

## LESSON 5: THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

1. As a young Christian, you are now growing on the milk of the word. Even so, this is one of the most vital and important physical life of a small child. Without milk a small child will not grow and mature properly. A similar thing will happen to you spiritually unless you use the "food" (God's word) you have to grow and mature.

(Question):

A. As a babe in Christ, your life is similar in many respects to the \_\_\_\_\_ life of a \_\_\_\_\_

2. In these early formative years, it is extremely important for you to understand the meaning of the word "church" because (1) you are a part of it and (2) a proper understanding is essential to your well being.

(Question):

A. It is important for you to understand the meaning of the word church because: (1) you are a part of it or (2) it is essential to your well being.

3. A clear, concise definition of the word "church" is hard to find. Of course, Webster gives a definition of the word as do Greek lexicons, but to really digest the meaning or get a good mental picture of the word is difficult.

(Question):

A. The word "church" is easy to define.

**True or False**

B. The word "church" is hard to define.

**True or False**

4. The word "church" is from the Greek word **ekklesia** literally means the "called out" or "assembly". Greek was the original language of the New Testament and the people of that day understood it. This definition of the term "church" naturally leads to the question, called out of what?

(Pick One):

A. Based upon the Greek, what does the word "church" literally mean? Called out/assembly or a building.

5. From a study of the Scriptures, it is evident that Christians are called out of the world, out of darkness and bondage, into the light, freedom and fellowship with Christ.

(Question):

A. Christian are called out of \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

6. The church is the redeemed of God; it is those purchased by blood of Christ. It is, as you studied in Lesson 1 those who have obeyed the gospel or committed themselves to Christ. Paul stated it this way; "And let the peace of Christ

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rule in your hearts, to which also ye were called in one body; and be thankful" (Col. 3:15).

7. Various descriptive phrases are used in the New Testament to illustrate the meaning of the word church. Perhaps a brief look at some of these designations will help you understand what the church is.

(Question):

A. Several descriptive phrases are used in the Scriptures to define the church.

**True or False**

8. It is referred to simply as "the church" (Matt 18:17). In 1 Cor. 15:24 and Heb. 12:23 it is referred to as "the kingdom". Other designations are (1) "church of God" – 1 Cor. 1:2; (2) "kingdom of God" (Mark 9:1); (3) "kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14); (4) "church of the Lord" (Acts 20:28); and (5) "body of Christ" (Col. 1:18). Perhaps these phrases will help you clearly understand the meaning of the term "church".

(Question):

A. Descriptive phrases of the church are used because God could not give a specific definition of the word. **True or False**

B. Descriptive phrases of the church are used to aid understanding the real meaning of the word. **True or False**

9. If you are a member of a civic group, doubtless you realize the importance of sound organization to the group's effectiveness. The church is not a civic organization, but it is a religious organization where effectiveness is a must. Regardless of the type of group, organization is necessary if aims and goals are to be reached.

(Question):

A. The church is a \_\_\_\_\_ organization.

10. Without an understanding of how the church is organized, you will be unable to work effectively in it. Thus, the purpose of this lesson is to help you gain a proper understanding of organization of the church.

(Question):

A. Knowledge of how a group is organized is really not too important to a new member. **True or False**

11. A proper understanding of the organization of the church will help you understand its works and worship and your place in it.

(Question):

A. What is the purpose of this lesson?

12. Many members of the church who are older than you do not understand the "called out"

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feature of the church. Religious people generally have been unable to properly discern the nature of the church and its organization. Perhaps this is why there is so much confusion in the religious world concerning this matter.

(Question):

A. Most people understand the meaning of the word church. **True or False**

13. Because of this confusion, some have gone back to the Old Law (Moses' law) for their organization and worship. For example, some practice the priestly system and the burning of incense.

(Question):

A. Because of confusion or misunderstanding some have reverted to the \_\_\_\_\_ law.

14. The old system or covenant was merely a shadow of the good things to come (Hebrews 10:1). It was not the ultimate law and merely preceded the new law, which replaced it (Hebrews 10:9). The Old Law involved things of a physical nature to a great extent, which are animal sacrifices and earthly priests; whereas things of the New Law are spiritual.

(Question):

A. The two words that aptly contrast the Old Law with the New Law are physical and spiritual. **True or False**

15. But you live in the Christian Age and are subject to the new, spiritual law. Consequently, you are interested in the organization of the church as outlined in the New Testament.

(Question):

A. Christians are subject to the \_\_\_\_\_ law.

16. It is significant that the first recorded apostasy (or corruption) in the church occurred in its organization. This fact should suggest that the organization of the church is important.

(Question):

A. Where did the first recorded apostasy occur?

17. The church suffered as a result of the apostasy that occurred. This is true any time the organization of the church is changed to something other than what God directed. With these thoughts in mind, let us study the organization of the church.

(Question):

A. Man can improve on God's organization of the church. **True or False**

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18. First, you need to recognize that the church is unified; it is one, Paul pointed this out in Romans 12:4,5: "For as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

(Question):

A. To what is the unity of the church compared?

19. The idea of oneness is also expressed in 1 Cor. 12:12, 13 and Eph. 4:4: "For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also in Christ, for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit."

(Question):

A. Members of the body (church) all have the same function. **True or False**

20. Regarding the idea of oneness, Paul told the Ephesians, "There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling"

(Question):

A. There are many bodies (churches). **True or False**

21. The afore stated Scriptures indicate, in addition to the idea of unity or oneness, that the church is made up of many members. These members have special relationships; though many they are one. They are brothers and sisters; they are co-laborers in the church; they have concern for one another and work together for the edification of the entire body. Some of these relationships will be discussed in other lessons.

(Question):

A. The Christian life is one special relationship. **True or False**

22. Now, the idea of oneness of the church is discussed above should not lead you to the erroneous conclusion that all the members must meet in one great body, at one place, at the same time. The church can be comprised of many congregations (not denominations) as necessary. Each congregation must be organized, however, after the New Testament pattern.

(Question):

A. The church must be assembled together in one place at the same time to be one. **True or False**

23. It is expedient that several congregations to be available where Christians can work and worship; however, the number should be limited consistent with effectiveness.

(Question):

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A. The Bible limits the number of congregations. **True or False**

24. That the church can be separated into congregations is evident from the Scriptures. There were congregations of the church in such places as Rome (Romans 1:7), Corinth (1 Cor. 1:2), Philippi (Philippians 1:1), Colosse (Col. 1:2), etc. These congregations were referred to as the "churches of Christ" (Roman 16:16).

25. Each of these congregations is autonomous or independent; some super-structure or ecclesiastical ruling body does not hold them together. Each congregation had its own elders and deacons who function independently of other congregations.

(Question):

A. Autonomy means self-governing or independent. **True or False**

26. The fact that these congregations were independent does not mean they were prohibited from cooperation with one another. To the contrary, congregations can and should cooperate with one another in undertakings where greater efficiency will result. Sometimes several congregations can work together in a large project with great effect; whereas on congregation alone could not support the work.

(Question):

A. Since congregations are autonomous, they can't cooperate in work. **True or False**

27. In all cases where this is done, the autonomy of each congregation must be maintained. In every instance, it is important that congregational autonomy be maintained.

28. Certainly this principle of cooperation is taught in the Bible. For example, the congregations of Galatia, Macedonia, and Archaia cooperated in giving relief to the poor saints of Judea. See Rom. 15:26, 1 Cor. 16:1-4, 2 Cor. 8:1-5 in regard to this point.

(Question):

A. Several examples of cooperation among congregations can be found in the New Testament. **True or False**

29. Christ is head of the dispersed congregations, which constitute the church: "And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have preeminence" (Colossians 1:18). Christ has all power and all authority both in heaven and on earth. He has left directions for the organization, worship and work of the church in the Bible, as noted previously.

(Question):

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A. Who is the head of the church?

\_\_\_\_\_

30. The wisdom of God is evident in that Christ was made head of the church and each congregation was made independent. With such an independent arrangement, contamination of one congregation would not automatically affect another. Thus, this independence provides a measure of protections for each congregation. And with Christ being the only head, all can look to Him.

(Question):

- A. Autonomous organization provides a measure of protection against error.  
**True or False.**

31. Thus far, in your study of the organization of the church you have noted the following things:

1. The church is unified or one.
2. Christ is the head of the church.
3. The one body is composed of many congregations.
4. Each congregation is independent or autonomous.
5. Each congregation is made up of many members.
6. Congregations can work together or independently as the leaders choose.

32. Now, let us note more about the “leaders” in the church listed previously. According to Scripture, these leaders were evangelists, elders and deacons.

(Question):

- A. The leaders in the organization of the church are evangelists, elders and deacons. **True or False.**
- B. Majority consensus of congregation.  
**True or False.**

33. Men who fill the job of elders must meet certain requirements if they are to be pleasing to God. Paul outlined these as he wrote to Timothy and Titus in 1Timothy 3: 1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

(Question):

- A. To be elder, one must meet certain requirements. **True or False.**

34. Let us note the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy:

1. Blameless – that is without reproach
2. The husband of one wife.
3. Vigilant – temperate or watchful
4. Sober – sober minded or of sound mind: one who exercises self-control.
5. Good behavior – orderly
6. Given to hospitality

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7. Apt to teach – able to teach God’s word to others that they may be saved.
8. Not given to wine – no brawler or drunkard.
9. No striker – not contentious.

35. Paul continues to list the qualifications as follow:

10. Not greedy of filthy lucre.
11. Patient, longsuffering and gentle
12. Not a brawler. Not contentious or quarrelsome
13. Not covetous or a lover of money
14. One who rules well his own house
15. Not a novice or a recent convert
16. Must have a good report or testimony from those who are without. A good reputation.

36. Basically, the picture presented by the apostle Paul is one of an older man who is sound or grounded in the faith, sober minded and mature. You, as a new convert, should not be driven away from the job with high standards; rather you should look upon elders as an office to strive for.

(Question):

- A. The high requirements of the office of a bishop should discourage you. **True or False**

37. You should strive towards this goal. Or if you are a woman, you should strive to develop the character necessary for an elder’s wife (see 1 Tim. 3). Also remember that Paul said, “If a man desires the office of bishop, he desires a good work”.

(Question):

- A. Elders can be helpful to you in living a Christian life. **True or False**

38. Many of the qualifications of an elder as listed in Titus 1:5-9 are identical to those listed in 1 Tim. 3. As we review the qualifications in Titus and compare them with the qualifications of 1 Tim. 3, repeated qualifications are identified with the word “repeat” in the following tabulation.

1. Blameless (repeat)
2. Husband of one wife (repeat)
3. Having faithful children
4. Not easily angered
5. Not self willed
6. Not given to wine (repeat)
7. Not a striker (repeat)

39. Paul continues his instruction to Titus:

8. Not given to filthy lucre (repeat)
9. Lover of hospitality (repeat)
10. A lover of good men
11. Sober (repeat)
12. Just, rendering to each his due.

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13. Holy, pure (this does not mean perfect)
14. Temperate
15. Hold fast to the word of God

40. Doubtless, God had definite reasons for making these qualifications binding as a prerequisite to the office of a bishop. Since God has set these standards, it behooves us to accept them without question. To tamper with these qualifications is to tamper with a part of the organization of the Lord's body.

(Question):

- A. God has given standards that must be met by those desiring to be an elder.

**True or False**

41. Not only do elders have certain responsibilities to be members, but members have responsibilities to the elders. You, as a Christian have the responsibility to know them (1 Thess. 5:12), to honor them (1 Tim. 5:17,18), to esteem them highly in love for their work's sake (1 Thess. 5:13).

(Question):

- A. The duties of members to the elders are to know, esteem and honor them. **True or False**

42. Another element of leadership in the church is the deacons. Just as elders must meet certain

qualifications to hold that office, so must deacons. Paul instructed Timothy what these duties were in 1 Tim. 3:8-13.

43. Let us note the qualifications of deacons in 1 Ti. 3:8-13

1. Grave, serious minded
2. Not double-tongued or two faced
3. Not given to much wine
4. Not greedy of filthy lucre or covetous
5. Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.
6. Proved, must be tried for some time
7. Blameless and without reproach
8. Husband of one wife
9. Rule their children and house well

44. The men chosen to "serve tables" in Acts 6 were men of wisdom, of honest report and full of the Holy Spirit. Surely the assistance that men of such could render is evident.

45. In addition to elders, deacons and members of the Lord's church, one additional group is evangelist or preachers. These men are in the church "for the work of the ministry" (Eph. 4:11,12), they are to "preach the word". Paul indicates what the work and character of these men are in first and second Timothy and Titus.

(Question):

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A. \_\_\_\_\_ complete the organization of the church.

46. As a babe in Christ, it is important for you to understand the organization of the church and how you can work and function in it. Too, as you grow to maturity your responsibility to help protect the organization from apostasy will increase.

(Question):

A. It is important for you to understand the organization of the church. **True or False**

47. Truly the Lord organized the church to work efficiently and function as he intended. Let us grow and contribute our part in the organization. Above all, let us not tinker with or change the organization.