of God. _____
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? _____