

# OFFICERS IN THE CHURCH

**BIBLE TEXT** : Acts 6:1-7; I Corinthians 12:4-6,15-28; Ephesians 4:1-8, 11-13; I Timothy 3:1-13; 5:17-19; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-5.

LESSON 288 Senior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (I Peter 5:5).

## **BIBLE TEXT in King James Version**

**Acts 6:1-7** <sup>1</sup> And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

<sup>2</sup> Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

<sup>3</sup> Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

<sup>4</sup> But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

<sup>5</sup> And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:

<sup>6</sup> Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid *their* hands on them.

<sup>7</sup> And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the

## **BIBLE REFERENCES:**

### **I The Purpose of Responsible Officials in the Church**

1. In order that the Lord's work might be successful, God ordained that the responsibility for it be distributed among the body of believers, I Corinthians 12:4-6, 18-20.

**1 Corinthians 12:14** <sup>14</sup> *For the body is not one member, but many.*

2. Honour one for the other, and unity, must exist, I Corinthians 12:15-17, 21-26; 7:20; Ephesians 4:1-6.

**1 Corinthians 7:20** <sup>20</sup> *Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.*

3. The spiritual officers were first appointed, since spiritual matters take precedence over the temporal, I Corinthians 12:27, 28; Ephesians 4:8, 11-13.

4. The qualifications of a minister and overseer are very exacting, Ephesians 4:7; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:2-5;

**1 Timothy 2:1-7**

<sup>1</sup> *I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;*

<sup>2</sup> *For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*

<sup>3</sup> *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;*

<sup>4</sup> *Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*

<sup>5</sup> *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;*

<sup>6</sup> *Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*

<sup>7</sup> *Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.*

**1 Timothy 4:1-16**

<sup>1</sup> *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;*

<sup>2</sup> *Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;*

<sup>3</sup> *Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.*

<sup>4</sup> *For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:*

<sup>5</sup> *For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.*

<sup>6</sup> *If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.*

<sup>7</sup> *But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.*

<sup>8</sup> *For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.*

<sup>9</sup> *This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation.*

<sup>10</sup> *For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.*

<sup>11</sup> *These things command and teach.*

<sup>12</sup> *Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*

<sup>13</sup> *Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.*

<sup>14</sup> *Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.*

priests were obedient to the faith.

### 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 <sup>4</sup>

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

<sup>5</sup> And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

<sup>6</sup> And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

### 1 Corinthians 12:15-28

<sup>15</sup> If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

<sup>16</sup> And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

<sup>17</sup> If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the smelling?

<sup>18</sup> But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

<sup>19</sup> And if they were all one member, where *were* the body?

<sup>20</sup> But now *are they* many members, yet but one body.

<sup>21</sup> And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

<sup>22</sup> Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:

<sup>23</sup> And those *members* of the body, which we think to be less honourable,

<sup>15</sup> Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

<sup>16</sup> Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

### 2 Timothy 2:6

<sup>6</sup> The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.

2 Timothy 4:1-2 <sup>1</sup> I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

<sup>2</sup> Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

### 2 Timothy 4:5

<sup>5</sup> But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

### Romans 11:29

<sup>29</sup> For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance.

### 1 Corinthians 14:32

<sup>32</sup> And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

### 2 Corinthians 6:1-10

<sup>1</sup> We then, *as workers together with him*, beseech *you* also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

<sup>2</sup> (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.)

<sup>3</sup> Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:

<sup>4</sup> But in all *things* approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

<sup>5</sup> In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;

<sup>6</sup> By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,

<sup>7</sup> By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

<sup>8</sup> By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and *yet* true;

<sup>9</sup> As unknown, and *yet* well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed;

<sup>10</sup> As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and *yet* possessing all things.

### Acts 20:28

<sup>28</sup> Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

## II The Institution of the Officers in the Early Church

1. The increase of the numbers of disciples brought greater problems to the Apostles, Acts 6:1.
2. Realizing the great importance of the spiritual work, the Apostles determined to devote their time to it, Acts 6:2, 4.
3. The spiritual qualifications for those doing temporal work are shown to be much the same as for those doing spiritual work, Acts 6:3.
4. Deacons were appointed and exhorted faithfully to care for the temporal needs, Acts 6:5-7; 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

### Philippians 1:1

<sup>1</sup> Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

### Philippians 1:9-11

<sup>9</sup> And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;

<sup>10</sup> That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;

<sup>11</sup> Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

5. Elders have a place in the spiritual work and are found among the ministers, overseers, or lay personnel, Titus 1:5, 6;

### 1 Timothy 5:17

<sup>17</sup> Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

### Acts 11:29-30

<sup>29</sup> Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea:

upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness.

<sup>24</sup> For our comely *parts* have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked:

<sup>25</sup> That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another.

<sup>26</sup> And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

<sup>27</sup> Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

<sup>28</sup> And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

### **Ephesians 4:1-8** <sup>1</sup> I

therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

<sup>2</sup> With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

<sup>3</sup> Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

<sup>4</sup> *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

<sup>5</sup> One Lord, one faith, one

<sup>30</sup> Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

#### **Acts 14:23**

<sup>23</sup> And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

#### **Acts 15:1-6**

<sup>1</sup> And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

<sup>2</sup> When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

<sup>3</sup> And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

<sup>4</sup> And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

<sup>5</sup> But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses.

<sup>6</sup> And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

#### **Acts 15:22-23**

<sup>22</sup> Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:

<sup>23</sup> And they wrote *letters* by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren *send* greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia:

#### **Acts 16:4**

<sup>4</sup> And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

#### **Acts 20:17**

<sup>17</sup> And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

#### **Acts 20:28**

<sup>28</sup> Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

#### **Acts 21:18**

<sup>18</sup> And the *day* following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.

#### **James 5:14**

<sup>14</sup> Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

#### **1 Peter 5:1-5**

<sup>1</sup> The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

<sup>2</sup> Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

<sup>3</sup> Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

<sup>4</sup> And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

<sup>5</sup> Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of *you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

6. Promotion in the Church of Christ is not by man's design or through desire to be exalted above men,

#### **Psalms 75:6-7**

<sup>6</sup> For promotion *cometh* neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.

<sup>7</sup> But God *is* the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

#### **Galatians 5:20**



baptism,

<sup>6</sup> One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

<sup>7</sup> But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

<sup>8</sup> Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

### **Ephesians 4:11-13** <sup>11</sup>

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;  
<sup>12</sup> For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

<sup>13</sup> Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

**1 Timothy 3:1-13** <sup>1</sup> This *is* a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

<sup>2</sup> A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

<sup>3</sup> Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

<sup>4</sup> One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

<sup>5</sup> (For if a man know not

<sup>20</sup> Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

### **1 Peter 5:2-3**

<sup>2</sup> Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

<sup>3</sup> Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

### **1 Corinthians 1:26-31**

<sup>26</sup> For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*:

<sup>27</sup> But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

<sup>28</sup> And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

<sup>29</sup> That no flesh should glory in his presence.

<sup>30</sup> But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

<sup>31</sup> That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

### **1 Corinthians 9:16-23**

<sup>16</sup> For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

<sup>17</sup> For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.

<sup>18</sup> What is my reward then? *Verily* that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

<sup>19</sup> For though I be free from all *men*, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.

<sup>20</sup> And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;

<sup>21</sup> To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.

<sup>22</sup> To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some.

<sup>23</sup> And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with *you*.

### **2 Corinthians 3:5-6**

<sup>5</sup> Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency *is* of God;

<sup>6</sup> Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

### **2 Corinthians 5:18**

<sup>18</sup> And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

### **Colossians 1:1**

<sup>1</sup> Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus *our* brother,

### **1 Timothy 1:12**

<sup>12</sup> And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;

7. Those who serve the Church of Christ in fulltime capacity or service are authorized to receive support from the Church when necessary and possible,

### **Matthew 10:9-10**

<sup>9</sup> Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses,

<sup>10</sup> Nor scrip for *your* journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.

### **1 Corinthians 9:7-15**

<sup>7</sup> Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

<sup>8</sup> Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also?

<sup>9</sup> For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the

how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

<sup>6</sup> Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

<sup>7</sup> Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

<sup>8</sup> Likewise *must* the deacons *be* grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;

<sup>9</sup> Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

<sup>10</sup> And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being *found* blameless.

<sup>11</sup> Even so *must* their wives *be* grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.

<sup>12</sup> Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

<sup>13</sup> For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

**1 Timothy 5:17-19** <sup>17</sup> Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

<sup>18</sup> For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer *is* worthy of his reward.

<sup>19</sup> Against an elder receive

mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?

<sup>10</sup> Or saith he *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.

<sup>11</sup> If we have sown unto you spiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?

<sup>12</sup> If others be partakers of *this* power over you, *are* not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.

<sup>13</sup> Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live *of the things* of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?

<sup>14</sup> Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

<sup>15</sup> But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for *it were* better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.

1 Corinthians 9:18

<sup>18</sup> What is my reward then? *Verily* that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

1 Corinthians 16:17

<sup>17</sup> I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied.

Galatians 6:6

<sup>6</sup> Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

Philippians 4:14

<sup>14</sup> Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.

1 Timothy 5:18

<sup>18</sup> For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer *is* worthy of his reward.

Hebrews 13:16

<sup>16</sup> But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Acts 18:1-3

<sup>1</sup> After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

<sup>2</sup> And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.

<sup>3</sup> And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

Acts 20:33-35

<sup>33</sup> I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

<sup>34</sup> Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

<sup>35</sup> I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

1 Thessalonians 2:9

<sup>9</sup> For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

1 Thessalonians 3:7-9

<sup>7</sup> Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith:

<sup>8</sup> For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

<sup>9</sup> For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God;

8. Honour and obedience are due those who are called to positions of responsibility,

1 Timothy 5:17-19

<sup>17</sup> Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

<sup>18</sup> For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer *is* worthy of his reward.

<sup>19</sup> Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.

Hebrews 13:7

not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.

**Titus 1:5-9** <sup>5</sup> For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

<sup>6</sup> If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.

<sup>7</sup> For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

<sup>8</sup> But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;

<sup>9</sup> Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

**1 Peter 5:1-5** <sup>1</sup> The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

<sup>2</sup> Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

<sup>3</sup> Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

<sup>4</sup> And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye

<sup>7</sup> Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of *their* conversation.

**Hebrews 13:17-18**

<sup>17</sup> Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you.

<sup>18</sup> Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

**1 Corinthians 16:15-16**

<sup>15</sup> I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and *that* they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)

<sup>16</sup> That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with *us*, and laboureth.

**1 Peter 5:5**

<sup>5</sup> Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of *you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

**Romans 15:30**

<sup>30</sup> Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me;

**Galatians 4:14**

<sup>14</sup> And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, *even* as Christ Jesus.

**Philippians 2:25-30**

<sup>25</sup> Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

<sup>26</sup> For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.

<sup>27</sup> For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

<sup>28</sup> I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.

<sup>29</sup> Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation:

<sup>30</sup> Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

**1 Thessalonians 5:12**

<sup>12</sup> And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;

**1 Thessalonians 5:13**

<sup>13</sup> And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves.

## **NOTES:**

### **The Government of the Early Church**

God began to bless the early Church immediately after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, and the promised signs began to follow the ministrations of the Apostles. "The number of the disciples was multiplied" and with that increase there came also certain additional problems.

The Apostles, acting on their understanding of God's will for them, called the multitude of disciples together to discuss the problems occasioned by the phenomenal growth of the Church. We can see, in even these early acts of the Apostles, the methods that God has sanctioned and approved for the government of His Church and for taking care of both the spiritual and temporal matters of the Church. These things, also, are "written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Corinthians 10:11). Here, in the Acts of the Apostles, we have many examples set forth that show us how to conduct our worship of God and how to administer the temporal duties of the work of the Lord.

The Apostles had felt the call of God very keenly. They were not unmindful of the responsibilities that were theirs, and which were to be passed on to all followers of Christ because of the Great Commission



shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

<sup>5</sup> Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

(Matthew 28:18-20 <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. <sup>19</sup> Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: <sup>20</sup> Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even unto the end of the world. Amen*). The action they took at this time was designed to allow them to continue doing the spiritual work which had already been occupying their entire time and to guarantee that they would not have to leave it to do the work which others could do who were not at that time particularly called to the spiritual work of the church.

### Universal Responsibility in the Church

It is always better, especially in the work of the Lord, if responsibility can be distributed among as many people as possible. This is a sound practice for several reasons. In the first place, there are to be no "lords over God's heritage" (I Peter 5:3), but all are to be "clothed with humility" and "subject one to another" (I Peter 5:5). Like the stones that were cut and shaped in the quarries and then brought to the Temple site, the saints of God are prepared by God for a specific place in His Church. All the true people of God have a place in the work of the Lord. None are excluded. None are forgotten. None are considered as unworthy of some place in the service of God — in a capacity that fits their capabilities — if they are true children of God. None are to be inactive. All have places to fill — humble or unnoticed though they may be — and each one will be rewarded for the manner in which he fills his God-given responsibility.

Since we are all human beings, subject to the limitations of a finite mind, no one of us can see or understand all phases of the problems that regularly come up in the work of the Lord. Some are gifted along certain lines and others along lines that are far different. Some are eloquent in speech and some are skilled in technical abilities. Some are hesitant along some particular line of work while being boldly confident along another. All have a place and all are needed.

We must all depend upon one another. Where one cannot fill the need, another must take up the torch, so to speak, and carry on. Where one is incapable of fulfilling a task, another must give a helping hand, an encouraging word, or an intercessory prayer. Tremendous things can be accomplished for God and for mankind if the true spirit of co-operation exists in the body of believers.

### Qualifications of Workers

It is extremely interesting to see how the essential qualifications set forth by the Apostles differ from those usually looked for by earthly examiners. Men of the world look for qualities that are largely missing from this list given by the Apostles.

"Men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom" were those who could be used in God's service. One might ask: "Why place so much emphasis on the spiritual qualifications in those who are to do a steward's work? Were not these men merely to take care of the distribution of the food and physical necessities of the group?" Yes, that was to be their responsibility. But for even that work, and for any other work in the Kingdom cause, it is necessary that the servant of Christ be "of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom."

Naturally, one must be of honest report to be a member of the Church of Christ. His former dishonesty is gone. He is a new creature. He no longer walks in the paths of dishonesty. Therefore, if the applicant's life is questionable along any line of honesty or personal integrity, it can be rightly said that he is actually not a member of the Church of Christ and has no right to serve in any capacity as a representative of that Church.

Paul the Apostle set forth some of these qualifications in more detail when instructing those under his influence. He said that such must be blameless, not an adulterer; he must be a vigilant person who is sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, willing to receive instruction, and capable of teaching others if that is his call. He must not be a quarrelsome person, not

greedy for money or personal gain, not contentious or filled with enmity, and most certainly not covetous. His children should be well disciplined and his household ruled with diligence and paternal affection.

But these qualifications are not all that are mentioned as belonging to those who serve in the work of God. Those who are thus specifically commissioned must also be filled with the Holy Ghost and wisdom. It is significant that the word **wisdom** is here mentioned in connection with the Holy Ghost.

The wisdom that we must have, if we are faithfully going to execute the service of God, is that wisdom which cometh from above. This is not the wisdom that is earthly, sensual, and devilish, which sponsors envyings and strife. The wisdom that comes from God is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17). We can ask for it in faith, nothing wavering, because God gives it "to all men liberally" (James 1:5, 6). There is, therefore, no excuse for the one who does not have it. If he does not have it, the reason for his lack is simply that he has not asked for it but has been content to go on in his own wisdom, his own sagacity, and his own self-sufficiency.

The final necessary attribute is the enduement of the Holy Spirit. The particular thing that is mentioned here is an abiding enduement of that wonderful power for service. It is the power that was promised by Jesus before He went to the Cross to die and again before He ascended to Heaven. (John 14:15-26 <sup>15</sup> If ye love me, keep my commandments. <sup>16</sup> And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; <sup>17</sup> *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. <sup>18</sup> I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. <sup>19</sup> Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. <sup>20</sup> At that day ye shall know that I *am* in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup> He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. <sup>22</sup> Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? <sup>23</sup> Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. <sup>24</sup> He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. <sup>25</sup> These things have I spoken unto you, being *yet* present with you. <sup>26</sup> But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. John 15:26-27 <sup>26</sup> But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: <sup>27</sup> And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning. John 16:7-15 <sup>7</sup> Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. <sup>8</sup> And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: <sup>9</sup> Of sin, because they believe not on me; <sup>10</sup> Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; <sup>11</sup> Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. <sup>12</sup> I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. <sup>13</sup> Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. <sup>14</sup> He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you. <sup>15</sup> All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you. Acts 1:8 <sup>8</sup> But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth) It is the necessary gift from above that equips and commissions us, making us capable of leading men to God.

### Offices of Responsibility in the Apostolic Faith Work

With careful diligence, the first General Overseer of our organisation and her associates laid the foundations for this organization so it would be



Scriptural in every way. Observing that the spiritual offices were first mentioned, and first filled, in the early Church, these places of responsibility were first filled and priority given them in the organization of the Apostolic Faith work.

"There are differences of administrations" and "diversities of operations" in our work, as in the early Church. The preaching of the Word of God is the most important function of the Church and must be carried on by those who are called and qualified in every gift and grace that is necessary for that exacting and all-consuming work. It must have priority over every other function of the Church. It must precede, in relative importance, every other thing done or undertaken by the Church. The offices of prophets (preachers of the Word of God), evangelists, pastors, and teachers, must of necessity be filled in order that the saints might be perfected and the body of Christian believers edified.

After these commonly called spiritual offices were filled, then attention was turned to the other responsibilities important to the promulgation of the Gospel of Christ. From the very beginning of the Apostolic Faith work we were taught that there was to be no schism or division in the body. All are to be united in that unity that defies analysis and which is found only in and between those who are entirely sanctified. (**Hebrews 2:11** <sup>11</sup> **For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,** **John 17:9-23** <sup>9</sup> **I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.** <sup>10</sup> **And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.** <sup>11</sup> **And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.** <sup>12</sup> **While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.** <sup>13</sup> **And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.** <sup>14</sup> **I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.** <sup>15</sup> **I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.** <sup>16</sup> **They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.** <sup>17</sup> **Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.** <sup>18</sup> **As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.** <sup>19</sup> **And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.** <sup>20</sup> **Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;** <sup>21</sup> **That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.** <sup>22</sup> **And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:** <sup>23</sup> **I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast**

**loved me.**  
**Ephesians 5:22-32** <sup>22</sup> **Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.** <sup>23</sup> **For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.** <sup>24</sup> **Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.** <sup>25</sup> **Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;** <sup>26</sup> **That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,** <sup>27</sup> **That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.** <sup>28</sup> **So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.** <sup>29</sup> **For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:** <sup>30</sup> **For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.** <sup>31</sup> **For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.** <sup>32</sup> **This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church)** We were shown that all things must be done unto edifying, in a decent and orderly manner (**1 Corinthians 14:26**

<sup>26</sup> **How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.** **1 Corinthians 14:40** <sup>40</sup> **Let all things be done decently and in order.),** for God is not the author of confusion (**1 Corinthians 14:33** <sup>33</sup> **For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.).** The spirits of the ministers of

the Gospel must be subject to one another (**1 Corinthians 14:32** <sup>32</sup> **And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the elders. 1 Peter 5:5-6** <sup>5</sup> **Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. 6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:**). Also we, who are members of the body of believers, are instructed to be subject to one another even as the ministers of the Gospel are instructed to take into consideration the wisdom, judgment, and spiritual discernment of their associate ministers. None of us, ministers or lay members, are to show an independent spirit or attitude toward one another, nor are we to feel self-sufficient in any matter. Especially as the coming of the Lord nears and the powers of deception increase in the world, we need to depend upon, and receive help from, one another in every spiritual need.

We are to "covet earnestly the best gifts" and "contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (I Corinthians 12:31; Jude 3). We are to "stir up the gift of God," which is in us (II Timothy 1:6). We are to do with our might whatsoever our hands find to do (**Ecclesiastes 9:10** <sup>10</sup> **Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.**). Having done all these things to the best of our ability, we are then able to put our trust in God for His blessing upon our efforts. God has honoured the work as it has been carried on, and His blessing has been upon it. Because of this approval by the Holy Spirit, and because of the promised signs which we see following the sincere efforts and prayers that have been offered, we have reason to feel that the methods that have been followed are correct.

We have a General Overseer, and an Assistant General Overseer, who take the over-all responsibility of the Apostolic Faith work. Each branch church is responsible to the General Overseer at Headquarters. Requirements of our civil government, making it possible to transact all necessary legal affairs and other administrative matters for the Apostolic Faith Mission of Portland, Oregon, and all its branches, are taken care of by a Board of Trustees at the Headquarters. This Board of Trustees is selected from the ministerial staff and approved by the congregation at a general business meeting. A Secretary-Treasurer takes care of the financial and legal matters, and when he joins the Board of Trustees this group is called the Executive Board.

There are elders, deacons, and deaconesses as in the early Church. The duty of an elder is to assist and stand behind the ministry in loyal support of all that is being done for the furtherance of the Gospel. These godly men and women do work of a spiritual nature that is otherwise done only by ministers. They may pray for the sick, either with a minister or with another elder. When a minister is giving counsel or reproof, an elder is often asked to assist the minister in the confirmation of the truth and the enforcement of discipline. The elders' co-operation is sought by the minister many times when he is trying the spirits to see whether or not they are of God (**1 Thessalonians 5:21** <sup>21</sup> **Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. 1 John 4:1** <sup>1</sup> **Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.**). The elders are usually veteran workers who have a call from God and have proved their love for the souls of men, their fidelity to the doctrines of the church, and their loyalty to the ministry. Their advice and counsel is often sought by the wise minister, and frequently they are called to augment the governing board when questions of great importance are to be taken up by that body. They are often rightly referred to as pillars of the church, and their prayers and faith are of inestimable value.

The deacons and deaconesses are those who supervise the labour in the temporal interests of the work of God. Places of responsibility, regarding the care and maintenance of the church property and equipment, and labour of a mechanical or technical nature necessary to the spread of the Gospel, are filled by these deacons and deaconesses.

In our organization we do not place much stress on the titles of these

various offices, nor does anyone wear a specific garb or uniform; but we do realize the importance of the service that is rendered by those who are actually filling the offices. Each one is called by God to the responsibility, for it is the Holy Spirit who seeks out those best qualified for the responsibilities and positions in the Church of Christ. Our desire and aim is to be sure that promotions come in this way. For this reason, and to allow the Spirit of God complete freedom in His work in the church, we minimize and avoid as much as possible the machinery of organization.

It is obvious that those whom God has called are worthy of the respect of all the body of believers. Any work or responsibility in connection with the church is important, and each and every call or appointment is important and exacting. We must give our best to the work if we are to be considered faithful in it; and in so doing we will be taking a step toward greater and more exacting responsibilities.

Philip and Stephen were faithful in their work, and they found places of increased responsibility in the ministry of the Word. Stephen preached a sermon that aroused the opposition of the Christ-haters of his day, but he won commendation and accomplished a work that few, if any, others have ever experienced. Philip preached the Gospel for years in different places and was used by God in a miraculous way to bring the Truth to those who were in need. We can see in these two examples that faithfulness has its reward, and we can also see that respect and honour is due to those who may be called to a steward's work, for in these may be found the ministers and leaders for the spiritual work of the future.

The principles of organization of our branch churches are similar to the organization of the church at the Headquarters. The pastor, or minister in charge, is assisted by other ministers, elders, deacons, or deaconesses, as is necessary and possible, depending on the size of his congregation. An individual may be chosen to take care of the financial matters, as in the Headquarters' organization. And while there may be no actual board of trustees, the wise pastor is one who will surround himself with those who have wisdom and spiritual insight into the problems that naturally arise in connection with the work of God.

What a privilege to be a member of that mystical Body — the Bride of Christ — and to be allied with Christ in the work of redemption! To us is committed the ministry and word of reconciliation (**2 Corinthians 5:18-19** <sup>18</sup> **And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;** <sup>19</sup> **To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.**). We are "stewards of the mysteries of God" (I Corinthians 4:1). It is the Holy Spirit and the Bride of Christ who are sending the Gospel message to lost souls today, in the great preparation for the Day of the Lord (**Revelation 22:17** <sup>17</sup> **And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.**).

There are battles to fight for God, but "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds" (II Corinthians 10:4). We have grave and solemn responsibilities to assume, to carry, and to see fulfilled. But how great is our privilege! How far-reaching are the effects of our work for God, if we faithfully do those things which He has given us to do! How glorious will be our reward if we continue to the end and are able to lay precious sheaves at His feet because we have done faithfully, carefully, and with holy zeal, the things He has given us to do!

### **QUESTIONS**

1. What is the difference between a disciple and an Apostle?
2. What are the duties of a pastor? an evangelist? a teacher?
3. What was the reason for the appointment of the seven deacons at this time?
4. What work in the Church of Christ is the most important?
5. Enumerate some of the qualifications of a Christian worker.
6. What are the duties of an elder?
7. From what groups in the church are the elders selected?
8. What are the duties of a deacon or deaconess?
9. What two of the seven deacons became great preachers?
10. Who gives promotion in the Church of Christ? And what is the wrong attitude to take concerning promotion?