

THE CHARACTER AND ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

I. Uniqueness

- A. A new historical relation with the Holy Spirit.
 - 1. Given in a new way. John 7:38-39; John 14:16-18; Acts 1:4-5
 - 2. The indwelling of the Spirit. Col. 1:27
- B. A new entity: the "body of Christ." 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:22-23
- C. Permanently sealed with the Holy Spirit.¹ 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; Eph. 4:30; John 14:16
- D. Not known in ages past. Eph. 3:5; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:26

II. Activities

- A. Evangelization. Mat. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8
 - 1. The Message, focus on the essentials. 1 Cor. 2:1-2
 - a) Jesus is the Messiah. Acts 2:36; Acts 5:31; Acts 17:3
 - b) Jesus died for our sins. Mat. 26:28; Rom. 5:9; Heb. 9:22-28
 - c) Jesus rose from the dead. Acts 4:33; Acts 13:33; Acts 17:31
 - d) Jesus will return. Acts 1:11; Acts 15:16; Heb. 9:28
 - 2. Salvation is not by human wisdom or schemes, but by the Spirit drawing men. John 1:12-13; John 3:3-7; **John 6:37-44**; Acts 16:14
- B. Fellowship of believers. Acts 2:41-42
 - 1. Salvation. Acts 2:41
 - 2. Baptism. Acts 2:41
 - 3. Instruction. Acts 2:42
 - 4. Fellowship. Acts 2:42; Heb. 10:25
 - 5. Communion. Acts 2:42
 - 6. Prayer. Acts 2:42

III. Organization

- A. Christ the head. 1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 1:22; Eph. 5:23; **Col. 1:18**;
- B. Elders - a plural group of leaders. Acts 11:30; **Acts 14:23**; Acts 20:17; Acts 20:28; **Tit. 1:5**; Jas. 5:14
 - 1. Pastors vs. Elders vs. Bishops: how do they differ?
"Scripture is quite clear that these descriptive titles relate to the same pastoral office. The terms elder and bishop are synonymous in Acts 20:17 and Tit. 1:5-7. The

¹ Just how permanent is this sealing? Examples of the intended permanence of sealing: (1) Mtt. 27:66 the tomb (2) John 3:33 Jesus' testimony (3) John 6:27 Jesus sealed by the Father (4) Rev. 7:3 witnessed during the tribulation (5) Rev. 10:4 what the seven thunders uttered (6) Rev. 20:3 Satan during the millennium. Compare the permanent indwelling of the New Testament believer with the statement of David in Ps. 51:11.

terms elder, bishop, and shepherd are synonymous in 1Pe. 5:1-2. The leadership role of elders is also evident in the shepherdly activity of Jas. 5:14. As clearly noted by Lightfoot, in biblical times elder and bishop were synonymous terms." [MacArthur, John Jr., *Rediscovering Pastoral Ministry*. (Dallas: Word Publishing: 1995), p. 39.] The elders of Acts 20:17 are called bishops in Acts 20:28 and are to feed the flock as shepherds.

2. Qualifications. 1Ti. 3:1-7

C. Deacons. Acts 6:2-5; Php. 1:1; 1Ti. 3:8

1. Qualifications. 1Ti. 3:8-13

2. Unlike deacons, elders focus their efforts on feeding and tending the flock spiritually. The office of deacon was initially created so that the elders could give themselves completely to prayer and the Word. Acts 6:2-4; Eph. 4:11; 1Ti. 4:13; 1Ti. 5:17

3. Deacons also were gifted in other ways besides physical service.

a) Stephen perform great wonders and miracles. Acts 6:8

b) Philip took the gospel to Samaria and performed miracles (Acts 8:6; Acts 8:13) and was gifted as an evangelist (Acts 21:8).

D. Gifts. 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11

1. For edification and equipping of the church. Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:7; Eph. 4:11

2. The saints (members of the church) do the work of the ministry! Eph. 4:12

IV. Character

A. United. Acts 2:44; Acts 4:32; Eph. 4:1-7

B. Steadfast. Acts 2:42; Eph. 4:14-16

C. Charitable. Acts 2:45; Acts 4:34-35; Eph. 4:28

D. Joyful. Acts 2:46-47; Eph. 5:18-21