

+ *Distinctives #1*

A family of people who are led by elders, but congregationally governed

+ Family

Various metaphors used in the NT that shape our understanding of church

- **Body**

- For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. (Rom. 12v4-5)
- We who are many are one body (1 Cor. 10v17).
- Equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ (Eph. 4v12).
- In my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church (Col. 1v24).

Also 1 Cor. 12v12, v27, Eph. 5v2, 5v30,

- **Marriage**

- Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb (Rev. 21v9).
- 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church (Eph. 5v31-32).

Also Rev 19v7-8, 2 Cor 11v12

- **Buildings (God's house(hold))**

- I am writing these things to you so that . . . you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth (1 Tim. 3v14-15).
- The church is the temple of God, built with living stones, with Christ as the foundation and cornerstone, and the Holy Spirit indwelling it. (1 Peter 2v5)
- It is time for judgment to begin at the household of God" (1 Pet. 4v17).
- Do you not know that you [pl] are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple (1 Cor. 3v16-17).

Also Heb. 3v6, 1 Cor. 3v11, Eph. 2v19-22, .1 Pet. 2v6-7 [Isa. 28v16; Ps. 118v22] 1 Cor. 6:19.

- **Family**

- I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty (2 Cor. 6v18).
- Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity (1 Tim. 5v1).
- The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless – not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He

must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. (Titus 1v5-9)

- Brothers and sisters eg Galatians 1v2, v11, 3v15, 4v12, 4v28, 4v31, 5v11, 5v13, 6v1, 6v18

Also Eph 2v19, Matthew 12v49-50, Gal 6v10, 1 Tim 3v1-6

Family seems to be the overarching metaphor used for the local church in the New Testament. How might this shape our understanding of church?

Led by Elders but congregationally governed

+ Congregationally Governed

A ***tension*** within the bible...

- ***Sometimes*** the entire church is addressed:

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Matt. 18:15-20; | - church discipline |
| Acts 6:2-6; | - choosing deacons |
| 1 Cor. 5; | - discipline - remove them |
| 2 Cor. 2:6; | - discipline - welcome them back |
| Gal. 1:3-10. | - discipline but addressed to whole churches (not leaders) |

- ***Sometimes*** Christians are called to submit to their leaders:

- Heb. 13:7,17;
Acts 20:28;
1 Peter 5:1-4.

+ Elder led

What are elders then?

Have a look at Acts 20v17, 25-28.
How are the leaders of the church in Ephesus described?

Elder (Presbyter) -

Overseer (Bishop) -

Shepherd (Pastor) -

4 Broad Aspects of Eldership

From Titus 1v5-9 and 1 Tim 3v1-7

5 The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. 6 An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe[b] and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. 7 Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless – not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. 8 Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. 9 He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

Titus 1v5-9

3 Here is a trustworthy saying: whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. 2 Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4 He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. 5 (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) 6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. 7 He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

1 Tim 3v1-7

1. Relationship with self (character)

2. Relationship with outsiders (character)

3. Teaching (gifting)

4. Desire

But what do elders actually do?

6 things... (?)

1) study & teach the bible & refute falsehood

Acts 6v4, Eph 4v11, 1 Tim 3v2, 5v17, Titus 1v9, Acts 20v17-31

2) pray

Acts 6v4, James 5

3) care for Christians

1 Peter 5v2-5

4) managing / ruling / leading / directing the church

1 Tim 5v17, 3v4-5, Acts 20v28,

5) church discipline

Matt 18v15-17, 1 Cor and 2 Cor

6) training up others

2 Tim 2v1-2