

I. Introduction.II. Continue to follow the New Testament pattern for how the church is to function. v. 7-17,28

- A. Acts 20 provides a snapshot of the early church's meetings. 20:7-12 2:42
1. They gathered on the first day of the week (The Lord's Day). 20:7a I Cor. 16:2 Rev. 1:10 John 20:1 Heb. 10:24-25
  2. They faithfully participated in the public means of grace and demonstrated the marks of a true church.
  3. The Lord's Supper was a part of their weekly worship. 20:7b 2:42 I Co. 10:16 11:23
  4. They were devoted to the ministry of the Word. 20:7b-12-12 Acts 2:42 I Ti. 4:13
  5. They also were devoted to prayer and fellowship. Acts 2:42 20:11
- B. The New Testament reveals the way the local church is to be governed. v. 17, 28
1. Jesus Christ is the Head of the church. Col. 1:18
  2. Jesus has appointed elders to lead His church. Acts 20:28 He. 13:17 I Ti. 5:17 3:1-7 I Pet. 5:3 Titus 1:5-9
  3. Each local church is to be led by a plurality of elders. 14:23 20:18 Ti. 1:5 Phil. 1:1 Js. 5:14 I Pe. 5:1-4 2:25 Heb. 13:17,20
  4. The titles *Elder* (Presbyter) and *Overseer* (Bishop) refer to the same office. v. 17, 28 Titus 1:5,7
  5. *Pastoring* (shepherding) is the function of the Elders. v. 28 I Pet. 5:2 Eph. 4:11
  6. All Elders are equal in rank and power. I Tim. 3:1-7 Titus 1:5-9
  7. Different Elders will have different gifts and functions. I Tim. 5:17 Ro. 12:3-8
  8. There are many advantages of plural leadership. Gal. 2:11f I Co. 3:4 I Tim. 5:19-20 Pr. 15:12,31-32 I Pe. 5:4
  9. Elders are appointed by God and recognized by men. v. 28 14:23 Titus 1:5 I Ti. 3:1-7
  10. With the passing of the Apostles, there is no office above that of Elder. Eph. 2:20 Mt. 18:15-20 Ro. 15:26 II Co. 8-9
  11. The Elders are assisted by those who hold the serving office of Deacon. Acts 6:1-4 I Tim. 3:8-13
  12. Every member of the church participates in ministry using their spiritual gifts. I Co. 12:7 Ro. 12:6-8 I Pet. 4:10-11 2:5 Eph. 4:11ff

III. Continue to shepherd (pastor) God's flock. v. 18-38

- A. Lead the Lord's sheep by setting an example. v. 18-19,33ff Ps. 23:2-3 I Pe. 5:3
1. Live a holy life. I Ti. 4:12,16a Phil. 3:17 Heb. 13:7 I Co. 11:1
  2. Be a humble servant. v. 19a John 13:1-17 I Pet. 5:3,5 I Tim. 3:6 Phil. 2:1-11 Rom. 12:3 I Co. 4:7 Mark 10:42-45 John 13:1ff
  3. Serve passionately. v. 19c Rom. 9:2ff 12:15 John 11:35 Luke 19:41 Heb. 5:7
  4. Be prepared to suffer tribulation. v. 19d, 22-24 9:16 John 10:11 II Ti. 3:12 4:7-8 II Co. 11:23-29
  5. Work hard at your calling. v. 33-35 I Th. 2:5,9-10 I Tim. 3:3b Ezek. 34:2-3
  6. Give direction to the flock. Ps. 23:2-3 Ro. 12:8 He. 13:17 I Ti. 5:17 I Tim. 5:12
  7. Serve with joy. I Pe. 3:2 Heb. 13:17 I Th. 2:19-20 Heb. 12:1-3
- B. Feed the Lord's flock. v. 20-21 6:4 Ps. 23:5 John 21:16 I Tim. 3:2 5:17 I Th. 5:12 Titus 1:9 Ps. 23:5a Eph. 4:11-12 John 21:16 I Pet. 5:2 Acts 6:4

1. Before you can feed the Lord's people you must feed your own soul. I Ti. 4:14-16  
II Tim. 2:15,20-21
  2. Preach the whole counsel of God. v. 20, 26-27 II Ti. 3:16-4:4 James 3:1 Heb. 13:17
  3. Take advantage of every opportunity. v. 20b-21a I Tim. 4:13 II Tim. 4:1ff
  4. Make the gospel primary. v. 21b 1 Co. 2:2 Rom. 1:14ff
  5. Equip the flock to serve God. Eph. 4:11-12 II Tim. 2:2
- C. Protect the Lord's flock. v. 28-31 Ezek. 33:2-6 Titus 1:9-11 3:10 I Co. 5:13
1. Church discipline (along with preaching the Word and proper administration of church ordinances) is a mark of a true church. Mt. 18:15ff 1 Co. 5:1ff
  2. Why is this so important? v. 28c-30 Rev. 5:9 I Pe. 1:18-19 John 10:11 Ezek. 34:2ff
  3. First watch yourself. v. 28a I Tim. 4:16 Mt. 26:31 I Co. 10:12 1 Sam. 11:1ff
  4. Courageously take decisive action to drive out the wolves who promote error or immorality. Rev. 2:2 I Tim. 5:20
  5. There may be other troubles for which the flock needs to be prepared – persecution. v. 23 2 Tim. 3:12 John 15:20 1 Pe. 4:12-19 2:11-12
- D. Love God's flock. v. 35-38 Ps. 23:1,5b John 10:11-13 Mt. 9:36 Luke 15:4
1. Being an elder involves a lot more than teaching, preaching and leading.
  2. Care deeply for the Lord's sheep. v. 19b, 31b, 36-38 Ro. 9:2-3 II Co. 2:4 11:28-29  
I Thess. 2:7 5:14 Luke 13:34-35
  3. Be devoted to praying for them. Acts 6:4 Js. 5:14
  4. When you love deeply, parting is hard – but sometimes necessary. v. 37-38 21:13-14
- E. Serve in light of the day of judgment. v. 24 2 Tim. 4:1ff Phil. 3:13-14
- F. God has given you all the resources you need to carry on His work. v. 32

#### IV. Conclusion.

- A. To the shepherds. I Pet. 5:1-5 II Tim. 4:6-8
- B. To congregation. Heb. 13:17 I Th. 5:25 Eph. 6:19
- C. Jesus is our perfect Chief Shepherd. I Pe. 5:4 2:25 Ps. 23 78:52 100:3 John 10:11 Mt. 2:6  
Ezek. 34:23f Isa. 40:11 Heb. 13:20

#### Discussion questions

1. What can we learn about the meetings of the early church from Acts 20?
2. What can we learn about the government of the early church from Acts 20?
3. How are the marks of a true church seen in Acts 20?
4. What qualities of a faithful elder are taught in Acts 20?
5. What is the basis of Paul's hope that the church in Ephesus would thrive after he is gone?