

# Establishing the Church



**Fellowship Bible Church**



# *Establishing the Church*

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## **Bible Study Guide**

*From the leadership development ministry of*

**FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH MISSIONS**

# Acknowledgments

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The lesson outlines and notes in this booklet were prepared and edited by Tim McManigle, Director of FBC Missions.

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***"Voltaire, the French infidel once said; "It required eleven men to build the church; I will prove that it needs only one man to knock it down." He was wrong on two counts. First, it was not eleven men who built the church, but rather one man, The Man, Christ Jesus. Second, no one can ever knock it down, for its omnipotent Founder declared; "I will build My church, and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. 16:18) The mere existence of the church is proof positive that the living Christ is in the midst of it. Voltaire is dust; Christ lives on. Every generation has produced its Voltaires, those who have predicted the downfall of the church. And although it has consistently faced tempest and persecution, there remains no explanation for it's continued existence apart from the fact that it's Founder and Protector is Jesus Christ."***

***"It ought to interest each one of us immensely that there is an object of the deepest affection of Christ here on this earth. I know of nothing more encouraging amid all the wreck and tumult, the anxieties and sufferings, and feebleness that beset us, than to think that the "treasure hid in the field", for which Christ sold all that He had, is still here. There is one interest here that shall last forever-the interest of Christ in the church. He "loved the church, and gave Himself for it". It is most interesting and encouraging, in the midst of prevailing confusion and uncertainty, that there is one thing to which Christ is as much attached as ever on this earth. He has not given up His affection for the church because it is in a paralyzed condition. A man does not lose his affection for his wife because she is in feeble health. Our heart can go up to Christ in the happy confidence that He is as much devoted to the church now, as on the brightest day that it saw on earth. We have changed, but, He has not changed".***

**J.B. Stoney**

# ESTABLISHING THE CHURCH

## Chapter 1

### *God's Design for the Church in the Grace/Church Age*

#### Introduction

- Our subject will be “Establishing the Church (not methods/programs/church organization or government, but rather spiritually mature/established in the faith.)”

#### Dispensationalism

- A very important factor for us to consider is that in the Old Testament, God worked through a nation (Israel); however, today He is working through the Church.

#### Israel/The Law Contrasted With the Church/Grace

- If we were to take a close look at Scripture, we would see that over half of the Bible relates to the Jews, and they are dealt with by God in a rather unique way.
- They were separated from the mass of humanity and given specific promises not given to any other people groups.
- It is interesting that the other nations are mentioned only as they have involvement with the Jews.
- All the promises of God to Israel relate to the earth. If they were faithful and obedient, they were promised earthly riches and power, but if unfaithful and disobedient, they would be scattered among all peoples, **Deuteronomy 28:1-2, 15, 58-59, 62**.
- As we look further into Scripture, we see another distinct body, which is the Church
- This body also has a peculiar relation to God and like Israel has received specific promises from Him, but similarity ends there.
  1. Instead of being formed from the descendants of Abraham alone (Jews), it is a body made up of all people, both Jew and Gentile.
  2. Instead of the relation being one of covenant (law), it is one of birth (born again—grace).
  3. Instead of being promised rewards of earthly greatness and wealth, the Church is taught to be content with food and clothing and to expect persecution and hatred, **Philippians 1:29; I Timothy 6:7-8; Hebrews 13:5**.

- We could say that Israel's Promised Land is temporal and earthly, while the Church's Promised Land is eternal and spiritual. Israel's Promised Land is a place of physical abundance, whereas the Church's Promised Land is a place of spiritual abundance (fruit of the Spirit).
- Something else for us to think of is that the Church did not exist before or during the earth life of Christ. **Matthew 16:18** – notice the future tense, “I WILL build My Church;” not, “I HAVE built or AM building.”
- Keeping in mind that the Church is not once mentioned in the Old Testament prophecy. The birth of the Church is in **Acts 2**, and its termination is in **I Thessalonians 4**.
- If we were to compare what Scripture says about Israel and the Church, we would find that in origin, calling, promises, principles for conduct and future destination, all is contrast.

For example:

1. CALLING -- Israel was called to an earthly kingdom: **Genesis 12:1; Deuteronomy 8:7-9 (Condition)**. The Church is called to a heavenly kingdom: **Philippians 3:20; I Corinthians 4:11 (Position)**.
  2. CONDUCT -- Israel's principles for conduct: **Deuteronomy 7:1-2; Exodus 21:23-25**. The Church: **I Corinthians 4:12-13; John 13:34**
  3. WORSHIP -- Israel was to worship in one place and at a distance from God: **Leviticus 17:8-9; Luke 1:8-10**. The Church worships wherever two or three are gathered and has boldness to enter into the holiest: **Matthew 18:20; Hebrews 10:19**.
- In the predictions concerning the future of Israel and the Church, the differences are even clearer. The Church will be taken away from the earth entirely (I Thessalonians 4:16-17), but Israel will one day have her greatest earthly splendor and power in the Millennial Kingdom (**Luke 1:30-33**). As **2 Timothy 2:15** states, “A workman must rightly divide the Word.” There is a clear division between Israel and the Church; between law and grace. However, for the most part, the Church doesn't seem to recognize the division.
  - Instead of walking in a God-given path of separation from the world, the Church has attempted to use Scripture written to the Jews for the purpose of justifying and pursuing earthly treasures such as health, wealth, power, magnificent church buildings, among other things. If we look closely at Scripture, we will see that it divides time into seven unequal periods called dispensations. These periods are marked off in

Scripture by a change in God's method of dealing with people because of sin and each one ends in judgment.

## The Seven Dispensations

- Five of these dispensations have come and gone; we are in the sixth, probably toward the end, and have before us the seventh and last, the millennium. Very briefly, the seven dispensations are as follows:
  1. **MAN INNOCENT:** From the creation of Adam to his expulsion from Eden. Adam was created innocent and ignorant of good and evil; he sinned and then this dispensation ended in judgment; put out of the garden. **Genesis 1:26; 2:16-17; 3:6 & 22-24**
  2. **MAN UNDER CONSCIENCE:** After the fall, man now had a knowledge of good and evil (**Genesis 3:7, 22**). This dispensation began with Adam's expulsion from Eden and ended in judgment at the flood. **Genesis 6:5, 11-12; 7:11-12, 23**
  3. **MAN IN AUTHORITY OVER THE EARTH:** Human government resulted as man attempted to become independent of God. This dispensation began at the flood and ended in judgment at the Tower of Babel, where the languages were confused and the people scattered. **Genesis 9:1-2; 11:1-8**
  4. **MAN UNDER PROMISE:** Out of the scattered descendants of Babel, God entered into a covenant with one man, Abram. Some of the promises to Abram were unconditional (grace) and these have been or will be fulfilled by God. Other promises were conditional upon faithfulness and obedience (law). Every one of these conditions was violated. This dispensation went from Babel to God's judgment, bondage in Egypt. It is interesting that Genesis opens with "in the beginning, God created," and ends with, "in a coffin in Egypt." **Genesis 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:5; 26:3; 28:3; 28:12-13 (judgment); Exodus 1:13-14**
  5. **MAN UNDER LAW:** In the wilderness of Sinai, God proposed the covenant of law. Instead of the people pleading for a continued relation of grace, they self confidently answer, "all that the Lord has spoken, we will do" (**Exodus 19:1-8**). The history of Israel is one long record of repeated violations of the law. This fifth dispensation began at Mt. Sinai and ended at the cross. **2 Kings 17:1-9; Psalms 106; Acts 2:22-23; Romans 3:19-20; Galatians 3:10**
  6. **MAN UNDER GRACE:** God-given righteousness, rather than God-required righteousness. From the cross to the rapture. **Ephesians 2:8-9; I Thessalonians 4:16-17**

7. MAN UNDER THE PERSONAL REIGN OF CHRIST: This period of time is known as the millennium. The seat of Jesus' power will be in Jerusalem and the saints, including the Church, will reign with Him. Eventually Satan is set loose for a season and he finds the natural heart of man as prone to evil as ever. He gathers the nations to battle against the Lord and His saints. This last dispensation closes like the others in judgment. The Great White Throne is set, the wicked dead are raised and judged and then comes the New Heaven and New Earth. **Revelation 20:2-3, 7-15; 21 & 22**

# ESTABLISHING THE CHURCH

## Chapter 2

### *The Purpose and Formation of the Church*

#### The Church

- Let's look more closely at this sixth dispensation called the grace Age, or as it is often referred to as the Church Age.
- The word "church" as we know it actually means "**called out ones.**"
- The present divine purpose of the Church in this dispensation is not the conversion of the world, but rather the calling out from the world those who will believe in Christ to form the Body of Christ which is the Church.
- In accordance with this, it is stated in **Romans 11:25** that Israel's present blindness is only until the completion of the Church, the end of this age of special Gentile blessing.
- Keep in mind that the immediate purpose of God is not the correction of the evil in the world, but the out-calling of all who will believe.
- In **Acts 15** the substance of James' address at the conclusion of the first council of the church in Jerusalem is given. The occasion of this council was to determine this same question as to the present purpose of God in this age. Remember that the early Church was made up mostly of Jews, and they were confused because now all of a sudden the new gospel was not only just for them, but it was flowing out to the Gentiles. James states that according to Peter's experience in the house of the Gentile Cornelius, God is first visiting Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. "After this," James continues, "the Lord will return and then He will fulfill all His purposes for Israel and the Gentiles." **Acts 15:13-19**



#### The Formation of the Church

- Christ prophesied that He would build His Church (**Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 5:27**)
- The Apostle Paul likened the Church to a structure of Living Stones growing "into a holy temple in the Lord," and "built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." **Ephesians 2:21-22**)
- Christ was the Founder, Teacher, and Builder of the Church (**Colossians 1:18**).

- He also was the sender of the Holy Spirit who actually formed the Body of Christ (**I Corinthians 12:13**).
- Pentecost was the beginning of the Church since the body of Christ is formed by the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 1:5**), and it will end at the rapture (**I Thessalonians 4:16-18**).

## The Church and Her Relationship to Christ

### 7 Figures/Pictures of Christ and the Church

- **It might be good to take a few minutes and focus on Christ's relationship to the Church, keeping in mind our definition of the Church (called out ones).**
  1. The Shepherd and the sheep – **John 10:1-30; Psalm 23** – (Shepherd leads, guides, feeds, protects).
  2. The Vine and the branches – **John 15:1-8** – (vine is the source of life).
  3. The Cornerstone and the stones of the building – **Ephesians 2:19-22; I Peter 2:4-8; I Corinthians 3:11** – (Foundation Rock on which we stand).
  4. The High Priest and believer-priests – **I Peter 2:5-9** – (Priest is a middle-man between God and man) – **Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:25; 9:24; 10:19-22; Romans 8:34**.
  5. The Head and the body – **I Corinthians 12:12-31** – (Head is the brains/seat of wisdom).
  6. The Last Adam and the new creation – **Romans 5:12-19; I Corinthians 15:45-49** – (Exchanged life).
  7. The Bridegroom and the bride – **Ephesians 5:22-32** – (Protector, Provider, Lover, Savior) – **2 Corinthians 11:2**.

## Establishing the Church

- **It seems appropriate from verses recorded in Acts and Paul's epistles, to use the word "establishing" or "maturing" to represent a concept that was central to Paul's ministry regarding the churches.**
- As mentioned before, our subject will be "Establishing the Church." (Not methods/programs/church organization or government, but rather spiritually mature/established in the faith) – **I Thessalonians 3:1-2**.
- What is God's design for the Church? When is a church mature? God gives His design for a mature church in **Ephesians 4:11-16**.
- Because **Ephesians 4:11-16** is God's design for the Church, then our role in establishing churches is to first cast a Biblical vision of a mature church.

- What does the phrase, “Establishing the Church/maturing the church” really mean?
- Basically, we could say that “Establishing the Church” is discipleship, and discipleship is “Establishing the Church.”
- However, the most common way of discipleship is to preach against gossip, drunkenness, lust, pride, and lying, and to encourage new Christians to pray, to be devoted, to give, and to serve.
- However, as mentioned before, true discipleship is seen in **Ephesians 4:11-16**.

### **DISCIPLESHIP:**

- Equipping the saints to do the work of the ministry.**
- Building up/edifying the body of Christ.**
- Unified in the faith; true knowledge of Christ.**
- End goal – Christ-likeness/fullness of Christ**

- The more disciplined and equipped the saints become, the more established the church as a whole becomes; the more established a church becomes, the more disciplined and equipped the saints will become.
- It’s not a matter of throwing out truth and expecting people to walk in it.
- Discipleship is a serious ministry (**2 Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 5:12**)
- “There is not a New Testament requirement that does not immediately bring the believer face to face with an overwhelming dilemma. Either he must cease to move in the realm of the purely natural, die to the flesh-life, and find in the resurrected Christ a new life, or he must fail as a Christian.” F.J. Huegel
- The Christian’s purpose – Born to grow into Christ-likeness. (**Philippians 2:5-8**)
- It should grieve us to realize how many abandoned babes in Christ there are; spiritual orphans. There is an ever increasing need for the ministry of nurturing believers that they may be rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith. (**Colossians 2:7**)
- *“The greatest proof of our love for Christ is that we care for those who belong to Him; if you love me, feed my sheep.”* (**John 21:15-17**) J. B. Stoney
- “The Christian life is not merely a converted life, or even a consecrated life, but it is the Christ-life. It is the consuming desire of the Lord Jesus to incarnate Himself in the believer.” Ruth Paxson

<b>TWO METHODS OF DISCIPLESHIP</b>	
<b>Focus on Man's Responsibility</b>	<b>Resting On Christ's Finished Work</b>
*Works based	*Relationship based
*Sanctified by obedience	*Sanctified through faith – <b>Col. 2:6-12</b>
*Self-focused	*Occupied with Christ
*Strive to be adequate	*God makes us adequate <b>2 Cor 3:4-6; 5:18-19</b>
*Acceptance based on performance	*Accepted in Christ – <b>Rom. 15:7</b>
*Leads to self-condemnation	*Now no condemnation – <b>Rom. 8:1</b>
*Leads to self-righteousness	*Clothed w/ His righteousness – <b>2 Cor 5:21</b>
*Leads to burnout and lack of joy	*Manifests the life of Christ - <b>2 Cor 4:10-11</b>
*Complacent/dissatisfied w/growth	*Content w/God's timing – <b>*Phil 3:12-16</b>

- What is true discipleship?
  - \*Growth in a true relationship with Jesus Christ.
  - \*As the relationship with Christ grows, there is also a progression of freedom that is experienced in the believer's life.
- As the relationship with Jesus grows, and more freedom is experienced, practical holiness will become a natural by-product.

### **QUESTIONS TO EVALUATE OUR CHURCH**

1. Are we truly discipling our people into Christ-likeness?
2. Are we equipping the saints to do the work of the ministry?
3. Is the body being edified/built up?

# ESTABLISHING THE CHURCH

## Chapter 3

### *Establishing the Church*

**Let's now look at Paul's establishing process:**

How did Paul go about planting and establishing churches? What was His strategy? (**Acts 14:21-23**)

- A. Preached the gospel (verse 21).
- B. Gathered the Christians together, discipling, strengthening, and establishing them in their faith. (**Ephesians 4:11-16**).
- C. Appointed plurality of spiritually mature elders (**Acts 14:22-23**). Notice Paul's burden to strengthen churches (**Romans 1:8-15**).
- D. He continued the process of establishing the churches, both by letters and visits, training key men to assist him in the establishing process (**Acts 15:36; 18:22-23; I Thessalonians 3:1-13, esp. verse 2**).
- E. He used the churches as a base for taking the gospel into new areas, encouraging them to participate with him in the furtherance of the gospel (**Acts 13:1-4; 14:26-28**); and to find faithful men who could be trained to carry on this task for the next generation.

An interesting thought here: Paul wanted to go back to Thessalonica, but Satan was hindering him (**I Thessalonians 2:17-18; I Corinthians 16:9; I John 4:4**) so Paul sent Timothy (**I Thessalonians 3:2**). Had Paul not trained Timothy, the Thessalonica Church may not have been established (**I Thessalonians 3:11-13; 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17; Colossians 1:28-29; 2:5-7; I Corinthians 3:5-11**).

## PROGRESSION TOWARD MATURITY

(from unbeliever to spiritual man)

- Let's look at the Biblical way of progressing churches toward maturity; establishing churches.
- **Phase 1 – Relationship With God:** (**Revelation 4:11; I Corinthians 1:9**) – call of God is first to Himself – (**Matthew 4:19-20; Mark 3:13-14; 6:7; Isaiah 6:1-8; Acts 13:1-4**).
- **Relationship with God – foundation for salvation.**

The Christian life is a relationship, therefore our desire is to lead people into a deep and intimate relationship with God. In order to grow into that level of relationship with God, there are foundational truths that must be clearly taught and understood. These foundational truths include the following:

- The attributes of God – His love, mercy, grace, goodness, sovereign power, omniscience, omnipotence, justice, immutability, hatred of sin, faithfulness.
- The sinfulness of man, his helplessness to save himself, and his need for a Savior.
- Only God can provide a way of salvation
- The Gospel.
- We suggest that the “Creation to Christ” study be used in Phase #1 to communicate these foundational truths.

### **QUESTIONS TO EVALUATE OUR CHURCH:**

- What is the Christian life?
- What is the goal of the Christian life?
- What is the most important thing for us as Christians?
- What is our view of God? Who is He? What is He like?
- Describe life before salvation (is lostness, or sinfulness or hopelessness mentioned? Is there any mention of being in Adam, separated from God, or their old position?).
- Explain salvation. Is Christ’s death on the cross mentioned? Do they emphasize God’s grace?
- Is there any mention of being in Adam, separated from God, or their old position?
- If the leaders aren’t clear on these foundational truths, then chances are they will be unable to ground the church in them either.

- **Phase 2: Position with Christ (I Corinthians 1:30a) new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).**

- **Position with Christ.**

- **Foundation for Sanctification**

The moment someone is born again, there is an immediate change of position that takes place in his or her life. At that very moment, one becomes a child of God, and is taken out of Adam and placed into Christ. All that Christ is and all that Christ has, becomes ours. Therefore, before service to God is considered, one must be grounded in an understanding of who we are in Christ. Some important foundational truths that should be emphasized in Phase #2 teaching include the following:

- Placed into Christ
- Justified (declared righteous) and accepted in Christ

- Child of God
- Restored to oneness with God
- Eternally secure in Christ
- His divine power has given to us all things pertaining to life and godliness through His finished work on the cross.
- Our part is to believe.
- We suggest for Phase #2 that the “Creation to Christ For Growing Believers: and “New Birth Explained” be used as a foundation for sanctification.

### **QUESTIONS TO EVALUATE OUR CHURCH**

- Compare who we were with who we are now.
- Is there any mention of complete acceptance with God, or eternal security, or being clothed with the righteousness of Christ, or being placed into Christ?
- Do they speak more of the finished work of Christ, or their own works and responsibilities?
- If the conversation is mainly about their own works and responsibilities then these truths aren't clear.
- **Phase 3 – Dependence Upon the Spirit – (2 Corinthians 3:17-18) – (Holy Spirit is the Spirit-of-Truth – John 16:13-14).**
- **Introduction of the Church – (Church is the pillar and foundation of truth - 1 Timothy 3:15).**

The position change that takes place in every believer's life at salvation, is immediate and complete. The daily “living out” of that position, on the other hand, is a growth process. It is the progression of growth that the Holy Spirit is working all believers through in His process of conforming us to the image of Christ.

In order for believers to move on to maturity, we must learn to walk and depend upon the Holy Spirit. Therefore, our purpose in Phase #3 teaching is to reveal the Holy Spirit's ministry, and His faithfulness to lead, guide, feed, and protect God's children, as well as to introduce the church. Some of the important foundational truths that should be emphasized include the following:

- The Holy Spirit's ministry to lead, guide, feed, protect, and establish us in truth.
- To emphasize the FAITHFULNESS of the Spirit to fulfill all that Jesus promised.
- To reveal the early Church's dependence upon the Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit is as faithful in our lives today as He was to the early Church in the book of Acts.
- Introduction of the Church and her role.
- The book of Acts will be the focus of our study in Phase #3.

### **QUESTIONS TO EVALUATE OUR CHURCH**

- Describe spiritual growth.
- Since coming to Christ, are you sensing spiritual growth in your life?
- How has that growth come?
- Is there mention of the Holy Spirit's ministry in their lives?
- Is the view more that the Holy Spirit's role is to give power for overcoming sin with the ultimate goal of making people better?
- Do they pray about spiritual growth? What do they pray?
- **Phase 4 – Practical sanctification – Identification with Christ/co-crucified with Christ/conformed to image of Christ – (Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20; Romans 8:28-29).**
- The Holy Spirit is teaching us to walk less in the flesh and more in the Spirit, with Christ becoming more and more the objects of our hearts. In Phase #4, we will study through the epistles with the purpose of learning to rest in our identification with Christ and His finished work. As we, by faith, begin to appropriate identification truths, and in particular our co-crucifixion with Christ, our lives will become more and more conformed to the image of Christ, manifesting the fruit of the Spirit.

Some of the important truths that will be emphasized in Phase #4 include the following:

- The believer's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. (Crucified with Him, and raised to newness of life.)
- Sanctification is the process of walking less and less in the flesh and more and more in the Spirit.
- Our part in the process is faith in the finished work of Christ, and our identification with it.
- What it means to truly walk in the Spirit.

- Putting off the old and putting on the new.
- Manifesting the life of Christ/fruit of the Spirit.

It has been suggested that the Phase #4 books be taught in the following order: Romans, Ephesians, 1 Corinthians, 1 Timothy, Titus, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, Revelation, Galatians, Colossians, 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Philemon, 2 Timothy, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Hebrews.

- In this final phase, we will study through “Romans to Revelation For Growing Believers,” “Principles of Spiritual Growth,” “God’s Masterpiece the Cross of Christ,” and “Looking Unto Jesus” lessons.
- In summary, God’s way of establishing churches is by systematically and progressively teaching through the Scriptures from creation to Revelation.

### **QUESTIONS TO EVALUATE OUR CHURCH**

- Explain the phrase “walking in the Spirit.” What does it mean? How does one walk in the Spirit?
- Is there mention of the finished work of Christ, or identification truths? Co-crucifixion with Christ? Co-resurrection with Christ?
- Or, is the focus man’s responsibilities and faithfulness to live the Christian life?
- What have the people been taught? Have they been taught progressively through the epistles?
- What is the emphasis of the teaching?

# ESTABLISHING THE CHURCH

## Chapter 4

### *The Mature Church*

Regarding a mature church, there are four basic areas to consider:

1. Access and engagement to God's Word.
2. Life and function of the church.
3. Leadership and discipleship.
4. Identity of the church.

#### **A. God's Word For the Church –**

##### **Entrance & Engagement**

*Entrance* relates to God's Word penetrating a culture; *Engagement* refers to the effective work of God's Word in that culture. Entrance takes place in the following forms: Lives which model a deep understanding of, as well as a dependence on God's Word, a faithful translation of Scripture which can be read and understood, and teaching of the Scripture. When this teaching is done on the basis of relationships and a deep understanding of culture, God's word engages the hearts and changes the lives of people in a dynamic way, enabling them to respond in genuine life-changing faith.

1. The believers treasure God's Word as His communication of Truth, and therefore as their complete, final, and absolute authority.
2. The believers have available in their "heart-language" a Bible.
3. All believers – regardless of age, social status, or gender – will have the opportunity to become literate and then improve their proficiency so that they are able to read God's Word and take an active role in those aspects of church life which require literacy skills.
4. The church has access to a body of Truth which has been taught systematically (chronologically) in their language and in a culturally relevant way. They will have the willingness and capacity to correctly interpret and apply this body of truth within their own cultural context; so as to encourage, to correct and to stand against error.
5. The church has an avenue to obtain printed copies of Bible lessons, literacy materials and translated Scripture, as the need arises.

#### **QUESTIONS TO EVALUATE OUR CHURCH**

- Does the church have God's Word in their heart language?

- The complete Word of God or only the New Testament?
- Is there public teaching of God's Word? Where? How often? Who teaches? What is being taught?
- Is there one on one teaching? With whom? What is the focus of this time?
- Are there signs of spiritual growth and hunger for the Word?
- Are people's lives changing? If so, describe the change.
- What about the elderly? What about children? What about the women?
- Is there an emphasis on teaching men, women, children, the elderly?
- Are all the believers literate?
- Does the church recognize the importance of literacy, and is it taking the responsibility to teach people?
- Do they have a literacy program with those who can teach literacy?
- Are older folks in the church who may never read, included and encouraged to minister in the church?
- How are they being "fed?"
- What have the leaders been taught? Who did the teaching?
- What have the current leaders taught to the church? Try to be as specific as possible; was it progressive and chronological teaching, or topical? What topics?
- What are they currently teaching?
- Do they have an understanding of teaching God's Word progressively?
- Do they see the importance of the Bible study materials that have been provided? Are they being used? Are they translating the Bible study materials and making them available to everyone who can read?

## **B. The Life of the Church: Form and Function**

The church, a living functioning, established in the faith, body of believers. The *form*, or the way things are done by the church, should grow and develop out of its source of life (Jesus Christ). The *function*, or what the church produces as a result of its life, will be culturally sensitive and will flow out from and back into the church in a natural, healthy way; all under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

1. The church will exhibit clear signs of spiritual maturity and stability, while at the same time, showing a desire for continued growth in all areas of the Christian life. The motivation and basis for growth will be a solid understanding of God's grace and the believer's position in Christ.

2. The church will know how to apply Scriptural principles in order to respond in a socially appropriate way to any major cultural dilemmas they face as God's children living in that society.
3. The believers will show tangible evidence of love and generosity among themselves and to others. (There will be some process for the church to look after anyone in genuine need, including those who require help because of commitments to God's work.)
4. The church will gather together at both planned and informal times. (There will be ongoing evaluation regarding where to meet, how often and for what purpose. Adjustments will be made to fit the cultural circumstances at any given time or location, while also promoting unity, communal worship and the teaching of God's Word.)
5. There will be a second generation of believers showing real signs of spiritual life and growth, and there will be the desire and ability to pass on truth to others as they become old enough to understand.
6. The church will evidence a sense of responsibility and a knowledge of how to reach out in evangelism and church planting. New church planting efforts will be started as a result of the church sensing the need, and with its support and oversight.

### **QUESTIONS TO EVALUATE OUR CHURCH**

- When and how often does the church meet together? What is the purpose for meeting? Consider the reasons given for meeting.
- Is the church (as a body) clear on God's grace regarding salvation? How about sanctification?
- What evidences are seen of a continuing desire to grow spiritually? Is it apparent in each generation, or only a specific group?
- What evidences of maturity are seen?
- Are the believers showing love to one another? How?
- What are the evidences of the church growing in unity? Is there disunity?
- How much of a priority is "God's work" in believer's lives?
- How is this being shown?
- How are people involved in the advancement of "God's work?"
- Is there a clear understanding regarding financial giving? What is the motivation for giving; legalism or grace?
- What would most people in the church say is the reason for giving?

- Does the church recognize its responsibility for the economic well being of its pastors and missionaries?
- Is it ABLE to fulfill these responsibilities? Either from a spiritually mature standpoint, or from a financial standpoint?
- Does church life extend outside of meeting together on Sundays or Wednesday evenings, etc.?

### **C. Discipleship in the Church – Leaders and Led**

Discipleship is the practical application of Truth within the proximity and vulnerability of relationships. Discipleship extends the engagement of God’s Word, communicating Truth apart from the detachment of a formal teaching context. It has the goal of equality and envisions each individual functioning to the benefit of the church in his God-engifted capacity. A significant part of discipleship focuses on the formation and reproduction of a team of godly leaders who are committed to being discipled and discipling others.

1. Discipleship will increasingly be part of the fabric of church life, and will be possible because of two different groups in the church; those who desire to be helped, and those who, having gone before in the walk of faith, are willing to help the ones coming behind.
2. Although much of the discipleship will take place informally, Bible teachers and leaders will be discipled along an established “path” to ensure that they receive the specific training and equipping in how to teach and lead.
3. The church will have recognized leaders. They will have the desire and gifts to teach and shepherd the believers in their care, recognize and deal with any areas of syncretism, contend with sin in the church – with the ultimate goal of restoration, disciple and then recognize others in their areas of gifting (including church leadership).

### **THE PROCESS OF DISCIPLESHIP**

**Stage 1** – Teaching attributes of God, man’s sinfulness, man’s helplessness, that God communicates with man, God’s plan is the Gospel.

**Stage 2** – Man is placed into Christ at salvation, accepted in Christ, God’s children, made righteous, has eternal life.

**Stage 3** – Holy Spirit led, Spirit’s faithfulness, Spirit’s ministry.

**Stage 4** – Identification with Christ, crucified with Christ, putting off the old, raised to new life, basis for sanctification. **Ephesians 4:22-24**

**Stage 5 – Fruit of the Spirit, manifesting the life of Christ, walking in the Spirit, putting on the new, Ephesians 4:13 – “Attaining to the measure of the fullness of Christ.”**

### **QUESTIONS TO EVALUATE OUR CHURCH**

- Do the church leaders have a clear understanding of what is to be the goal and content of true discipleship?
- Are the leaders discipling? Is anyone?
- Are women discipling women?
- Where is discipleship taking place?
- What about the next generation of leaders? Are there men that are targeted?
- Are the believers studying the Bible in their own homes?
- Are they applying the truths that they are learning?
- Other than in formal teaching times, what evidences are there of God’s Word being communicated? (**Titus 2:1-8**)
- Do the church members understand the purpose of the spiritual gifts and their own responsibility to use what god has given them?
- Is the church leadership giving individual believers opportunities to minister through their spiritual gifts?
- Does the church leadership understand that they are disciple makers; that they are to equip the believers for the work of the ministry?
- What is being done to encourage the women in the area of leadership among women?
- Are leaders showing a commitment to their own personal spiritual growth?
- How willing are the leaders to admit needs in their own life?
- Are leaders able to Biblically confront each other with areas of concern?
- Do the leaders see how they fit together as a team, using their particular spiritual gifts for the growth of the church? Do they appreciate the differences/strengths that each brings to the leadership team?
- What is being done to ensure that discipleship continues into the future?
- How are Bible teachers being developed?
- Who is doing the teaching?
- Who can be included in Bible teacher classes?
- Is there a need to train men and women Bible teachers differently?
- What further training is required for potential leaders?
- Were the church leaders accepted by the church on the basis of leadership qualifications as seen in I Timothy and Titus?
- Are there church leaders that are able to teach?

- Are there church leader who are shepherding the believers?
- How are they showing care and concern to the flock?
- Are the church leaders teaching in a way that confronts cultural obstacles?
- Do the church leaders understand syncretism?
- Are the church leaders confronting sin in the lives of the believers, both individually and as a body?
- Has the church ever had to carry out “church discipline?”

#### **D. Identity as a Church – Within and Without**

Identity relates to the way the church sees itself from *within and how it is perceived from without*. From within, identity has to do with the believers’ understanding of who they are, how they came to be, and why they exist as a body. From without, identity has to do with how the society perceives it, that is, if it is seen as a distinct entity within the society and how it is seen to be different. Identity also includes issues of composition (how well represented are different strata within the society), cohesion (what is it that holds them together), and community (how they relate within and without). The quality of relationships it establishes and develops will result from its own sense of identity and how others perceive its identity.

1. The church will be gaining a balanced view of its identity founded on an understanding of God’s character and the believer’s position in Christ. The believers will have a functional understanding of the things which make the church a distinct entity in their society and in the world.
2. The believers will evidence a measure of understanding about the privilege they have to be part of a body of believers, and of the protection and spiritual sustenance that is to be found within that body.
3. The believers will be making whatever steps are possible to clarify their position within the society – to communicate who they are, what the church is for, and to address areas of misconception in that regard.
4. Foundations will be established for the church to learn how to handle relationships:
  - \*Among themselves as local bodies of believers
  - \*With different levels of government authorities
5. The believers will have a growing realization of the part they can play in fulfilling the Great Commission, and they will show a willingness to continue taking steps of faith beyond what might be assumed as the limits of their responsibility.

## QUESTIONS TO EVALUATE OUR CHURCH

### 1. Within

- What do the believers say is the purpose of the church?
- Who are they?
- How they came to be?
- Why they exist as a body?
- Does the church have a statement of faith and purpose?
- Is a close relationship being demonstrated between the believers, based on their faith in Christ?
- Has a sense of belonging been developed among the believers?
- How does the church help to protect the believers in times of difficulty or when under pressures/persecution to conform to cultural traditions?
- Does the church provide spiritual direction for believers at all times?

### 2. Without

- What does the world say is the purpose of the church?
- Are believers able to explain the difference between true Christianity and other beliefs such as animism, Catholicism, Mormonism, Seventh Day Adventist, charismatics, etc.?
- Does the community understand why the believers no longer participate in traditions that go against God's Word? Are the believers communicating that they desire to base their entire life on the truths of God's Word?
- Does the community expect the church to contribute to the life of the community?

### IN SUMMARY:

#### The Mature Church

1. **Access and engagement to God's Word** – does the church have the Bible, are the leaders teaching the whole counsel of God, is there a Bible study curriculum available, are the people literate.
2. **Life and function** – New Testament principles, body functioning, manifesting the life of Christ, reproducing, intimately connected to the Head.
3. **Leaders/discipleship** – qualified leaders, identification with Christ, rightly dividing God's Word, true discipleship, walking in the Spirit.

4. **Identity** – who they are in Christ in the local context, Christ is the standard, not other churches.

# ESTABLISHING THE CHURCH

## Chapter 5

### *Who Should Lead the Church?*

## Who Should Lead the Church?

### Man's Methods

- Before we consider what the Scriptures have to say regarding who should lead the church, it might be good to look at the various methods men have employed in the church through the centuries. We will consider this question by looking at the patterns of power of authority in the church as well as the types of people who have been placed in authority.

### Patterns of Power

- Throughout its history the Church has leaned toward one of two extreme courses in leadership. In the first of these courses the Church has tended to be led by one strong leader. This has caused sharp distinction between the “clergy” and the “laity,” or we could use the terms “paid staff” and “lay leaders.” However, any clear reading of the New Testament would make clear that all who believe in Jesus Christ are gifted by God to do the work of the ministry. There is no cast-system with God. The Bible knows nothing of a peculiar high class who has been given authority over everyone else in the church.
- The second course the Church has taken has been the polar opposite. In this course, leadership has been placed in the hands of “all,” everybody is supposed to lead (congregational rule). In this system everybody in the church has an equal vote in how the church is conducted. While this may at first seem attractive, it inevitably runs afoul of two clear Scriptural principles: maturity and unity. The Bible from beginning to end makes it clear that the wise and mature are to be followed. The essence of majority rule, on the other hand, is that the interests of all, both the wise and the unwise, will produce the best decisions. But when “each man does what is right in his own eyes” doom inevitably follows in the Scriptures, and in the end produce conflict and divisions, not unity.

### People of Power

- Who often become the leaders in these systems of power? Frequently the wrong people. Those often found leading the church are the:
  - \*Most ambitious
  - \*Most prestigious
  - \*Most wealthy

- \*Most vocal
- \*Most eloquent
- \*Most controlling
- \*Most willing/available
- \*Most compliant

- But are any of these God’s standards for the leaders of His Church? To answer this question, let’s explore now God’s method for leadership as opposed to the standards of men.

## God’s Method

### *Plurality of Leaders*

- No one person has all of the gifts, abilities, and wisdom needed to function as Christ would. In **Romans 12:3**, Paul admonishes/warns that we are not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think, and then in **verse 4** he explains why; because we are all members of one body with differing functions/roles. It might be good to think of it in this way: there is unity in the body of Christ, but there is also diversity in our functions or God-given roles. This then, is Paul’s lead-in to sharing the seven motivational gifts in **Romans 12:6-8**.
- He begins in **verse 6** by saying, **“having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us;”** and then he shares the seven motivational gifts of prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, giving, administration, and mercy, emphasizing the fact that it is all by God’s choice and grace that we are placed into the body of Christ (**I Corinthians 12:18**) with one of these motivational gifts for the purpose of profiting the entire body (**I Corinthians 12:4-7**). (We are taking the liberty here to use the word “motivational” to explain the idea that one of these seven gifts in **Romans 12** will be our primary interest/driving force within/motivation.)
- It might be good to stop a moment (**Psalms 46:10** – **“Be still and know that I am God,”**) and meditate on the fact that God has made us incomplete and in need of one another. Some scriptures to consider are **Romans 12:1-8**; **I Corinthians 12**; **Ephesians 4:1-16**, keeping in mind that the motivational gifts in **Romans 12** are different from the ministerial gifts mentioned in other scriptures. Also it might be good at this point to mention that in the “Chain of Grace” Bible lessons Book #4, we have an explanation of each of the seven motivational gifts and a test that can be a help in determining your gift, as well as a study entitled “Charismatic Questions” which answers the confusion surrounding the gifts listed in **I Corinthians 12**.
- From all that has been shared, we can conclude that God’s plan for leadership must involve more than “one” leader. If these indeed are motivational gifts in **Romans 12**,

and we are correct in believing that we only receive one of these motivational gifts at salvation (even though as we grow in grace and knowledge of Christ we take on the characteristics of the other six), we as leaders in the Church of Jesus Christ desperately need one another in order to see clearly the full counsel of God in any situation.

- When local churches were established in the first century, it is very clear from the historical record in Scripture that spiritual leaders (plural) were appointed to lead these churches. For example, on the second missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas retraced their steps and went back to the cities in which they had previously made many disciples and appointed elders in every church, **Acts 14:21-23**.
- In addition, Paul left Titus in Crete to organize the churches that had just been founded. Part of that work involved appointing elders in every city, **Titus 1:5**.
- Many churches have ignored the Biblically taught oversight of the church by a plurality of elders and replaced it with a one-man pastor which is difficult to defend from the Scriptures.
- The New Testament record clearly reveals that the oversight of many of the churches was committed to a council of elders. Some example are:
  1. Barnabas and Saul gave their offering for Judea's poor to the elders, **Acts 11:29-30**.
  2. The elders at Jerusalem came together with the apostles to discuss doctrinal controversy, **Acts 15:1-2, 6**.
  3. The Bible record reveals oversight by the plurality of elders in the churches of Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Antioch (**Acts 14:21-23**), Ephesus (**Acts 20:17**), Philippi (**Philippians 1:1**), Crete (**Titus 1:5**). And according to Peter, the churches in Pontus, Galatia, Cappodocia, Asia, and Bithynia (**I Peter 1:1; 5:1**).
  4. Both Paul and Peter charged the elders to pastor/shepherd/oversee the churches, **Acts 20:17, 28; I Peter 5:1-2**.
  5. According to **Titus 1:5**, it appears that Paul did not consider a church established/fully developed until it had functioning, qualified elders.

### QUESTIONS TO EVALUATE OUR CHURCH

- Who is leading our church?
- Do we have a plurality of leadership?

# ESTABLISHING THE CHURCH

## Chapter 6

### *Portrait of a Godly Leader*

#### Portrait of a Godly Leader

- Strong leaders make for strong churches and weak leaders make for weak churches.
- A key ingredient for spiritually strong, established churches are mature leaders (selfless servants/Godly examples who are teachable in grace).
- It might be good to look at one of the greatest leaders of all time, the Apostle Paul. Wherever he went, Paul stood out as a man of unusual authority...a man who was a great leader.
- Paul never lacked followers. His Godly character seemed to move him into leadership roles over others. For example, when he and Barnabas set out on their first missionary journey, the order was “Barnabas and Saul,” **Acts 13:2**. But before long, he bypassed the older man, and we read of “Paul and Barnabas,” **Acts 13:43, 46**. It’s interesting that Barnabas did not seem to resent the leadership of this younger man, **Acts 15:2**.
- In the shipwreck on the way to Rome, (**Acts 27**) when it seemed inevitable that all would be lost, it was Paul who stood out as the leader. Paul, the prisoner, gave orders to the centurion soldiers and sailors in **verses 30-35**. Such was his personality and authority that the whole crew obeyed his orders without question. When he stood on trial for his life before King Agrippa, it was the prisoner who sentenced the judge, rather than the judge sentencing the prisoner, **Acts 26:27-29**.
- A point worth noting: Paul did not exercise his authority in a harsh manner; he was reasonable, not overbearing, yet firm, **2 Corinthians 13:10**.
- Paul’s leadership was not perfect, but it provides us with an encouraging example of a Biblical leader. It is interesting to look at the words the Bible uses to describe a leader:
  1. A leader is a **servant** – **Mark 10:42-45**; **servant-leader** – **John 13:1-16, 34**.
  2. A leader is a **steward** – **I Corinthians 4:1** – a word meaning the **manager of the resources** of a household.
  3. A leader is also an **administrator/manager** – **I Timothy 3:4-5** – a word implying the helmsman who steers a ship; one who **gives direction/manages**.
  4. A Christian leader is an **overseer** – **Acts 20:28** – a word meaning **shepherd or guardian or protector** – **Proverbs 27:23**.
  5. He is an **elder** – **I Peter 5:1** – **implies maturity**.

6. He is a **ruler** – **Romans 12:8** – one who **leads/rules/governs**. The Biblical concept of a ruler is that he rules/leads by example, **I Timothy 4:12; I Peter 5:1-3; I Thessalonians 1:6-8; Hebrews 13:7**.

- It might be good to stop here and focus on some practical characteristics of a Biblical leader.

### **TEACHABLE IN GRACE**

- One of the most important characteristics of a Biblical leader is that he is **teachable in grace** (**2 Timothy 2:1; Proverbs 1:5; 2:1-5; 12:15**) and here is the reason why: **Acts 5:38-39**.

### **DEAD TO SELF, SPIRIT PRODUCED FLEXIBILITY**

- Another interesting characteristic of a Biblical leader is a **“dead to self/Spirit-produced flexibility**.
- The flexibility that characterized Paul’s leadership is demonstrated in the way that he dealt with the problems of differing people and churches:
  1. Sometimes he was kind and paternal, **I Thessalonians 2:7-8, 11-12**.
  2. But when necessary, he thundered, **2 Corinthians 13:2-3**.
  3. Sometimes he used sarcasm, **I Corinthians 4:8-10**.
  4. Other times we see his sense of humor, **2 Corinthians 12:16**.
  5. At times he graciously praised, **I Thessalonians 2:14**.
- It’s interesting to see that Paul poured his life into a small number of men with leadership potential; he did not try to exert control over them, but ultimately relied on the Holy Spirit to mature them. It’s amazing to see the affection his followers had for him, **Acts 20:36-38**.

### **CHRIST-CONFIDENT COURAGE**

- Christ-confident courage is another big factor in the life of a leader. Paul’s walk of faith produced a tremendous amount of courage. The test of courage in a leader includes being able to meet unpleasant and difficult situations without panic, as well as the willingness to take firm, unpopular action where necessary, **Acts 20:22-23**. In **Acts 19:30-31**, Paul was willing to confront an angry mob.
- We are not to misunderstand; Paul was not a man who knew no fear, **I Corinthians 2:3**.
- In the flesh, he was just like us, but he also knew **2 Timothy 1:7**.

- Paul displayed tremendous Christ-confident courage in **Galatians 2** when, as a newcomer, he confronted the great Apostle Peter, **Galatians 2:1**.

### **GOD-PRODUCED ENDURANCE**

- God-produced endurance is another characteristic of Godly leaders, **James 1:2-4**. Notice that the trying/perfecting of our faith produces endurance; and then through enduring faith, comes maturity, **Colossians 1:11**. Note: “patiently endure with joy,” **2 Corinthians 11:24-28**. Notice Paul’s enduring faith.

### **DECISIVENESS**

- Unwavering faith in Christ produces decisiveness, which is also one of the most essential ingredients of an effective leader, **James 1:5-8; Proverbs 24:21**. The Apostle Paul, as a spiritual leader, fully qualified in this area of leadership. This was something that was evident from the moment of his salvation.
- When the heavens burst open and he saw Christ, his first question was, “Who are you, Lord?” The answer, “I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting.” Which led to his second question, “What would you have me to do?” **Acts 9:5-6; 22:8-10**.
- Once he was sure of the facts, faith sprang up and Paul made swift decisions and was willing to accept responsibility for failure as well as success. Procrastination, vacillation and indecision are fatal to a leader.
- Read and explain **I John 3:19-21**.

### **FAITH AND VISION**

- Faith and vision are very important factors in Biblical leadership. Paul made this statement in **Acts 27:25**. Paul was indeed a man of faith. His trust in Christ was absolute and wherever he went, he left a trail of people whose faith had been quickened and renewed. He saw faith as the driving principle of the Christian’s daily life, **2 Corinthians 5:7**.
- It’s interesting to give thought to the fact that faith produces vision.
- Paul was able to see things that were invisible to others because of his faith.
- A good Old Testament example of this is in **2 Kings 6** when Elisha’s servant saw clearly the enemies encircling army, but Elisha’s faith enabled him to see the invincible and encircling host of heaven; his faith imparted vision.
- Faithlessness blinds vision (**12 spies, Numbers 13-14**).
- Practically speaking, if FBC’s elders had no faith, we would not have the new facility to worship in.

## **ENDURING RELATIONSHIPS**

- Often times it is said, “**you can tell a man/leader by his relationships.**”
- A man who, by God’s grace, makes and maintains enduring friendships, is generally a good leader. The Apostle Paul was such a man.
- His love for his friends came from God; was genuine and ran deep.
- No man in the New Testament made fiercer enemies, but few men in the world have had better friends, **Colossians 4:7-14**.
- Paul involved his friends in all sorts of risks for Christ’s sake, but they followed him cheerfully because they were assured of his love and concern for them.
- One great secret of Paul’s friendships was his capacity to love unselfishly even if his love was met with nothing in return, **2 Corinthians 12:15**.
- Paul could be described as a servant-leader, **Mark 10:42-45; 2 Corinthians 4:10-12**.
- It is interesting to note that Jesus’ servant-leadership ultimately took Him to the cross. To some, this is a horrible end, but **Philippians 2** lets us see the real picture, **Philippians 2:5-11**.
- Paul’s capacity for making friends was a big factor in his ability to reproduce himself in others.

## **CHRIST-CONFIDENT MODESTY**

- In his preaching and writing, Paul shared his own inner battles, frustrations, failures, **Romans 9:1-2**.
- Paul was fully conscious of his own failures and shortcomings, **Philippians 3:12**. Many of his comments reflect his self-image. What is Paul? “Only a servant, through whom you believed.” (**1 Corinthians 3:5; 2:3; 2 Corinthians 3:5**)
- Yet, with all this very modest self-appraisal, Paul exhorts the Corinthians, “Therefore I urge you to imitate me” (**1 Corinthians 4:16**)
- However, later in the epistle he adds an important thought: “Follow me, as I follow Christ” (**1 Corinthians 11:1**).
- It’s interesting that even though Paul was quite modest, he also knew his worth; not self-worth, but rather Christ-worth. Not self esteem, but Christ-esteem.
- Holding up his life as an example was not pride; for what he was and what he had achieved had been done by Christ, **Romans 15:18**.

## **PROGRESSIVE HUMILITY – JAMES 3:13**

- Humility is not included in the requirements to be a world leader. However, to become a Christian leader, humility is a must.

- Paul was highly esteemed by others, but lived in humility. While he did not dwell on it, he never forgot that he had ruthlessly persecuted the Church of God. And when his enemies said he was not fit to live, he did not dispute it: ***“I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle”*** (1 Corinthians 15:9).
- However, ***“Although I am less than the least of all God’s people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”*** (Ephesians 3:8) Then there is Paul’s selfless statement in 1 Timothy 1:15.
- I would like to throw in here one more Biblical example of a courageous, confidently modest, humble man of faith, John the Baptist.
- It’s interesting what the Lord has to say about John the Baptist in **Luke 7:28**.
- It’s also interesting what the Holy Spirit has to say in **Luke 14:11**. Now keep in mind, there was not a greater prophet than John. With this verse in mind, what can we know about John? He must have been an extremely humble man.
- Over the years, I have given a considerable amount of thought to the humility of John. In John 1, the Priests and Levites were sent to ask, “Who are you?” He told them that he was not the Messiah that he was not Elijah, neither was he the prophet, but they wanted an answer. So they said, “Who are you that we may give an answer to them that sent us? What do you say about yourself?” Notice his response in **John 1:19-23**: ***“I am just a voice...”***
- When they continued to press him by saying, “why are you baptizing then if you are not the Christ, Elijah, or the prophet?” His answer: “I (just) baptize with water, but there is one who comes after me whose shoe latchet I am not worthy to unloose” (**John 1:24-27**).
- It’s also interesting that in John, chapter 3, when approached by his disciples regarding the fact that many people were turning away to Jesus, John answered by saying, “a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven” (**John 3:26-27**).
- Again, a self-less humble response. If a man has anything, where did it come from?
- Then there is this awesome statement in **John 3:30**: ***“He must increase and I must decrease.”*** Christ confidence.

## **SELFLESS SERVANT-LEADERSHIP**

- I would like to move on now to another essential ingredient of a Godly leader; **servant-leadership**.
- Possibly, the best term to describe a Godly, Biblical leader is this term, “self-less servant-leader.”

- There are many different thoughts regarding what a Godly leader looks like. For example (me at RBC).
- Some typical images of leaders which are common in our society: drill sergeant, football coach, corporation executive, orchestra conductor, dictator, etc.
- And now some qualities that we associate with these leaders: strength, authority, power dominance, decisiveness, superiority, intelligence, one who is never wrong, nor has needs.
- **Mark 20:42-45** – servant leader – **John 13:1-16, 34**.
- The servant-leader focuses on giving of self – **Philippians 2:3-4** – Old Testament example, **Genesis 13:5-12**.
- The servant-leader does not lord authority over others, but willingly serves the needs of all, **1 Peter 5:2-3**; **2 Corinthians 4:10-12**; **2 Corinthians 12:14-15**; **Acts 20:17-35**.
- It appears from Scripture that both John and Paul were courageous men of faith, who were confidently modest servant-leaders who were progressing toward humility. Who wouldn't want to follow them?
- I love this comment by Chuck Swindoll: *“Take heart if you don't think you fit the mold of a spiritual leader. Consider uncultured, negative, ill-prepared, unwanted, dogmatic, clumsy, fig-picker Amos.”*
- It would appear that great leaders are modest, humble servant. But how? In this extremely self-centered world, how can one become a humble, servant-leader?
- Like everything else in the Christian life, it is simply another gift from God; it's all by grace.
- Becoming a servant-leader is as much a matter of grace, as salvation...and faith is always the only condition on the human side.
- Everything in the Christian life is freely given to us, **Romans 8:32**.
- Nevertheless, it costs.
- It costs us nothing.
- It costs us everything.
- Because the cross stands at the entrance to the Christian life, it's this way, or not at all.
- **Mark 8:31-35** – Notice verse 34. We must deny/die to self which can only take place at the cross.
- Something to keep in mind is that promotion to leadership positions comes only from God, **Psalms 75:5-7**; **Romans 13:1**.
- However, we must remember that exaltation by God only comes at the cross.
- Our example is Christ Himself, **Philippians 2:8-9**...**Now Philippians 2:5-7**.
- The lower we go with Jesus into death, the higher we go with Him in resurrection.

- Without the death of self, which can only take place at the cross, our lives will only produce the deeds of the flesh (**Galatians 5:19-21**). Keep in mind that the very best that the flesh can ever produce is self-righteousness.
- Only those who embrace **Romans 6** can become a confidently modest, humble, servant-leader who walks by faith (explain **Leviticus 8**).
- For most of us, the Lord has been waiting, waiting, waiting for us to come to the end of our efforts. In all reality, He doesn't need us, and so often we are standing in His way.
- He certainly can do the work Himself; all He really wants are empty vessels that He can live His life in and through, **Galatians 2:20**.

# ESTABLISHING THE CHURCH

## Chapter 7

### *Biblical Elders*

#### SOME THOUGHTS REGARDING ELDERS:

- These local church leaders are identified in Scripture with two primary titles:
  - a. The term “**elder**” is used to describe the leaders in the churches that were primarily populated with Jewish believers. This term “elder” comes from the Jewish community, going back as far as the time of Moses.
  - b. The word “**bishop**” was used to describe spiritual leaders in churches that were populated primarily with Gentile converts. This term “bishop” comes from the Greek and Romans world and was used to refer to a commissioner who oversaw a new colony of people. These two terms were used interchangeably, particularly by the Apostle Paul. Titus 1:5 & 7; I Timothy 3:1-2; I Timothy 5:17, 19.
- Eldership is not a power position, but a service position. Thus, it is totally different than the leadership positions of the world which center on power, prestige, and pride. “An elder should not be one who says, ‘Look at me, do what I say.’ Rather, an elder is one who says, ‘Here’s my hand; let me help guide you along by what I have learned.’” Christ and the apostles who followed Him made clear that the manner in which church leaders were to serve was radically different than the manner of leadership they had seen modeled in their culture. Specifically, they were to be radically different in two ways; as selfless servants and excellent examples.
  - a. **Selfless Servants**

Christ’s goal was to create a new kind of leader, the selfless servant, who was a giver rather than a taker, as the following verses show: **Mark 9:35; 10:42-45; Luke 22:24; Acts 20:35.**
  - b. **Excellent Examples**

Leadership by service draws its strength and authority not from the use of power and demands, but from a Godly example, **John 13:12; Hebrews 13:17; I Peter 5:1-2.**
- New Testament churches had more than one elder, who jointly governed the local church and functioned as under-shepherds of Christ, **I Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:17; 15:23.**
- Some of these leaders were to be paid for their ministry, **I Timothy 5:17-18.** When a man gives a large portion of time to the ministry and because of it, is not able to work a regular job in order to provide for his family; and if the body of believers encourages and accepts his ministry, then they are responsible to provide financial assistance for him.

- Elders are restricted to male members of the congregation, **I Timothy 3:1**.
- The elders oversee, lead and shepherd the local church of God, and nowhere does the Bible suggest that the elders are under the authority of the congregation, but rather that the congregation is to submit to the guidance, protection and care of these under-shepherds of Christ, **Hebrews 13:17**.
- There are two words to describe the overall responsibility of elders.
  - a. *Managing a church:* Paul first used the word “manage” when listing the qualifications for elders in **I Timothy 3:4**. Notice that he used this term by referring to the role of a father in a family. Then in verse 5, he correlates this thought with leadership in the church. It appears that God holds the man responsible for the overall leadership in a home, and He holds the elders responsible for the overall leadership in a church, **Hebrews 3:17**.
  - b. *Pastoring a flock:* The Apostle Peter used this analogy more than any other New Testament writer did, **I Peter 5:1-3**. A shepherd is responsible for the total welfare of his sheep. He is to guard them from “savage wolves”/false teachers, **Acts 20:28-29**. He is to feed them by teaching the “whole purpose of God,” **Acts 20:27**. Manage the church/shepherding and caring for the flock/being example. **I Peter 5:1-4; I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 20:28; 2 Timothy 2:22-26**. Importance of leaders to be men of faith/men of the Word/skillful handlers of the Word using it to protect the church, **Titus 1:5, 9; I Timothy 3:2; 4:12-16; 5:17; Colossians 2:8; 2 Timothy 4:2-4; Ezekiel 34:1-10**.
- These spiritual leaders (elders) were to delegate responsibility to other qualified men (deacons) to care for the physical/cultural needs of the church. When Paul wrote to Timothy, he specified first, the qualifications for elders in **I Timothy 3:1-7**, and then he specified the qualifications for deacons, **I Timothy 3:8-10, 12**. It is interesting that the Biblical writers did not specify the functions for deacons as they did for elders; but rather merely gave qualifications for the position, and left the deacons role open-ended. One reason for this is that Christians will always need to be managed and pastured (taught the Word and ministered to in spiritual ways). On the other hand, physical/cultural needs vary from society to society.

## Recognizing Leaders and Qualifications

- How can we recognize such leaders? What should we look for in servant/leaders? The answer given in the New Testament epistles is that elders are to be appointed on the basis of moral and spiritual qualifications. (**2 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9**)

- We could boil down the **I Timothy 3 and Titus 1** qualifications to the following four categories: 1)Christ-like character; 2)Righteous reputation; 3)Healthy homes; and 4)Soundness in the Scriptures.

## A. CHRIST-LIKE CHARACTER

The man who should be recognized as an elder is the man who best exemplifies the character of Jesus Christ in his life. Specifically, the New Testament describes these Christ-like qualities in positive as well as negative categories.

### ***Positive Qualities***

1. “Temperate” (**I Timothy 3:2**) – avoiding extremes; self control
2. “Prudent” (**I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8**) – showing good judgment and common sense
3. “Gentle” (**I Timothy 3:3**) – being patient and considerate
4. “Loving what is good” (**Titus 1:8**) – being loyal to moral and ethical values
5. “Just” (**Titus 1:8**) – fair

### ***Negative Qualities***

1. “Not addicted to win” (**I Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7**) – not abusing substances
2. “Not Pugnacious” (**I Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7**) – not having a violent temper; not a fighter
3. “Uncontentious” (**I Timothy 3:3**) – being peaceful in nature
4. “Free from the love of money” (**I Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7; I Peter 5:2**) – not greedy for personal gain
5. “Not a novice” (**I Timothy 3:6; I Peter 5:5**) – not a new convert
6. “Not self-willed” (**Titus 1:7**) – not selfish or self-centered
7. “Not quick-tempered” (**Titus 1:7**) – not easily angered

## B. RIGHTEOUS REPUTATION

An elder is not only distinguished by his internal character, but also his reputation. Elders are recognized as godly by those in their church, in their neighborhoods, and in their work settings. Elders are the type of people who are exemplary church members, neighbors, and employers and employees. They are:

1. “Above reproach” (**I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6**)
2. “Hospitable” (**I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8**)
3. “Having a good reputation with those outside” (**I Timothy 3:7**)

## C. HEALTHY HOME

The Scriptures are very clear in stating that there is a direct relationship between a man's qualifications to be a leader in Christ's Church and his handling of his family life. ***"If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's Church."*** (I Timothy 3:5) Thus, if we are to look for God's choices for an elder we need to ask, "Is he a servant to his wife?" "Does he show signs of maturity and Godly wisdom in his dealings with his children?" Specifically the Scriptures give us four tests to us in evaluating the family life of an elder.

1. ***"Husband of one wife"*** (literally "a one-woman man") (I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6) – not a flirtatious man, but one who is content with and faithful to his wife.
2. ***"Manages his own household well"*** (I Timothy 3:4) – being a servant and shepherd to his own family.
3. ***"Children under control with dignity"*** (I Timothy 3:4) – having children who obey with honor and respect.
4. ***"Children who believe, not accused of dissipation"*** (Titus 1:6) – having children who display faith, who are not living recklessly, who are not rebellious.

#### D. SOUND IN THE SCRIPTURES

Last, but not least, we want to look for elders who give evidence of having a deep understanding and knowledge of the Scriptures. With regard to God's truth in the Scriptures there are four specific standards:

1. ***"Able to teach"*** (I Timothy 3:2) – having the ability to instruct in Biblical truth.
2. ***"Holding fast the Word of truth"*** (Titus 1:9) – standing firm in Biblical truth and not compromising Scripture.
3. ***"Exhort with sound doctrine"*** (Titus 1:9) – encouraging believers by means of Biblical truth.
4. ***"Refuting those who contradict"*** (Titus 1:9) – standing against false teaching.

#### LET'S SUMMARIZE

- God's plan for the leadership of His Church:
  1. His desire is for leadership by plurality, because no one man can embody all the gifts and characteristics of Christ.
  2. Leadership by maturity; displaying then wisdom of Christ that can be gained by knowledge of truth coupled with experience.

3. Leadership by service; Christ came to give us an example of a servant-leader.
  4. Leadership by example; we need to see godliness lived out in order to understand it.
- **Summary of leadership qualifications, I Timothy 3:107; Titus 1:5-9**
    1. Above reproach
    2. Husband of one wife
    3. Temperate/self control
    4. Prudent/sensible
    5. Respectable
    6. Hospitable
    7. Able to teach
    8. Not addicted to wine
    9. Not pugnacious/a fighter
    10. Gentle
    11. Uncontentious
    12. Free from the love of money
    13. Manages his household well
    14. Not a new convert
    15. Good reputation outside

### **THE MINISTRIES OF BIBLICAL LEADERS**

- What is it these Godly, servant/leaders, examples are called upon to do? What are the ministries that Christ has entrusted to elders? The New Testament epistles describe for us four categories of ministry in which elders are engaged in order to serve the rest of the church: 1)Teaching; 2)Giving direction; 3)Protecting/watchful; 4)Serving willingly.
  - A. Teaching
    1. Teaching, **I Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:7**
    2. Exhortation, **Titus 1:9**
    3. Admonition, **I Thessalonians 5:12**
    4. Humble example, **I Timothy 3:107; Titus 1:6-9; Hebrews 13:7**
  - B. Giving Direction
    1. Leading and decision-making, **Acts 16:4; I Timothy 5:17**
    2. Overseeing church life: evaluation and administration, **Acts 11:30; I Thessalonians 5:12; Hebrews 13:17**
  - C. Protecting/Watchful
    1. Guarding the church from false teaching, **Acts 20:28**
    2. Refuting false teachings and scoffers, **Titus 1:9**

D. Serving Willingly

1. Preaching and teaching, **I Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:9**
2. Opening his home in loving hospitality, **I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8**
3. Helping and praying for the weak and sick in their needs, **Acts 20:35; James 5:14**

**QUESTIONS TO EVALUATE OUR CHURCH**

Are the leaders in our church characterized by **I Timothy 3 and Titus 1**?

**ESTABLISHING THE CHURCH**  
**Chapter 8**  
*Selecting and Discipling Potential Elders*

**Choosing Biblical Leaders**

- When it comes to specifics regarding how elders are to be chosen, we are told very little.
  1. *How old should leaders/elders be?* The word “elder” seems to carry with it the idea of age. The facts are that there are certain things that can only be learned over time. Age and experience definitely enhance Godly wisdom. Most major problems that occur in churches are caused by leaders who are too young, not only in years, but they lack experience and wisdom to minister. Since many men graduate from seminary in their mid-twenties, are they qualified to lead a church? This is a difficult question. Generally speaking, it would be best for those under 30 to come under the authority of a more mature man who will be able to lead and guide him through some difficult aspects of the ministry, as Timothy (who was thought to be about 30 years old) was under the authority of Paul.
  2. *How should leaders/elders be selected?* Again, the Bible does not give specifics. We do know that Paul and Barnabas appointed elders, **Acts 14:23**. But we do have a problem: none of us are apostles. There is a principle, however, that comes from Scripture and can guide us today; elders may be appointed by someone who is already recognized as a spiritually qualified leader, just as Timothy and Titus were, **Titus 1:5**.
  3. *How many leaders should there be?* Again, the Scriptures are not clear as to how many, but what is clear is the principle of multiple leadership.
  4. *How long should leaders serve?* The Bible does not give specifics.
  5. *When there is more than one leader, should there be a primary leader?* Biblical evidence and practical experience both point to the fact that lines of authority need to be set up in the church which will guard against insecurity among the members and power struggles among the leaders (primary leaders in the synagogues, **Acts 18:8, 17**).

**Training/Choosing Leaders**

1. Choosing, **Acts 16:1-3; 13:1-4; 2 Timothy 2:1-2**.

2. Time spent pouring our lives into theirs, **Acts 11:19-26; 20:19-32** (Paul spent three years with the elders at Ephesus). The key is Biblical example, **I Peter 5:2-3; I Thessalonians 2:6-12.**
  - a. Christ's example, **John 13:12-15; Hebrews 12:1-3**
  - b. Paul's example, **Philippians 3:17; 4:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:8-9**
  - c. Teach others to be an example, **I Timothy 4:12**
  - d. What is the example that we are to model and teach, **Luke 9:23; John 12:24**; Christlikeness/Godliness, **I Timothy 3:16** – When we come to the realization that only God can make a man Godly, we are left with no option but to trust and rest, **I Thessalonians 5:24; I Peter 1:16.**
3. Allow some leaders who appear to have the gift of teaching to devote themselves to careful study of the Word, **I Timothy 4:6; Titus 2:1, 15.**
4. These men should be encouraged to take the lead in assembly meetings, at first under the supervision of a more mature leader.
5. Eventually, pass the full responsibility on to the man, **Acts 14:21-23; 3 John 4.**

### **Some practical suggestions regarding the elder selection process:**

- Errors in the selection process of elders have always been on the side of premature appointment. Therefore, we must be very careful in the appointment of elders.

### **Prerequisites**

- Wise men, clothed with knowledge, who are of honest report, full of faith, walking in the Spirit, and modeling the Christ-life, **James 3:13; Acts 6:3-5; I Peter 5:3.**
- A minimum of one year involvement in a structured ministry that requires weekly involvement.
- A substantial demonstration that the individual is a growing believer, and is teachable in grace.
- A consistent demonstration that the individual understands and is under the authority of the current leadership, **Hebrews 13:7, 17.**
- An individual who consistently demonstrates a desire to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace within the church, **Ephesians 4:3.**
- An individual who demonstrates an understanding of the principle of male headship in the home and in the church in a healthy and Biblical way, **I Corinthians 11:3.**

## PROCESS:

- The individual is observed by current elders and leadership over a period of at least one or two years as they manifest the above prerequisites and qualifications.
- As the above observers become aware of a growing maturity they share with each other observations about the individual and begin to ask the question, “is the individual ready to be considered for the position of elder?”
- As the answers to the above questions become increasingly positive, the elders nominate the individual as an elder.
- The elders invite the individual to become part of the intentional selection process. This begins with an extensive interview with the elders and other male leadership of the church based on the elder qualifications outlined in **I Timothy 3 and Titus 1**. The individual is encouraged to speak as openly and honestly as he is able about both his strengths and weaknesses. At a later meeting the elders and men gathered share their own assessment of the individual’s strengths and weaknesses. If there is consensus to move ahead with the process, the elders continue the process.
- The individual now meets with the elders, along with his wife and children (if they are old enough to participate), and goes through the same review process based on the Biblical qualifications for elder.
- The individual now meets with the elders and the members of his small group and goes through the same review process based on the Biblical qualifications for elder.
- If there is no significant obstacle to his appointment as an elder, a letter is sent to some unbelievers who are continually or frequently involved in his life (employer, neighbor, sibling, friend) asking them to write a letter of reference concerning their view of this man and his qualifications to be a leader in the church.
- If everything is sufficiently positive to this point, a letter is sent to the congregation stating that the elders are ready to appoint this man to full eldership, asking for any input they might have. Their response is to be in writing, signed by the person or in person with one of the existing elders. A limited period of time (one months) is allotted for this response to be made.
- If there is no significant negative input, the elders now appoint the individual as an elder.

## ESTABLISHING THE CHURCH

### Chapter 9

#### *Marks or Characteristics of An Immature and Mature Church*

#### When did the apostles John and Paul consider a church fully established?

- It might be good for us to look at the seven churches in Revelation, which could reveal some rather interesting thoughts regarding our subject of “Establishing Churches.” It’s possible that our study of these seven churches could reveal some marks or characteristics of un-established churches, as well as some marks or characteristics of established churches.
  1. Ephesus – religious, but no relationship, **Revelation 2:1-5**.
  2. Smyrna – under persecution for God’s purposes, **Revelation 2:8-11; 2 Corinthians 8:1-7**.
  3. Pergamos – in the world, **Revelation 2:12-17; James 4:4**.
  4. Thyatira – in idolatry (anything that we place ahead of God), **Revelation 2:18-29**.
  5. Sardis – dead with a remnant, **Revelation 3:1-6**.
  6. Philadelphia – revived, awakened believers, **Revelation 3:7-12**.
  7. Laodicea – apostate/fallen away from the faith, **Revelation 3:14-22**.
- So what are the marks or characteristics of an immature church?
  1. Religious people with little or no relationship with Jesus.
  2. Carnality/fleshly/worldly.
  3. Idolatrous/having other gods.
  4. Spiritually dead/burned out.
  5. Living in unbelief.
- Now, what are the marks/characteristics of an established church?
  1. **Revelation 3:17** – Humility (**James 3:13**) – people of the Word (**2 Timothy 3:16-4:2**), who are occupied with Christ (**Colossians 3:1-3**).
  2. **Romans 1:8** – people of faith and love – **Ephesians 1:15; Colossians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4**.
  3. **1 Corinthians 1:4-5** – Grace, utterance, knowledge (**Proverbs 24:3-4**).
  4. **Galatians 5:22-23** – People who are walking in the Spirit and manifesting the fruit of the Spirit and are walking with Christ, **1 Corinthians 1:9; 1 John 1:3** and people in whom Christ is being formed, **Galatians 4:19; 2 Timothy 2:1-2; 4:1-2; Titus 2:1-10**.

## ESTABLISHING THE CHURCH

### Chapter 10

#### *Sample Ministry Plan for Establishing the Church*

The following is an example of a ministry plan that might be helpful; let's ask the following questions:

- A. Where is God leading our church?  
**(Ephesians 4:11-16)**
- B. Where are we now?
- C. How does God want us to get from B to A, and what resources will God need to provide?
  1. After answering A, B, and C, what is the need that God has revealed? *Example:* Our need is to raise up servant-leaders with Christ-like character, righteous reputations, who lead their homes as a servant and are sound in the Scriptures.
  2. What are the key objectives that must be met to remedy the need?
    - a. To help develop men with Christ-like character.
    - b. To develop men with righteous reputations before the world.
    - c. To develop servant-leaders who lead their homes.
    - d. To train men who are sound Biblically.
  3. How are the goals to be accomplished?
    - a. Through discipleship/mentoring with Godly men.
    - b. Through studying the Bible systematically and progressively.
    - c. Through studying the "Principles of Spiritual Growth"
    - d. Etc.
  4. What are the action steps needed to be taken in order to reach the goals that will accomplish the stated objectives, which will ultimately meet the need (where and when)?
    - a. By prayerfully selecting five men in the next 30 days.
    - b. By meeting Tuesday and Thursday early mornings or evenings for 2 hours.

# ESTABLISHING THE CHURCH

## Chapter 11

### *FBC Missions Core Values*

In closing, we would like to explain the core values of our missions program at FBC.

- #1 Christ-centered:** There are many challenges facing pastors and leaders in churches throughout the world. It is very easy for church leaders to focus on the problems that arise within their churches. These would include: the burdens of ministering in a hostile environment, the lack of material resources, and the financial support. It is very easy to focus on people, problems, and programs. It is very easy to neglect to focus on the Lord Jesus Christ
- Our desire is to see God raise up spiritually strong, dead-to-self and alive-to-God local churches all over the world; churches where Christ is exalted and glorified, and where local pastors and leaders are preparing and deploying dependent disciples who are changing their world for Christ as they are being changed by Christ and into Christ-likeness (**2 Corinthians 4:5**).
- #2 Holy Spirit Led:** By Christ's ascension and the Holy Spirit's descent, Christ exchanged His bodily presence with His disciples in Jerusalem for His spiritual omnipresence with His disciples everywhere. The Holy Spirit became His representative on earth. World-wide missions are a divine movement directed not merely from heaven, but by the Holy Spirit who was sent down to earth for that very purpose. The role of the Holy Spirit in Christian missions involves empowering the individual worker spiritually, as well as directing the entire missionary movement. He is the Commander-In-Chief of God's great missionary campaign.
- #3 Biblically Based:** In writing to the Colossians, Paul said in **Colossians 2:6-7**, *"Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude."* There is no hope for being "established in the faith" without instruction from God's Word. FBC Missions is not about spreading the opinions or ideas of FBC, but about sharing the life-transforming truths of God's Word. God continues, therefore, to grow the Bible study literature ministry of our mission's ministry.
- #4 Enduring Relationships:** FBC Missions is about "PEOPLE" – real people with real needs and the privilege God gives us to come alongside these real people and partner

with them for the sake of the gospel. The reality is that Christian leaders are faced with all kinds of problems, and are in need of help to think through the problems of life. Many desire someone to draw alongside them. We see a need for more frequent visits with these men. In order for us to understand the problems that these Christian leaders are facing, it seems necessary to familiarize ourselves with the country, the people, the culture, the ministry, and other important background information. In the past number of years, we have also seen the value of bringing key leaders to FBC for the purpose of exposing them to a well organized, grace-based church. Many of the national leaders that FBC is working with have not been raised in a church, therefore they have no Biblical model to follow.

**#5 Developing Leaders:** Strong leaders make for strong churches. This was true not only in the first century churches, but the twenty-first century church as well. As God continues to open the doors for FBC to be involved in many local churches around the world, our desire is to come alongside key local church pastors and leaders and encourage them. We want to help strengthen them in their walk with God and their leadership skills. Just like in **Acts 14:21-22** where Paul and Barnabas went about strengthening and encouraging the disciples, and appointing elders in the early churches, so, too, God has graciously allowed us to go to various parts of the world to help develop leaders through enduring relationships.

**#6 We Value the Local Church:** From **I Timothy 3:15**, we can see that the local church is the “**pillar and the foundation of truth.**” **Ephesians 4:11-13** makes clear that the purpose of the local church is to prepare God’s people to do the work of the ministry so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. We wish to instill this vision of the value of a mature church in the lives of indigenous pastors and church leaders wherever we go. It is to advance the progression toward maturity that the focus of our efforts is now directed. Through literature, translations, teaching and training, we hope to see systematic and progressive spiritual growth in the local churches.



