

The Biblical Structure of the Church:

Christ is the Head of the church: Ephesians 1:9; 22-23, 4:15; 5:23

Jesus Christ is the head of the church. Jesus is the Senior Pastor who builds the church (Matthew 16:18). Jesus is the Senior Pastor who rules the church (1 Peter 5:4). Therefore it is absolutely vital that the church loves Jesus, obeys Jesus, imitates Jesus and follows Jesus at all times and in all ways according to the teaching of His Word (Colossians 3:16).

Elders are the male leaders of the church who are also called pastors, bishops, and overseers (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; 1 Peter 5:1-2). The elders are men chosen for their ministry according to clear biblical requirements (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). The elders are always spoken of in plurality because God intends for more than one man to shepherd, lead and rule over the church as a safeguard for both the church and the man. The elders' duties include ruling (1 Tim. 5:17) managing (1 Tim. 3:4-5), tending (1 Peter 5:2-5), giving account (Heb. 13:17), living exemplary lives (Heb. 13:7), using authority (Acts 20:28), teaching and preaching (Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17), doctrinal instruction (Titus 1:9), and discipline (Matt. 18:15-17).

Deacons are the servants of the church who are also qualified for their ministry of overseeing and caring for God's people by qualifications that are nearly identical to the elders minus the teaching and preaching abilities (1 Tim. 3:8-13). Unlike elders, deacons can be either male or female (1 Tim. 3:8-13 especially 3:11), as with the example of the woman Phoebe (Rom. 16:1-2). The deacon ministry may have officially begun in the early church in Acts 6:1-6.

Members are the Christians who are actively participating in the life of the local church so that it is built up for God's purposes (1 Corinthians 12:1-31; Romans 12:1-21). The early church had a notion of being a member that included numerical records (Acts 2:37-47), records of widows (1 Tim. 5:3-16); elections were conducted (Acts 6:1-6), discipline was carried out (1 Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1), accountability (Heb. 13:17), and an awareness of who was a church member (Rom. 16:1-16)