

# Church Government

## Guiding Principles of Church Government

### **Church Authority**

Matthew 16:18-19 – The keys of the kingdom given to the church

Matthew 18:15-20 – Whatever the church binds on earth is bound in heaven

1 Corinthians 6:1-3 – The saints will judge angels. Can we not handle the ministry through the power of the Spirit?

### **Christ is the head of the church**

*Ephesians 1:20-23* – “Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”

Ephesians 5:23-24 – Christ is the head of the church and the church is subject to Christ

### **Obligation to Love and Edify One Another**

*Ephesians 4:11-16* – “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

- If we make these principles paramount in our actions, we will be blessed as a congregation

### **Equality of Believers/Humility**

*John 13:14-17* – “If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. 16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. 17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”

- The greatest among us is a servant to all of us

*Galatians 3:26* – “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

- We are spiritually equal

*1 John 2:27* – “But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.”

- We all have the ability to receive teaching and leadership directly from the Spirit of God

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## Freedom of Individual & Church

2 Corinthians 1:23-24 – “Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. 24 Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.”

- Paul recognized his place as a minister (servant) and not as a lord over God’s heritage

1 Corinthians 5:4-5, 13 – Even though Paul judged that the man should be excluded, he was unable to do it. It took at action of the church

2 Corinthians 2:6-8 – Again, Paul recommended that they restore the man to fellowship, but it took at action of the church to make it happen.

## God Placed Leadership

Hebrews 13:17 – “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”

Acts 20:28 – “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”

1 Corinthians 16:13-16 – submit to others that are leaders in some capacity

- This doesn’t only apply to pastors, but others as well that are recognized as leaders in the congregation

## Levels of Church Decision Making

### One Mind/One Accord

One Mind/One Accord – These phrases are the same principle: to be unanimous in spirit and action, especially as directed by the Spirit of God.

Acts 1:14 – “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.”

Acts 2:1 – “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.”

Acts 2:46 – “And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,”

Acts 5:12 – “And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch.”

Philippians 2:2-6 – “Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. 5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:”

- This is the desire of Christ. Should we set our sites lower? If we are pressing for the prize, shouldn’t we at least aim for this?

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## Examples of the Principle of One Accord Carried Out

Acts 6:1-5 – The apostles saw a problem, proposed a solution and sought the will of the body.

- It pleased them all (one accord)

Acts 15:1-31 – A fantastic example of leadership, consensus, and action

- A difficult situation faced the church
- The spiritual leaders gathered together to prepare a recommendation
- They gained approval of the body (in one accord) and sent forth a letter authorized by the church.
- The body at Antioch was comforted and God was glorified.

## Consensus

Consensus – General agreement or accord

In practice, this is no member dissenting. Everybody agrees to the point of not disagreeing

This is the bridge between One Accord/One Mind and Democracy

## Democracy

Democracy – Government by equals in which majority rules (51%)

This is the default mode we adopt when we fail to achieve the preferred mode.

You cannot find the word, “democracy” (demokratos) in the text of the New Testament

## Example of the Principle of Democracy Carried Out

*2 Corinthians 2:6* – “Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many (the more).”

- This is the only passage that implies a vote took place
- If over half of the church cannot fellowship someone, action should be taken