

Decision Making in a Local Church (Part 1)

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Introduction: A local church must oversee its work to function properly.

- A. Every Christian is under *the chief shepherd*, Jesus Christ! **(1 Pt 5:2-4)**
 - 1. The Lord has *completely equipped* His people to work together and grow.
 - 2. In the complete delivery of the NT we have *all we need*. **(Jude 3)**
 - 3. This foundation is discarded by letting men decide by “majority rule.”
- B. This generation among brethren has done *a poor job* of teaching on these topics.
 - 1. How many can explain *how the scriptures* teach concerning local churches?
 - 2. We can appeal to scripture about *every aspect* of a local church! **(Col 3:17)**
 - 3. Let us return to the foundation and *learn how to build*! **(1 Cor 3:11-15)**

I. Local churches are a product of God’s wisdom and authority

- A. Jesus has *an eternal plan* on both saving and equipping His children. **(Jn 17:3-4; Mt 28:18-20)**
 - 1. Jesus showed that His authority came in the *revealed words* from the Father. **(Jn 7:16-17; 17:6-8, 20)**
 - 2. These words were given to the apostles and prophets and constitute *a perfect foundation*. **(Eph 2:20; Acts 2:42)**
- B. Should local churches exist?
 - 1. After the gospel was preached at Pentecost the “church *at Jerusalem*” came into existence. **(Acts 8:1; 11:22)**
 - 2. As the gospel spread, we hear of a local church *at Antioch*. **(Acts 13:1)**
 - 3. After the gospel spread, we hear of local churches! **(Acts 14:23; 1 Cor 16:1)**
- C. God has given instructions for any local church to function. **(Titus 1:5; 1 Cor 4:17)**
 - 1. *Mature leadership* is needed for brethren to grow and work together in peace.
 - 2. There are *detailed instructions* on who should be an elder and on how each member should respond to their leadership. **(Heb 13:17)**

II. Leadership is essential for a local church to function

- A. Consider the many decisions that *must be made* for a local church to function!
 - 1. The assembly involves *a collective worship*. **(1 Cor 14:26, 11:20, 23-24)**
 - 2. Local churches *observe the Lord’s Supper*. **(Acts 2:42)**
 - 3. Local churches *have a weekly collection* for the Lord’s work. **(1 Cor 16:1-2; 2 Cor 11:8)**
 - 4. God gave *instructions to appoint elders and deacons*! **(1 Tim 3; Acts 14:23)**
 - 5. There are many other instructions that *uniquely apply to local churches*.
- B. This is why *qualified elders* are greatly needed.
 - 1. It takes *great wisdom* to make decisions for a group of people!
 - 2. A poor decision or a lack of initiative can *cause problems*. Murmuring can quickly turn into a poisonous environment. **(Acts 6:1; 15:1-2)**
 - 3. Decisions, working out differences and the direction of a local churches require men and women that are *willing to serve one another* under the authority of Christ. **(Phil 2:2-3)**

- C. How can we make collective decisions *without elders*?
1. Local churches *can exist and function* without elders. **(Acts 14:23)**
 2. What does that look like?

III. Leadership in a local church without elders

- A. *How* does a church function while developing elders?
1. We *must make decisions* that help the church to keep growing spiritually.
 2. We must make decisions based upon *the fundamental order* laid down by God. **(1 Cor 11:3-4; 1 Tim 2:11-12)**
- B. God has *placed men* in the position of leadership.
1. God has given men a leading role and equipped them for that task.
 2. He is to be *the breadwinner* in the home. **(1 Tim 5:8)**
 3. *Only men* are to be elders and deacons. **(1 Tim 3:2, 11)**
 4. Phoebe was a servant but not one who served in *the office of a deacon!* **(Rom 16:1)**
 5. When men *do not take a leadership role* then the church is affected.
- C. How then can decisions be made?
1. There must be a process where *communication is made with the entire church* and then the men of the church work together to decide.
 2. As an elder in a large church we often had congregational meetings to communicate. The decisions were made by the elders *at a different time*.
 3. The “men’s business meeting” is *a challenging environment*. You have experienced and inexperienced men coming together
- D. It is *unwise* to have women in business meetings.
1. There were occasions for *the whole church* to hear discussion. **(Acts 15:6, 22)**
 2. *Why* would we want to have women in the business meeting? What would they do?
 3. In these meetings the *men are to make the final decision*.
 4. To have women attend the business meeting but not speak is like inviting one to a dinner table filled with food and *not let them eat*. Temptation will likely prevail.
 5. Many churches *no longer follow* the pattern of male leadership. There are identifiable steps to women preachers and elders! (Ex. Committees)
- E. Godly women have *a powerful impact* in the growth of a local church.
1. Women have a great influence in the church when they follow their God given role. **(1 Pt 3:3-4; Eph 5:28)**
 2. In the home there are *some bad examples* in the Old Testament of women who dominated their husbands and forced their will. (Ex. Jezebel and Ahab)
 3. There are *many good examples* of women who understood subjection. **(Prov 31:10-12, 23, 26-31)**
 4. A woman that is not constantly challenging their husband but rather showing honor and *confidence in his leadership*, will build strength in him.
 5. Women can cause great trouble by *complaining, gossiping, and being contentious*. Some will push their husbands in the background to their designs. (“she-elders”)
 6. If you find a good church with a loving spirit, you will also find *a church with godly women*. This is also true of the home.

Conclusion: Let us build one another up in a local church by the guidance of God!