

# The Organization of the Church

by

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# The Organization of the Church

We welcome you to this series of Bible studies concerning the organization of the Lord's church. It is the purpose of these lessons to assist truth seekers and growing Christians in a better understanding of the organization of the church as revealed on the pages of the New Testament.

Please take your Bible, look up the Scriptures listed, fill in the blanks where called for, and answer any questions. These lessons are based on the King James Version of the Bible.

**“Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ,  
to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi,  
with the bishops and deacons” (Phil. 1:1).**

If you have any questions or comments as you study these lessons, write them down so you can remember to mention them at the right time and place. Write your name on your material as you will want to keep it for future study.

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Name

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Date and Place of Study

Material Prepared By:  
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## **Introduction: Learning About Church Organization**

### Introduction

1. The Scriptures furnish us with a plan for the organization of the Lord's church.
2. A study of the organization of the church is of utmost importance for the now and for the generations to come.

### Discussion

#### **I. The Need For This Study**

- A. Let's notice some reasons why a study of the organization of the church is needed.
  1. To declare all the counsel of God. We are obligated to declare "all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). God has given counsel concerning how the church is to be organized. To neglect teaching on the organization of the church is to shun to declare all the counsel of God.
  2. To help each member know their place. God expects His people to be in their place (Judg. 7:21). Each member of the church has a place in the organization of the church. The only way we can know our place is by study.
  3. To encourage young men to become qualified leaders. Young men must be trained to become qualified leaders in the church. It takes time and hard work to be qualified for a position of leadership in the church. A church would do well to keep some kind of training program ongoing to help train such.
  4. To strengthen the church. The stronger the organization of the church, the stronger the church. Poor leadership retards the growth of the church.
  5. To clear up misunderstanding. The organization of the church has been misunderstood by many. The only way to clear up misunderstanding is by clearly teaching the truth as it is revealed on the pages of divine inspiration.
  6. To prevent apostasy. The apostasy of Israel was brought about by changing God's form of organization (1 Sam. 8:1-6). Most apostasies in the church have begun within the organization of the church (Acts 20:28-30; 2 Th. 2:2-4).
- B. As long as the church exists, there will be a great need to study its organization.

#### **II. The Definition Of Organization**

- A. Webster's Unabridged Dictionary defines the word "organization" as: "1. The act of organizing; the act or process of arranging and getting into proper working order; as, the organization of an expedition. 2. The state of being organized; that which is organized; an organized body. 3. Organic structure; the disposition or arrangement of the organs for the performance of vital functions. 4. The arrangement of the parts of an aggregate or body for work or action; systematic preparation for action."

- B. Some New Testament passages which set forth the concept of organization:
  - 1. 1 Corinthians 11:34 "...And the rest will I set in \_\_\_\_\_ when I come."
  - 2. 1 Corinthians 14:40 "Let all things be done \_\_\_\_\_ and in \_\_\_\_\_."
  - 3. Titus 1:5 "...that thou shouldest set in \_\_\_\_\_ the things that are wanting..."
- C. The organization of the church is the arrangement of the parts of the body for the accomplishment of the work God has given the church to do.

### III. **The Importance Of Organization**

- A. Where there is no organization, there is chaos and disorder!
- B. Organization is important for order and accomplishment when two or more people are associated in any given task.
- C. The lack of good organization is one of the greatest hindrances to efficiently accomplishing the work God has given the church to do.

### IV. **The Term "Church" As Used In The New Testament**

- A. The term "church" is used in two senses in the New Testament.
  - 1. Universal sense. The universal church includes all of the Lord's people everywhere. The term "church" is used in a universal sense in such passages as Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47; 1 Timothy 3:15.
  - 2. Local sense. The local church includes the Lord's people in a definite geographical location. The term "church" is used in a local sense in such passages as Acts 13:1; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1.
- B. There is no organization of the church on earth in a universal sense. God has given organization to the local church. Organizations larger or smaller than the local church are without divine authority.

### V. **The Autonomy Of The Local Church**

- A. The word "autonomy" is defined as, "independent in government; self-governing; without outside control" (Webster's International Dictionary).
- B. God gave to the local church the right of self-government.
  - 1. The Bible calls for elders in every church (Acts 14:23; Ti. 1:5). The authority of elders is limited to the local church (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2).
  - 2. Each church does its own work under the supervision of its own elders.
    - a. The local church sent out preachers (Acts 11:22).
    - b. The local church supported preachers laboring in foreign fields (Phil. 4:15-18).
    - c. The local church made up its own funds for relief (1 Cor. 16:1-3; Acts 11:27-30).
    - d. The local church selected and sent its own messengers with its funds for the work to be done (1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8:4-6, 16-21).
- C. Each local church is to be organized the same way; directed by the same Head; are each charged to do the same work; and are to function independent of each other - not through each other.

**VI. The Sufficiency Of The Church**

- A. The church is fully equipped to do all that the Lord has given it to do (Eph. 4:7-16).
- B. No other organization is permitted, much less needed.
- C. Our trouble today is not a lack of sufficient organization, but a failure to use what the Lord has provided!

**VII. The Organization Of The Church In A Nutshell**

- A. Christ is the absolute authority in the local church (Eph. 1:21-23).
- B. Christ gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, and teachers to make the church sufficient and function as a whole for His purpose (Eph. 4:9-16).
- C. The church also consists of elders (bishops), deacons, and members (saints). Paul wrote the Philippian letter, "...to all the \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_" (Phil. 1:1).

**Conclusion**

- 1. We should be content with God's pattern for the organization of the church.
- 2. Let's keep the church pure in organization!