

A Certain Order

Belgic Confession, Article 32

1. FROM SCRIPTURE TO PRACTICE: We must make a distinction between clear biblical principles and our _____ of those principles in our tradition.

2. THE HEART OF THE MATTER: The confession highlights three clear biblical _____ in addition to what was established in the previous article regarding offices in the church.
 - a. Worship must be according to _____ (Deuteronomy 5:8-10).
 - b. The order of the church should serve harmony, _____, and obedience to God (1 Corinthians 14:40).
 - c. Church _____ must be practiced (Matthew 18:15-20).

3. MINISTER, ELDER, DEACON: The offices of the Old Testament, together with the language of the New Testament, suggest three _____ areas of responsibility, which the Reformed tradition applies by way of three distinct offices.
 - a. Minister of the Word and Sacraments: focus is on _____ the Word and administering the sacraments; assists the elders in the shepherding of the congregation.

They shall teach Jacob your rules and Israel your law; they shall put incense before you and whole burnt offerings on your altar. (Deuteronomy 33:10, said of the Levites and Priests)
 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. (1 Timothy 4:13)
 - b. Elder: focus is on _____ the congregation by way of visitation, discipline, and spiritual oversight.

So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him. (Exodus 19:7)
 ...shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight (1 Peter 5:2)
 - c. Deacon: focus is on leading the congregation in works of _____.

And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty." (Acts 6:2-3; separating out the task of caring for the poor, which was associated with the tithes gathered by the Levites in the Old Testament)

4. CLASSIS AND SYNOD: It is important to make our spiritual unity _____ by working together and making formal connections with other churches (John 17). We do this, for example, when we meet as classis and synod.
 - a. We are following a _____ established at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15.
 - b. We unite with other churches for the sake of fellowship, _____, and accountability.
 - c. In all of these things, the ultimate focus is not the _____ in office or the church's organizational structure, but the Christ who is proclaimed and glorified and who promises that he is building his church.