

Summary of Church Gov. & Offices

- A proper church government with properly function church officers will be arranged as follows.
- Jesus Christ—the head of the church: this recognition of his ultimate authority is not a mere perfunctory nod to his sovereignty over the church; rather, the reality is worked out as churches pray and seek intensely the mind of Christ for them.
- Elders—In terms of human leadership, elders teach, lead, pray, and shepherd the church.
 - Teaching: pastors shoulder the responsibility of preaching during the Sunday service(s), teaching Bible studies and Sunday school classes, determining the biblical and theological content of various small group meetings (e.g., cell groups, home Bible studies, life groups), resolving theological disputes, engaging in Word-centered small group discipleship and personal mentoring, communicating the doctrinal statement and church covenant in instructional meetings for potential new members, studying Scripture regularly as an elder team, modeling commitment to the Word and submission to its instructions.



Summary of Church Gov. & Offices

- Elders Continued.
 - Leading: elders exercise oversight in all areas designated to them, which generally include managing the pastoral and administrative staff teams, developing the annual budget, deciding and enacting the church's philosophy of ministry, directing the process for hiring new staff, setting policies for the church, conducting congregational (or church business) meetings, approving new ministries, developing potential new elders.
 - Praying for the sick: the pastors should make themselves available to the sick members of the church and let them know of this ministry of prayer for them; as the elders engage in this work on behalf of the sick, they anoint with oil, pray with faith, encourage confession when the sickness is linked to sin, and encourage the sick to entrust themselves to the Great Physician Jesus.
 - Shepherding: pastors provide excellent (though still sinful) examples of Christ-like living, identify potentially dangerous doctrinal positions and alert the church's members to be aware of them and the people who spread the false teaching, address entrenched sinful situations and relationships in the church by directing the process of church discipline, enforce the church's decisions with regard to the exercise of discipline (e.g., the elders remove disciplined members from ministry and instruct them not to participate in the Lord's Supper).

Summary of Church Gov. & Offices


- Deacons/Deaconesses—complementary to elders, engage in all the other areas of service in the church.
 - Men’s ministries, women’s ministries, youth ministries, children’s ministries, worship ministries, evangelism and missions, bereavement ministries, seniors ministries, singles ministries, sports ministries, fine arts ministries, mercy ministries (e.g., food, clothing, tutoring, medical aid).
 - A significant number of deacons and deaconesses serve in and through the church, and congregational members are regularly encouraged and equipped to engage in the multi-faceted and many ministries of the church, leading to a steady number of them (as they become qualified, of course) becoming recognized and serving as deacons and deaconesses.
- Congregation—They also exercise significant authority. Those who participate in congregational decisions must be active and established members of the church.



ELDERS &
DEACONS

Summary of Church Gov. & Offices

- Congregation continued.
 - Acceptance of new people into the membership of the church and removal of unrepentant members through the process of church discipline; the buying and selling of property, and any major changes to the physical plant; etc.
 - Though the Bible does not directly give this authority to the congregation, elders may seek the congregation’s input on other matters, such as: evaluation and confirmation of candidates for church offices; evaluation and confirmation of proposed changes to the statement of faith, constitution, by-laws, and philosophy of ministry; evaluation and confirmation of missionaries sent out by the church and representatives of the church to other churches and denominational meetings; and evaluation and confirmation of the proposed annual budget.
- It is important to follow the pattern. Elders shouldn’t usurp authority that only belongs to Christ → the deacons shouldn’t usurp authority that only belongs to the Elders → and the congregation shouldn’t usurp authority that only belongs to the Elders or Deacons.
- The Bible specifies what authority belongs to each.



THE ROLE OF
ELDERS + DEACONS

Conclusion

- Church government and church offices are a very important part of ecclesiology.
- A rightly ordered church should have a rightly ordered church government led by rightly ordered church officers.
- A local church's ability to be doxological, logocentric, pneumadynamic, covenantal, confessional, missional, and spatio-temporal-eschatological depends on rightly ordered church government and officers.
 - A congregation will not rise above the holiness and biblical knowledge of their leaders. Instead, they will reflect it.
 - So the importance of church leadership cannot be underestimated.

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Ecclesiology– Study of the Church–
Biblical Ordinances: Baptism & Lord's
Supper; Spiritual Gifts

Introduction

- We are continuing the doctrine of the church or Ecclesiology (from, *ekklēsia*).
- Review from Lesson 1
 - Local churches are doxological, logocentric, pneumadynamic, covenantal, confessional, missional, spatio-temporal-eschatological.
- Review from Lesson 2
 - Church grows through purity and unity—preserved through church discipline.
- Review from lesson 3
 - Church government and offices
- This lesson will focus on the ordinances and other matters



Sacraments vs. Ordinances

- The Catholic Church and early church fathers called them sacraments. Some Reformers did as well.
- Other Reformers called them ordinances.
- The word sacrament comes from the Latin translations of the 4th and 5th centuries.
 - It translated the Greek word *mysterion*. So sacrament became associated with a mystery. They were associated with mystery religions at the time.
- As they developed in the early church and middle ages, the RCC acknowledged 7 such sacraments:
 - Baptism (cleansed an adult or infant from original sin and caused regeneration and incorporated them into Christ and His church. So grace comes through baptism).
 - Confirmation (confirms the person with the Holy Spirit and launches them into service).
 - Eucharist (the apex of the sacraments having to do with the body and the blood and presence of Christ).
 - Penance (for those who committed mortal sin. It involved contrition and public confession to a priest who absolves the person of their sin, and then demanding a work of penance as satisfaction).
 - Anointing of the sick (those who are about to die or are about to have a dangerous operation).
 - Holy orders (gives grace to men who would be ordained to be priests).
 - Matrimony (man and woman are about covenant together and enter into a marital bond).
 - So these became the norm at the beginning of the second millennium (1000-1100 AD).

Sacraments vs. Ordinances

- In the Reformation there was a debate over the nature and number of sacraments.
- Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin reduced it to two sacraments because only two were ordained by Jesus Christ: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- Instead of the sacraments infusing grace, the Reformers said they take place in accordance with the Word of God and on the basis of faith.
 - They believe in God's work in these sacraments, but they do not work *ex opera operato* (simply by the sacraments being administered), but instead they work by the Word of God and are appropriated by faith.
- Some Protestants were trying to move away from Catholic connotations, and so they wanted to change the name to ordinances. There is too much baggage with the word sacraments.



Sacraments vs. Ordinances

- The key player who set into the place the theology of the sacraments going all the way back to the late and early fifth century was Augustine.
- He defined a sacrament as a tangible, concrete, visible sign of an invisible, yet real grace.
- That theology established what sacraments are ever since.
- So there is the notion of God conveying grace through these sacraments.
- It's worth noting the concept of sacraments as used in the RCC and EO is unknown in Scripture.
 - Instead it is derived from the pagan mystery religions that flourished during the Roman Empire.
 - The word "sacrament" just means "mystery." When the Greek word for mystery is used in the New Testament, it is never in reference to the ordinances of baptism or the Lord's Supper.

