

What does a Biblical church consist of?

John MacArthur in his sermon, "How to Recognize a Real Church", concluded the following:

"There is really only one issue. How do those people who gather together handle Scripture? That's the issue. How do they handle the word of God? What do they believe about the Bible? What do they believe the Bible teaches? How does the Bible inform their living and their preaching and their teaching? I suppose it could be summed up by the Psalmist in [Psa 119:161b ESV] ... my heart stands in awe of your words."

I hope this is where we are wanting to be, and from this layman's view I believe Pastor Jerry Birkholz has been used by God to do at least three things to help our congregation see what a real church is:

- 1) Understand the Biblical basis for how a church is governed.
- 2) Model the preaching, teaching and function of a Biblical church.
- 3) Invite the disciples of the church to conduct themselves per the confession we see in 1Tim. 3:15-16 by Biblically modeling the polity we see in 1 Tim. 3:1-14

[1Ti 3:15-16 NASB95] 15 but in case I am delayed, [I write] so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth. 16 By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness:

- He who was revealed in the flesh,
- Was vindicated in the Spirit,
- Seen by angels,
- Proclaimed among the nations,
- Believed on in the world,
- Taken up in glory.

BIBLICAL INSIGHTS ON HOW GOD DIRECTS THE BUILDING OF HIS PEOPLE, THE CHURCH.

[Act 14:19-28 NASB95] 19 But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. 20 But while the disciples stood around him, he got up and entered the city. The next day he went away with Barnabas to Derbe. 21 After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and [saying,] "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God." 23 When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. 24 They passed through Pisidia and came into Pamphylia. 25 When they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. 26 From there they sailed to Antioch, from which they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had accomplished. 27 When they had arrived and gathered the church together, they [began] to report all things that God had done with them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. 28 And they spent a long time with the disciples.

Paul's instruction to the gentile convert and disciple, Titus.

[Tit 1:5-11 NASB95] 5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, 6 [namely,] if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. 7 For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid

gain, 8 but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, 9 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. 10 For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, 11 who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not [teach] for the sake of sordid gain.

Our Biblical example is that the church is Elder led, Deacon served, Congregational affirmed.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH (ELDERS, OVERSEERS, SHEPHERDS, BISHOPS):

Strong's #1984, 1985, 4045

[1Ti 3:1-7 NASB95]

1 It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires [to do.]

2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach,

the husband of one wife,

temperate,

prudent,

respectable,

hospitable,

able to teach,

3 not addicted to wine

or pugnacious,

but gentle,

peaceable,

free from the love of money.

4 [He must be] one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity 5 (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?),

6 [and] not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.

7 And he must have a good reputation with those outside [the church,] so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH (DEACONS):

[1Ti 3:8-13 NASB95]

8 Deacons likewise [must be] men of dignity,

not double-tongued,

or addicted to much wine

or fond of sordid gain,

9 [but] holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

10 These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach.

12 Deacons must be husbands of [only] one wife,

[and] good managers of [their] children and their own households.

13 For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH (WOMEN):

[1Ti 3:11 NASB95]

11 Women [must] likewise [be] dignified,

not malicious gossips,

but temperate,

faithful in all things.

Again, looking at Paul's reminder to us of the great confession of the real church:

[1Ti 3:15-16 NASB95] 15 but in case I am delayed, [I write] so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth. 16 By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness:

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