

Overseeing the Local Church **12-7-14 PM**

In our studies of the Local church and the Universal church, we had described the Universal church as that great body that all baptized obedient believers belong to and are part of until their death. Jesus is the head and the foundation, the Apostle and Prophets helped to build it, and the central strength of it is the Word.

The Local Church is the church of immediate Christians; by immediate we mean immediate to the area (geographic) and immediate in the time. Consider the church in Philippi: (Philippians 1:1b)" all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons". This is the local church of Philippi. Our MEMBERSHIP is placed within the local church by our purpose and intent. It is a commitment of work & worship, and SUBMISSION to that Body (Ephesians 5:19-21). What is our relationship to the local church?

Each Member owes the Local Church:

Personal Growth
Ability Development
Admonition
Exhortation
Patience

The Local Church owes its members:

Spiritual Development
Doctrinal Truth
Admonition
Exhortation
Patience

How is this exchange regulated and accomplished? In large part it is by the work of oversight, and the men who do that work, Overseers. The Bible speaks to the need of overseers (Titus 1:1-5; *For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you*).

According to Acts 20:28 and I Peter 5:2-4: Overseers = Elders = Pastors = Shepherds = Bishops

Holy Spirit was VERY SPECIFIC to the qualities necessary to Oversee. They are listed in I Timothy 3:1-7 and again in Titus 1:6-9. We need to remember that these qualities are not unique to elders; they are the virtues commanded of all Christians, virtues which define spiritual maturity. Additionally, Holy Spirit made numerous admonitions to the Overseers: Acts 20:28-32, I Timothy 5:19, I Peter 5:1-4. As well, Holy Spirit made numerous admonitions to us about the Overseers: Hebrews 13:7, 17, I Thessalonians 5:12, I Timothy 5:17-18.

In order to fully appreciate the importance of this work, we need to ask ourselves some important questions.

- Are we working at qualifying ourselves? All of our members are striving towards the level of spiritual maturity found in the virtues of the qualifications of the elders. We all are working towards those goals. But specifically, do we have men who are setting as a goal in life to serve in this work?

- Are we easy to oversee? We see Scripture admonish us that it is not an easy thing to oversee the saints. They are accountable for our very souls. Are we members who cause them grief or joy?

- Do we see the importance of patterns? We need to realize how important this work is to the local church, and desire to constantly be fulfilling this work among ourselves.