
11. The Local Church

Psalm 50:5

Gather to me this consecrated people, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice.”

Philippians 2:9-11

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Matthew 28:18-20

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Acts 2:41

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

John 3:5-6

Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

Romans 10:9-10

If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Ephesians 2:8-10

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Philippians 2:1-5

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do

nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Luke 24:1-3

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 20:7

On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.

Hebrews 10:24-25

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

The Rights and Privileges of the Local Church

The rights and privileges of the Local Church are limited to the directives of each Local Church, whereby each Local Church is fully autonomous, under the direct Lordship of Christ, through God’s Word and directed by the Holy Spirit. It is on this basis that the Local Church is authorized to decide, conduct and regulate all aspects of its life (including matters of doctrine, ministry, membership, worship, appointment of leaders and all aspects of governance), knowing that it is responsible give an account to God (Revelation 2 and 3).

The following Biblical References illustrate the principle of local church autonomy:

- **The Local Church, under the Lordship of Christ, through God’s Word and directed by the Holy Spirit determines the scope, admittance and dismissal of individuals.**

1 Corinthians 5:1-2b,

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you,..... Shouldn’t you rather have gone into mourning and have put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this?

1 Corinthians 5:12b-13

Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”

2 Corinthians 2: 5-7

If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you to some extent—not to put it too severely. The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.

- **The Local Church, under the Lordship of Christ, through God’s Word and directed by the Holy Spirit has both the authority and the ability to solve the problems of its own members.**

Matthew 18:15-17

“If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

I Corinthians 6:1-3

If any of you has a dispute with another, do you dare to take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the Lord’s people? Or do you not know that the Lord’s people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!

- **The Local Church, under the Lordship of Christ, through God’s Word and directed by the Holy Spirit has the authority and responsibility to appoint its own leadership, including pastors and deacons.**

Acts 6: 3-6

“Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.” This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

- **The Local Church, under the Lordship of Christ, through God’s Word and directed by the Holy Spirit has the authority and responsibility to commission and to send out missionaries and other ministry workers, choosing those whom it desires to support.**

Acts 13:1-3

Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

Acts 14:26-27

From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.

All Scripture verses referenced provide an indicative (and not exhaustive) expression of our Biblical Belief

Scripture Quotations taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version® NIV®

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