

SPENCERPORT BIBLE CHURCH

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Title: THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

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Purpose: To set in order the divinely demonstrated structure of a New Testament Church as seen in scripture

Notes:

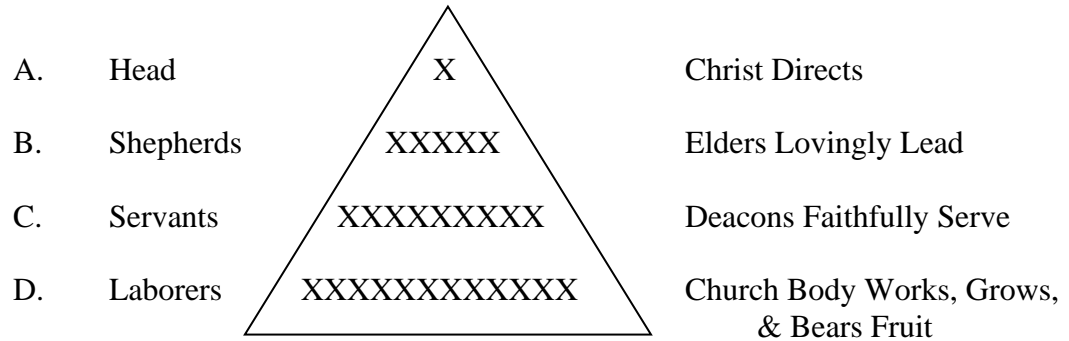
1. Biblically, the word “church” (*ekklesia*) has two applications to companies of Christians:
 - a. To the whole company of the redeemed throughout the present era . . . the Church which is His Body. (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22 & 5:23)
 - b. To a company consisting of professed believers (a local church). (Matt. 18:17; 1Cor. 1:2; 1Thess. 1:1) (W.E. Vine)
2. The focus of this document is on the “local church” application.

Changes:

Owner: T. Clement, Elder

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THE CHURCH PATTERN



A. CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

1. This local church acknowledges the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ as the **HEAD** of His body, the Church.
2. Under the guidance of the infallible Word of God and under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, this church recognizes no higher ecclesiastical authority.
3. God's Word states the following:
 - a. Eph. 1:22, 23 Christ is "... head over all things to the church"
 - b. Eph. 4:15, 16 "... Him, who is the head, even Christ"
 - c. Eph. 5:23, 24 "... Christ also is the head of the church . . . the church is subject to Christ . . ."
 - d. Col. 1:18 "He (Christ) is also head of the body, the church;"
 - e. Col. 2:19 Christ is "... the Head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together . . . grows with a growth which is from God."
4. Christ governs His Church through the leadership of gifted men (officers) whose divine appointment is recognized by the Elders of the church and affirmed by the membership who comprise the local church.
5. When a local church is being led by Christ as it should, Christ and His Word are the final authority in all matters of faith and practice.

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B. ELDERS ARE CHRIST-CHOSEN MEN RESPONSIBLE TO DO THE WORK OF SAFEGUARDING, OVERSEEING & SHEPHERDING HIS CHURCH

1. Church **LEADERSHIP** is vested in the Elders so recognized and confirmed by the membership.
2. Elders, Overseers, & Bishops are all the same office but each word emphasizes a unique characteristic of office function.
3. Church Elders are a plurality of biblically qualified men.

* NOTE: When church elders are mentioned, they are always a plurality (there are a few references of a single elder but only when an individual person is in view).

4. This pattern assures the church that no single individual makes all the decisions and that there is a combined counsel and wisdom for leadership decisions.
5. We believe in the autonomy of the local fellowship of believers.
6. God's Word states the following:

a. Acts 20:28 Paul commanded the Ephesian elders to "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."

b. 1 Tim. 5:17 "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching."

c. To "Rule":

<i>proistemi</i> "to stand before" "to lead" "to attend to"

- d. Titus 1:5
 - a. Setting elders in place was at the top of Paul's "do-list" for infant churches.
 - b. He wrote Titus, "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you . . ."

[Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4; 20:17; 21:18; 1 Tim. 5:17
1 Tim. 5:19; Titus 1:5; Jam. 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1; 2 John 1; 3 John 1]

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C. DEACONS ARE TO BE “TESTED SERVANTS”

1. Church **SERVICE** is vested in the Deacons who have been recognized and confirmed by the membership.
2. These qualified, recognized men function in a service capacity to the needs of the church.
3. Deacons do not have an authoritative function as do the Elders and serve under the auspices of the Elders.
4. Deacons are in no way inferior to Elders, they just bear different responsibilities (*functions*) in the spiritual and physical needs of the body.
5. God’s Word states the following:
 - a. 1 Tim. 3:10 “. . . let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons . . .”
 - b. Philippians 1:1 When deacons are mentioned in a church setting, they are also defined as a plurality
 - c. Acts 6:1-7 If this is an early precursor to the role of deacons, it demonstrates the relationship between the two offices of elders (in this case, apostles) and deacons (in this case, disciples/brethren):
 - 1) The 12 were dedicated to prayer & ministering the Word (v.2, 4)
 - 2) The 7 were put in charge of this service-task (v.2, 3)
 - 3) The servants were formally dedicated to the task (v.6)
6. “So in the church, there is a plurality of godly men – the Elders – who oversee the work of those who serve the Lord. They are assisted in their work by Deacons. The basic offices of a church do not need to be more sophisticated than that.” (J. MacArthur)

D. MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL CHURCH BODY

1. From scripture we can see that the whole body of a New Testament Church has been “**GIFTED**” for “**GOOD WORKS**” & set up reflecting the very nature of God.
2. God’s Word states the following:
 - a. Gen. 1:26 1) “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image . . .’
2) There is unity based on a voluntary subordination among equals:
 - a) The Son came to do the Father’s will
 - b) The Spirit was sent by the Son

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- b. 1 Cor. 11:7-9 In creation, God established an order that includes voluntary subordination:
 - a) Not a difference of essence, but of function – among equals
 - b) Reflects the marriage relationship
 - c) Reflects church polity
 - d) Requires submission to divine order

- c. 1 Cor. 11:11, 12 In creation, He also established a mutual dependency
 - a) In marriage, neither man nor woman is independent
 - b) Even though function is different, God is over all
 - c) Under God, each one is dependent upon the other

- d. Eph. 2:10 1) All are (*everyone is*) to be involved in spiritual labor
 2) “We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.”
 3) Each is grace-gifted (for spiritual labor) Eph. 4:8
 4) “. . . equipped saints for the work of service . . .” Eph. 4:12

REVISION/REVIEW HISTORY

Change/s:	Revision Date:	Review Date:	Author/s:
New Document	N/A	N/A	W. Allen
			T. Balentine
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