

# Deacons

Congregational-Pastoral Authority

# Congregations are given authority

- Mat 18:17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.
- Act 6:2 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.
- Act 6:3 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.

# Pastors are given authority

- Pastors (by any name: pastor, elder, bishop) instruct the congregation, watch for false doctrine, and serve as role models of Christianity.
- Heb. 13:7 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.
- Heb. 13:17 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.

The Biblical expectation is that both the congregation and the pastor(s) will love and respect each other

- 1 Th. 2:8 So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.
- 1 Th. 5:12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; 1Th 5:13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.

Since there is only one Church, and one Lord, and one faith, and one baptism, it should come as no surprise that the bible expects total harmony between the pastor and the congregation.

The greatest miracle at Pentecost wasn't tongues, or numbers—it was unity

# The reality is that pastors do overstep their boundaries

- They may seek power and honor and glory the pastorate doesn't really offer: 3Jn 1:9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. 3Jn 1:10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.

- They may mistrust or fear the congregation
- And so become paternalistic: making decisions on its behalf
- Or manipulate and control the flow of information to the congregation
- Or insist that things must be “his way”

# Congregations can overstep their boundaries, too

- They may take exception to teaching against sin, or some other doctrine
- They may try to limit his oversight—claiming for themselves a supreme authority over a program or ministry.
  - People tend to “take ownership” of their ministry: this is good, but with a potentially serious downside
- Or, having experienced overly authoritative pastors, may simply resist pastoral authority in general



- This can be done by ignoring his authority
- Or outright rejecting it
- Or by trying to organize against the pastor—  
which should never be done lightly: 1Ti 5:19  
Against an elder receive not an accusation,  
but before two or three witnesses. 1Ti 5:20  
Them that sin rebuke before all, that others  
also may fear.