

[Sunday, January 22, 2017] The Church Series, The Servants or Officers of the Church – Craig Thurman

### **The Servants or Officers of the Church**

There should be no will of entity, person, or persons that presides over any one of the Lord's churches except that determination which is the result of the Spirit of God working through the people of that particular congregation. The N.T. church government, if she is operating according to the Word of God, is about as pure a theocracy as she can possibly have until the day of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This last installment of messages on the New Testament church concerns the officers, or properly the *appointed servants* of the church. Certainly there is much order about the Lord's church. In these lessons we have considered the church's origination, what she is like, what her commission is, what her practices are, and now we need to look into those who might be appointed to places of service through her. By the grace of God very member of this church is a servant of the Lord. But there are some that are called of God, and there are some who are called upon by this church to do service: **1.** apostles; **2.** elders; **3.** pastors, shepherds, preacher, overseer, bishop, teacher; **4.** deacons; and **5.** evangelists.

### **The Apostolic Office**

In the Word of God there are two ways that the term *apostle* is used. As the term *preacher* might refer to anyone that proclaims the message of the Lord (cf. Ecc.1.1, *Solomon*; 2Pe.2.5, *Noah*; Ro.10.10, *whoever might preach the gospel*) or to those who are officially appointed to that work (Acts 13.2, *Paul and Barnabas*; 1Ti.2.7; 2Ti.1.11, *Paul*), so it is with the term *apostle*. It is used in a general way so that it refers to those who have gone out to preach the gospel, and it is used in a specific way to refer to certain men who are officials in this capacity. The noun *apostle* refers to a man who is sent forth. Apostle is an English transliteration of the Greek noun, ἀπόστολος. The act of sending forth is derived from the Greek verb ἀποστέλλω. And so,

ἀπό, a Greek preposition meaning *forth, from, of* + στέλλω or στέλλομαι, to send

### **The General Use of the Term Apostle**

There are men that are called apostles that were sent forth of the Lord that did not hold the office of an apostle. These were apostles in the simple sense that they went forth. For example the verb form is used with reference to the seventy that Jesus had sent forth during his earthly ministry.

*Lu 10:1 After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also,*

This follows on the heels of chapter 9 where the Lord had appointed the twelve apostles. So, he appointed seventy more to go forth into Israel's cities and villages.

Heb 3:1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

*and sent, απεστειλεν them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.*

There were brethren that accompanied Paul who were called apostles, but these were never an apostle in the sense that he was.

*Ac 14:14 Which when the **apostles, Barnabas and Paul**, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out ...*

and Timothy, Silas, and Luke.

*1Th 2:6 Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.*

It is in this looser sense of the word that others misrepresented themselves to the churches as apostles.

*Re 2:2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which **say they are apostles**, and are not, and hast found them liars...*

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Meaning that these claimed that the Lord sent them. And this is all that is meant by the use of the word apostle.

*2Co 11:13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.*

*Acts 15.24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment ...*

So this is the record of God's word concerning the general use of the term apostle. Now we need to consider that specific *office of an apostle*.

### **The Specific Use of the Term Apostle:**

#### *The Apostolic Office for Israel*

The apostolic office was instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He chose out certain men from among the larger group of disciples to go with Him as He ministered to the nation of Israel.

*Lu 6:13 And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: **and of them he chose twelve**, whom also he named apostles ...*

*Mt.10.1 ¶ And when he had called unto him his **twelve disciples**, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.*

*2 Now the names of the **twelve apostles** are these;*

*...*

*5 ¶ These **twelve** Jesus **sent forth** (ἀπέστειλεν), and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:*

*6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

These were the first servants of the church in Israel.

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*1Co 12:28 And **God** (in reference to our Lord Jesus) hath set some in the church, **first apostles**, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.*

*Eph 4:11 And he gave some, **apostles**; and some [understood from v.8, gifts to men], prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers ...*

The role of the apostle in the early church was significant. They were chosen to be specific witnesses of these things and to give this record to the churches. They are the very backbone of our Bible. The record that we have in our Bible is the result of the Lord bringing back to their minds those things that the Lord Jesus had spoken to them. (cf. Jn.14.25, 26; 2Pe.1.16-21)

*Ac 1:1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,*

*2 Until the day in which he was taken up, **after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:***

*3 **To whom** also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen **of them** forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:*

*4 And, being assembled together (that is, the resurrected Lord Jesus) **with them**, commanded **them** that **they** should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.*

The number of men appointed to the apostolic office of the church for Israel are twelve. There are no more and no less.

*Mt.19.27 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?*

*28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon **twelve** thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

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*Ac 1:22 ... must one be ordained to be a witness with us (the apostles) of his resurrection. (Not two, three, or ten, but one. Anyone who gives this any thought must ask why that was the case then.)*

One of these twelve men that held the office of an apostle was named Judas Iscariot. This man, after that he betrayed the Lord Jesus to be crucified hanged himself and brought the number of the apostles to eleven.

*Lu 24:9 And (the women after hearing the report of the two angels concerning the Lord's resurrection) returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the **eleven**, and to all the rest.*

Therefore the very first business meeting of the church at Jerusalem was to appoint an apostle to replace that which was vacated by Judas.

*Ac 1:20 ... and his bishoprick let another take.*

It is because of this procedure of selecting another man to fill this vacated apostolic office that reveals the restriction of this office to that day.

*Acts 1.21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,  
22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.*

It was restricted to the generation of men that lived in Jesus' day. It was impossible that it could extend any further. It is a matter of fact that no church ever convened to select another apostle once these men died. (cf. Acts 12.1, 2; the death of James, John's brother; no replacement was made for him.)

### *The Apostolic Office for the Gentiles*

There is only one other apostolic office to be considered. That is the apostle to the Gentiles. Our ascended Lord Jesus Himself appointed one man named Saul to this office.

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Acts 26.15 *And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.*

16 *But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;*

17 *Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee [ἀποστέλλω],*

18 *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*

Saul, whose name was changed to Paul, was an apostle to the Gentiles.

Ro 11:13 *For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as **I am the apostle of the Gentiles**, I magnify mine **office** ...*

Ro.15.15 *Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God,*

16 *That I should be **the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles**, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.*

1Co.15.3 *For I delivered unto you first of all that which **I also received**, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;*

4 *And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:*

5 *And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:*

6 *After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.*

7 *After that, he was seen of James; then of **all the apostles**.*

Referring to either the eleven or to include that one which shall be chosen to replace Judas who must have seen the Lord as well.

8 *And last of all **he was seen of me** also, as of one born out of due time.*

ἔκτρώματι, dat. sing. of ἔκτρωμα, ἔκτρωμα; in the LXX, twice *untimely birth* (Job 3.16; Eccl. 6.3), and once *abortion* (Nu.12.16)

9 *For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.*

10 *But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*

Be he the least or the greatest, he is an apostle and specially identified to the other twelve by this *office*.

It is correct to understand that the Lord had special men that were put into the apostolic office. It should be clear to us all that this office was not an office which continued through the ages by succession. No man succeeded the twelve apostles to Israel, and no man succeeded the apostle to the Gentiles.

### **The Pastoral Office**

The pastoral office is a church office. There can be no pastor without a church, but there can be a church without a pastor. There are terms which can be used to refer to any number of offices in a church. For example an apostle, a pastor, an elder, a deacon, and every member of the N.T. church can be referred to as a *servant* of the Lord. The pastoral office is also referred to by these terms: *elder* (Acts 20.17), *presbytery* (1Ti.4.14), *pastor* (Eph.4.11), *overseer* (Acts 20.20), *bishop* (1Ti.3.1, 2), *teacher* (Eph.4.11), and *servant of the Lord* (2Ti.2.24). These terms help to define the work of a pastor in a church.

Acts 20.17 ¶ *And from Miletus he (Paul) sent to Ephesus, and called the **elders** πρεσβυτεροι of the church.*

...

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

...

*35 I have shewed you all things, how that so laboring 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.*

### **Elder/Presbyter/πρεσβύτερος**

Elder in the Old Testament first means *old* or *aged one*. (Ge.10.21, *elder*; 25.23; 29.16) Later it used to mean the older which rule among the people. (Ge. 50.7; Ex.3.16); the aged or old men. It was a patriarchal society where fathers ruled their homes, which as long as they lived meant that they guided the society of their family until their death. City governments were ruled to some extent by elders. (Ezr.10.14) In the New Testament elders were noted as having some influence in society that qualified them to sit as judges with rulers and scribes. (Acts 4.5, 8) At the least the elders of a people stood as representatives of those to whom they were related. (He.11.2; Re.4.4) **Elder is best described as those who stand forth among the people, and this is very well defined in the following:**

*1Ti 5:17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.*

*rule, προεστῶτες, nom. pl. masc. part. perf. of προΐστημι; πρό forward + ἵστημι to stand*

By this an elder is not necessarily one who labors in the word and doctrine as a pastor must do. Elders who stand forth as sound and godly examples of Christ are those worthy of *double honor*.

### **Pastor/Shepherd/ποιμένος**

This is most often translated *shepherd*, and is once in Eph.4.11 translated *pastors*.

The verb, ποιμαίνω, means to *feed* (Lk.17.7; Jn.21.16; Acts 20.28; 1Co.9.7; 1Pe.5.2); to tend like a shepherd would guide sheep, and translated *rule* (Mt.2.6; Re.12.5; Re.2.27; 19.15, **always and only refers to our Lord Jesus; He alone has such force over His flock.**)



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From this also is the Greek, ποιμνη and ποιμνίον, which translates into the English, *flock/fold*. (cf. Mt.26.31; Jn.10.16; Lk.12.21; Acts 20.28)

**Pastors feed and guide the flock of God.** The Greek for this is ἡγήομαι. This is used three times with reference to pastors and is translated *rule*.

*1Ti 5:17 Let the elders that **rule** well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.*

*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.*

Pastors are to *govern*, as the noun of this word is translated (ἡγεμών). That means to be leaders. But how are they to lead? By temper/anger/intimidation? (And such leadership by every member is wrong. No member should attempt to influence a church to do anything by the use of anger or intimidation.) As lord of the church/as a sovereign? How is the church to be guided? **By the Word of God and example.**

*2Ti 4:2 **Preach** (cry out) **the word**; be instant*

ἐπίστηθι, 2ps. aor. imper. of ἐπίστημι; to stand or set upon the word; lit. *come upon it ...*

*in season, out of season; **reprove, rebuke, exhort** with all longsuffering*

μακροθυμία, dat. sing.; long + wrath, fierceness; long refraining from the use of fierceness or wrath. How are the saints to be reprovved, rebuked, and exhorted? With every restraint against the use of fierceness and wrath. This certainly

reinforces the truth that to do otherwise would be a rare occasion. Longsuffering necessarily excludes lordship, anger, and intimidation. What remains is a man who will direct, guide, and rule with *patience, gentleness, and kindness*.

*and doctrine.*

*1Pe.5.2 Feed the flock of God*

ποιμνίον, tend; like a shepherd would tend a flock of sheep or a herd of cattle

*which is among you, taking the oversight thereof,*

ἐπισκοποῦντες from which we have *episcopal*.

*not by constraint, but willingly;*

He.10.26, *willfully*

*not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;*

προθύμως, *willing, forward*; πρό + θυμός, *forward with passion*

**3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples**

Gr. τύποι, nom. pl. of τύπος; KJV, *prints, figures, fashions, manner, forms, examples, ensamples, patterns.*

*to the flock.*

*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.*

The most powerful tool in the pastors arsenal of weapons he has to effect the flock for good or bad is his example.

*1Ti 4:12 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.*

This describes the means of rule that a pastor ought to have over the congregation. It is from this strong, spiritual position that any pastor will rule. The arm of flesh will never accomplish in the hearts of the children of God what the Spirit will do through a man or men who will subject themselves to lead the flock in the same way that the Great Shepherd, our Lord Jesus Christ did during His earthly ministry.

### **Overseer/Bishop/ἐπίσκοπος**

ἐπίσκοπος is a compound Greek word ἐπί upon, over + σκόπος, this noun is once in Phl.3.14, *mark*; the verb σκοπέω is translated *take heed; look, consider, and mark*; literally, it means to *have a scope over* the flock. The imagery is one of a shepherd who has situated the flock in a good pasture. Here he takes to a vantage point situated over the flocks so that he may view whether there are any dangers within or without the flock. Like this, the pastor must provide the saints with sound teaching which will strengthen them to wage conflict against the flesh and spirit. In the event that anyone show signs of sickness, weakness, or signs of apostasy he may come into to help them to bear up under the load, or to retrieve them from the deceptions of false teachers.

The verb, ἐπισκοπέω, is translated *looking diligently* (He.12.15); *taking the oversight* (1Pe.5.2) Peter uses some of the clearest terms to describe the pastor. Notice:

*1Pe 5:2 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;*

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

## **Teacher**

Teacher comes from the Greek, διδάσκαλος, didaskalos. In the KJV is translated with the English words *master*, *doctor*, and *teacher*. This word communicates the idea of one who is acknowledged as an apt instructor by example and in doctrine.

### **Able**

*1Ti 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, **apt to teach** ... (cf. 2Ti.2.24)*

### **Faithful and Trustworthy**

*1Ti 2:7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) **a teacher of the Gentiles in [έν, or by] faith and verity** (truth).*

## **The Servant of the Lord**

This office of servitude is unlike any other. Contrary to what many would have us to believe the Word of God would have His servants to be *gentle, patient, meek ...*

*2Ti 2:24 And **the servant of the Lord** must not strive; but be gentle unto all men,*

*ἥπιον, acc. pl. masc. of ἥπιος; 1Th 2:7 But we were **gentle** among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:*

*apt to teach, patient,*

*25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves (that are set against themselves); if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;*

*26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.*

This is contrasted to those who would rule and reign over the Lord's people like *lords*.

*1Pe.5.3 Neither **as being lords** over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.*

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*being lords, κατακυριεύοντες, nom. pl. masc. part. pres. of κατακυριεύω; κατά πρεποσιτιον, down or as + κυριεύω, verb form of lord, so lording (Lk.22.25, exercises lordship over; Ro.6.9, hath dominion)*

The church is not a business entity. It is not a military unit. It cannot be treated as these. She is often compared to a flock of sheep. Sheep are not dogs. They are not wolves. Things that are attractive to dogs and wolves might appeal to the flesh, but they will not satisfy and content the sheepish nature of the spirit of the saints.

### Preacher

Preacher comes from the Greek, κήρυξ. The verb form is κηρύσσω which is translated *preaching, publish and proclaim*. The verb *to preach* also comes from the word εὐαγγελίζω, which transliterated is evangelize. The noun, is translated *gospel*, which literally means *the well-announced [message.]* And the man that is dedicated in his life to this work is called an Evangelist, εὐαγγελιστής. So, one of the works of a pastor is to *preach* the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The first pastors of the early churches were always called from among the membership of that church in which the work began.

*Ac 14:23 And **when they had ordained them elders in every church** (where they went preaching Christ on the very first missionary endeavor), **and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.***

*1Ti 1:3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that **thou mightest charge some that they teach** no other doctrine,*

...

*2Ti 2:2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same **commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.***

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*Tit 1:5 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 ...*

It is my opinion that *often* calling pastors from other places has brought an unnecessary amount of confusion and hurt to the churches. Brethren, it is always best to follow that which we can readily see in the Word of God. And in this case it must be best to see a pastor for the people to be of that people.

A pastor who will do his best for a church should be set apart by that church so that he may best apply himself without distraction to the ministry of the Word of God.

*Ac 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.*

While it is not always possible that a church can fully support the living of a pastor so that he might continually attend to the Word and doctrine, it would be best for the church if they could.

Concerning the specific qualifications of a pastor as they are detailed in 1 Timothy chapter 3 and Titus chapter 1 I have not gone into great detail. These should be plain enough to us all. These are essential requirements laid out for pastors by the wisdom of God. A man without children cannot know how to care for a church without first having some experience with managing his own house. Online is posted a message which focuses on the point of *husband of one wife*.

### **An Evangelist**

The last office that needs to be considered is that of the evangelist. What is an evangelist? The term *evangelist* is found three times in the Scriptures. It is the Greek, εὐαγγελιστής.

*Ac 21:8 And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.*

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*Eph 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers ...*

*2Ti 4:5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.*

Related to this are the terms used with reference to the *preaching* of the *message* of Jesus Christ. The act preaching comes from the verb εὐαγγελίζω or εὐαγγελίζομαι. This is interpreted either as *preaching, bringing good tidings or gospel preaching*. The name of the message that is preached comes from the noun εὐαγγέλιον. This is interpreted without exception (77 times) with the English word *gospel*.

εὐαγγελίζω or εὐαγγελίζομαι, is a compound Greek verb which is εὖ meaning *well* + ἄγγελλω, to announce a message (cf. B-D-A-G Lexicon); ἄγγελος, *angel or messenger*; It is true that there is no other gospel than that gospel of Jesus Christ.

What do we know of Philip? What we first discover of this man is that he was a member of the church which was at Jerusalem, the only church that existed at this present time.

*Ac 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.*

From this membership, Philip, with six others, were set apart to do the work of a *servant*, which we call a *deacon*. We know that it was some time later, because of the persecution of Paul, that a number of the saints left the church at Jerusalem and moved into other places. Philip went to the city of Samaria. While there he preached the gospel of Christ there and many believed on Christ.

*Ac 8:5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.*

*6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.*

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...

12 *But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.*

...

14 ¶ *Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:*

We have no indication that he was sent to do this work. Unlike pastors and deacons, **the evangelist is not an appointed office in the church.** In other words it is not necessary for the church to set apart a man to this work by a church. It is not written that Paul commanded Timothy and Titus to ordain evangelists in every city.

The evangelist goes to the work because His authority is derived completely from Jesus Christ the Lord. From here the Spirit of God commanded Philip to go south to Gaza. There he was led to a man of Ethiopia who also heard the gospel of Christ and was baptized. (Acts 8.26-39) After this occasion Philip is *found* at Azotus,. From there he went preaching Christ in all of the coastal cities up to and finally resting in Caesarea. This record of Philip is one of an evangelist. This is what an evangelist does. This is an office of the church. But let's be clear about this so that we understand how this office functions. The man is what we would call a missionary. This man does not have to be sent by a church to go to the work of God. He, being called of God, will go out whether any church or man gives to him their *sanction* or not. This man goes out like Paul and Barnabas, Paul, Silas, and Timothy, Lucas, Gaius, and Luke. (cf. the missionary endeavors of Acts 13.4-26; 15.40-21.14) These men go about preaching Christ in the various areas that they come and when two or three come to faith in Christ, receive baptism, they are *organized* into a N.T. church. It is not that Paul *made* a church. A church could have arisen from two or three baptized disciples coming together in another area, that know what to do, and they do it. But Paul and those with him, were instrument in pointing these new converts to join together and become the Lord's church there were they were.

It is very likely that the evangelist became the pastor of that church for a time. But it is also likely that the evangelist would help the saints to know what to look



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for in men that could begin functioning as a pastor with them, and the evangelist could then move on to other places to do the same work, again and again.

There are differences of opinion about how to best accomplish missionary work. My position is what respects the local church teaching of God's Word. Evangelists go forth either as a couple of brethren, or as is usually the case, a husband and wife. These ought to leave a church and be a church wherever they are. (cf. 1Co.16.19, Aquila and Prisca and the places that they came; Acts 21.9, Philip and his daughters) The notion of the evangelist remaining a member of a church on the other side of the world, on another continent, or in another state, is untenable with Scripture truth concerning the local nature of a church. It is also untenable that as an evangelist witnesses Christ's work in a new place that those who are baptized are joined to a church of which they cannot be a part and very likely will never see. Yet unbiblical traditions and opinion of men continue to prevail over God's Word. New converts should be pointed to their newfound relationship together in Christ in that area and formed into a N.T. church as quickly as possible.

What was it that Philip was noted for having done that would help us understand what an *evangelist* is? He went out and preached Jesus Christ to others when he left the church which was in Jerusalem.

The pastoral epistles are probably best called *epistles for evangelists* because the import of these letters helped Timothy and Titus not only how to conduct themselves in a church, but how to instruct them, and to how to help them find qualified men to appoint in the churches. That is as simple as it can be stated.

*2Ti 2:2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*

*Tit 1:5 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 ...*

### **The Office of the Deacon**

This office appears first, in my opinion, in Acts chapter 6. This servant comes from the Greek noun, *διάκονος*. It is translated as *minister, servant, and deacon*. The verb is *διακονέω*, and translated *minister, serve, administer, and use the office of a deacon*. This service is in an *official* capacity. Only men will receive this appointment. Such men are charged with a work to do. They are appointed in the behalf of the church to do a certain service.

Note: Phoebe is called a *servant*, *διάκονος*.

*Ro 16:1 I commend (συνέστημι, I stand with ...) unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cencrea:*

*2 That ye receive her (aor. subj.) in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.*

At the present time there is only one church, the church at Jerusalem. The church had grown quite considerably so that the membership had grown from about 120 souls to thousands in a very short period of time. (Acts 1.1.15; 2.41; 4.4) There was a complaint raised in the church. The Grecian Jewish members complained against the Hebrew Jewish members. The Grecian saints thought that there was an inconsistency in the way that their widows were being cared for as opposed to the way that the Hebrew Jewish widows were. Whether it was a legitimate complaint or not isn't the issue as much as the occasion showed the need for someone to assume the role of overseeing the care for the widows. The apostles must continue in prayer and the ministry of the Word. This was God's priority for them. To meet the need the apostles put the matter to the church. There is no doubt that this was a good work; that this was a necessary work. But they must keep to that which the Lord had called them as apostles.

*Ac 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.***

So, the apostles directed the church to *look ye out among you* who would do this service.

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*Ac 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.*

These men would be responsible for the widows that were a part of the membership of this church.

It is important for us to understand that the church was not setting up a social program to care for the widows that were of the nation of Israel any more than they would set up an orphanage to care for all of the homeless children in the nation. Churches simply cannot perform this kind of service. There is nothing against individual entering into this kind of work. However, the churches should not take as a matter of their mission such cares.

*1Ti 5:9 Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man ...*

Properly, to satisfy the demand of individual who may come to the congregation for help we must meet the need on a case by case basis and never by some automated action.

By this the apostles were freed to continue in that work in which the Lord had called them to serve. The purpose for appointing men to this service helped the apostles so that they might continue ministering in the Word and doctrine. It supplies a need that the saints could not otherwise consistently meet with its membership, and it helps the pastors so that they might also remain dedicated to that which the Lord has called them as well. The prerequisites of these deacons are given best in 1Ti.3.8-13.

### **The Wives of the Appointed Servants**

A point to close the topic of the *offices* of the church might be necessary at this place. In all of the Scriptures which we have considered today there has been almost complete silence regarding the wives of these men. By the Word of God we simply do not know anything of the women that were behind Paul, Peter, Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, Titus, Lucas, etc., etc. But we have this:

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*1Ti 3:11 Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.*

It is the wives' behavior that must be considered when choosing a man for appointed service. She must be of such a behavior that she will not negatively affect the testimony and the work of this man. That sums up the requisites for her life so that her husbands might be able to serve us. She is not called for her teaching ability. She is not called for her speaking ability. She is not called to be an extrovert. She is not called to be sociable. She is not called to be the church organizer. She is called to be a proper wife to the man that we called to this special service.

It is the wives of these servants, there can be little doubt, that bear a significant weight because of their husbands' appointment. To say this to help, it is the men that were called to service, not the wives of these men. There are sisters in the Lord who were noted for serving the Lord through the church. But we do not know that their service was related to whether their husbands were in appointed places of service. The two are not necessarily connected.

*Ro 16:1 I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea ...*

Phebe stood in her own right as a servant of Christ and sister in the Lord.