

One Pastor and Church Government

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Some of the information in this outline was gleaned from Pastor Ben Townsend's book, *In Defense of One Pastor*.

I. There are only two offices in the NT church today: pastors (bishops) and deacons (**Phi 1:1**).

1. The office of pastor or bishop (**1Ti 3:1**).

A. The office of the pastor has several names which describe its different functions.

i. A pastor (**Eph 4:11**).

- a. Pastor - *Etymology* L. pastor-em shepherd, lit. 'feeder, giver of pasture', 1. A herdsman or shepherd. 2. A shepherd of souls; one who has the spiritual oversight over a company or body of Christians, as bishop, priest, minister, etc.; *spec.* the minister in charge of a church or congregation, with particular reference to the spiritual care of his 'flock'.
- b. Peter was a pastor (a feeder of the church) (**Joh 21:15-17 c/w 1Pe 5:1-2**).
- c. The elders of the church at Ephesus were likewise pastors (**Act 20:17 c/w Act 20:28**).
- d. As a pastor, the man of God spiritually feeds and cares for the church which is God's flock.

ii. An elder (**Tit 1:5; Act 14:23; Act 20:17 c/w 28; 1Ti 5:17; 1Pe 5:1-2**).

- a. Elder - B. n. An elder person, *lit.* and *fig.* 1. a. A parent; an ancestor, forefather; hence, in wider sense, a predecessor, one who lived in former days. 4. a. In ecclesiastical use. ...the title given to a certain order or class of office-bearers in the early Christian Church....
- b. As the elder, the pastor is to be viewed as the patriarch and mature leader of the church.

iii. A bishop (**1Ti 3:1-2; Tit 1:7; Php 1:1**).

- a. Bishop - 1. A spiritual superintendent or overseer in the Christian Church.
- b. Superintendent - 1. a. An officer or official who has the chief charge, oversight, control, or direction of some business, institution, or works; an overseer.
- c. Oversight - 1. a. Supervision, superintendence, inspection; charge, care, management, control.
- d. Control - *n.* 1. a. The fact of controlling, or of checking and directing action; the function or power of directing and regulating; domination, command, sway.
- e. As the bishop, the pastor is a spiritual supervisor and overseer of the church who checks and directs its action.

iv. An overseer (**Act 20:28**).

- a. Overseer - 1. a. One who oversees or superintends, a supervisor; *esp.* one whose business it is to superintend a piece of work, or a body of workmen; a superintendent (of workmen, slaves, convicts, etc.).

- b. As the overseer, the pastor oversees and superintends the membership of the church.
- v. A steward (**Tit 1:7; Luk 12:42; 1Co 4:1-2**).
 - a. Steward - 1. a. An official who controls the domestic affairs of a household, supervising the service of his master's table, directing the domestics, and regulating household expenditure; a major-domo.
 - b. As the steward, the pastor is the servant of Christ who has the control of the domestic affairs of the church, including a final say concerning its finances.
- vi. A minister (**1Co 4:1; Act 26:16; Rom 15:16; Eph 3:7; Col 1:23; 1Th 3:2; 1Ti 4:6**).
 - a. Minister - 1. a. A servant, attendant. 2. a. One who acts under the authority of another; one who carries out executive duties as the agent or representative of a superior.
 - b. As the minister, the pastor is a servant of Jesus Christ and of the His church.
 - c. He is also a representative of Jesus Christ who carries out the executive duties which Christ gives him in His word.
- vii. A preacher (**Rom 10:14; 2Ti 4:2**)
 - a. Preacher *n.* - One who preaches. 1. a. One who proclaims or sets forth religious doctrine by public discourse; one who delivers a sermon or sermons; *esp.* one whose occupation or function it is to preach the gospel; a minister of religion; *spec.* one licensed to preach.
 - b. As a preacher, the pastor proclaims God's word to the church.

B. These are all titles for the same office and are used interchangeably in the Bible.

- i. A pastor:
 - a. A pastor is an overseer (**Act 20:28**).
 - b. Since a bishop is an overseer, therefore a pastor is also a bishop.
 - c. A pastor is an elder (**Act 20:17 c/w Act 20:28; 1Pe 5:1-2**).
 - d. "That the "pastors" here were the bishops and presbyters of the Church, is evident from Act 20:28; 1Pe 5:1, 1Pe 5:2, where the bishops' and presbyters' office is said to be "to feed" the flock. The term, "shepherd" or "pastor," is used of guiding and governing and not merely instructing, whence it is applied to kings, rather than prophets or priests (Eze 34:23; Jer 23:4)." (Jameson, Faussett, and Brown Commentary, commenting on Eph 4:11)
- ii. An elder:
 - a. An elder is an overseer (**Act 20:17 c/w Act 20:28**).
 - b. An elder is a bishop (**Tit 1:5-7**).
 - c. An elder is a pastor (**1Pe 5:1-2**).
- iii. A bishop:
 - a. A bishop is an elder (**Tit 1:5-7**).
 - b. A bishop is an overseer and a steward (see definitions).

- c. Since a bishop is an overseer, and a pastor is an overseer, therefore a bishop is a pastor.
- iv. An overseer:
 - a. An overseer is an elder (**1Pe 5:1-2**).
 - b. An overseer is a pastor (**Act 20:28**).
 - c. An overseer is a bishop and steward (see definitions).
- v. A steward:
 - a. A steward is a bishop, which is an overseer (**Tit 1:7**).
 - b. A steward is an elder (**Tit 1:5-7**).
 - c. A steward is a minister (**1Co 4:1**).
- vi. A minister is a steward (**1Co 4:1**).
- vii. A preacher is a pastor (**2Ti 4:2**).
- viii. Therefore, the man given the charge of a church is its pastor, elder, bishop, overseer, steward, minister, and preacher.

C. The pastor has the following duties:

- i. Reading (**1Ti 4:13**) and studying (**2Ti 2:15; 1Ti 4:15-16**)
- ii. Teaching (**1Ti 3:2; 2Ti 2:2; 2Ti 2:24-26**), both publicly and privately (**Act 20:20**)
- iii. Preaching (**2Ti 4:2**)
- iv. Perfecting and edifying the saints, and unifying the church (**Eph 4:11-13, 15-16**)
- v. Protecting the church from heresy (**Eph 4:14; 1Ti 1:3; Tit 3:10-11**)
- vi. Defending the faith (**Tit 1:9-11**)
- vii. Warning (**Col 1:28**), charging (**1Ti 5:7; 1Ti 6:17**), exhorting (**Tit 2:6, 15**), admonishing (**1Th 5:12**), rebuking (**2Ti 4:2; 1Ti 5:20**)
- viii. Ruling (**1Ti 3:4-5; 1Ti 5:17; Heb 13:7,17**)
- ix. Keeping order in the house of God (**1Co 14:40 & Col 2:5 c/w 1Ti 2:9-12; 1Ti 3:15**)
- x. Leading (**1Ti 4:12; 1Co 11:1**)
- xi. Guiding decisions that must be made in church matters (**1Ti 5:3-16**)
- xii. Baptizing (**2Ti 4:5 c/w Act 21:8 c/w Act 8:12**)
- xiii. Starting churches (**2Ti 4:5 c/w Act 21:8 c/w Act 8:5,12 c/w Act 9:31**)
- xiv. Identifying and proving potential pastors (**1Ti 3:1-7**), and ordaining them (**Tit 1:5; Act 14:23**)
- xv. Ordaining deacons when needed (**1Ti 3:8-13**)

2. The office of a deacon (**1Ti 3:8-13**).

- A. The office of a deacon was given for only one purpose: serving widows tables (**Act 6:1-6**).
 - i. They were ordained for "this business" (**Act 6:3**).
 - ii. There is no other duty given to deacons in the NT.
- B. Nowhere in scripture are deacons given the rule or authority of the church.
- C. Nowhere in scripture are deacons given a teaching office.

3. The office of the apostles and prophets ceased by the end of the first century when the New Testament was complete, after which there was no need for apostles and prophets to prophesy and give God's word to His churches (**1Co 13:8-10**).

A. No man today can meet the qualifications to be an apostle (**Act 1:21-22**).

B. When the New Testament revelation was complete, the gift of prophecy ceased, and so did the office of the prophet (**1Co 13:8-10**).

II. One pastor is sufficient to rule and oversee a church.

1. The example of Jesus and His church.

A. Jesus built His church during His earthly ministry (**Mat 16:18**).

i. The church was established while He was on earth (**Mat 18:17**).

ii. Jesus built His church out of baptized disciples (**Mat 3:1-6**) whom He called to follow Him (**Mat 4:18-22**).

iii. He sang hymns to God with His church (**Heb 2:12 c/w Mat 26:30**).

iv. He served the first communion to His church (**Mat 26:26-28**), which was the pattern for all other local churches (**1Co 11:23-26**).

B. Jesus was the pastor and bishop of His church.

i. Pastor - 1. A herdsman or shepherd. Now unusual. 2. A shepherd of souls; one who has the spiritual oversight over a company or body of Christians, as bishop, priest, minister, etc.; spec. the minister in charge of a church or congregation, with particular reference to the spiritual care of his 'flock'.

ii. Jesus was a shepherd, which is a pastor (**Mat 26:31; Joh 10:11,14; 1Pe 2:25; 1Pe 5:4; Heb 13:20**).

iii. Jesus had a flock (**Luk 12:32**).

iv. Jesus was a bishop (**1Pe 2:25**).

C. Jesus is the Chief Shepherd which demands that there are shepherds (pastors) under Him (**1Pe 5:4**).

i. God had promised to give His people pastors to feed them with knowledge and understanding (**Jer 3:15**).

ii. This promise was fulfilled when Jesus gave His churches pastors and teachers (**Eph 4:11-12**).

iii. Jesus' pastors are the masters (rulers and teachers) of His assemblies (churches) who give His (the one Chief Shepherd) words to them (**Ecc 12:11**).

a. Master *n.* - I. A man having control or authority. 1. a. *gen.* One having direction or control over the action of another or others; a director, leader, chief, commander; a ruler, governor. II. A teacher; one qualified to teach.

b. Assembly *n.* - I. The action or fact of assembling, the state of being assembled. 1. a. Gathering together, meeting; the state of being collected or gathered; = assemblage 1. II. The company assembled.

4. A gathering of persons; a number of people met together; a concourse, throng.

c. A church is an assembly.

(i) Church *n.* - III. 10. A congregation of Christians locally organized into a society for religious worship and spiritual purposes, under the direction of one set of spiritual office-bearers.

(ii) Congregation *n.* - 1. The action of congregating or collecting in one body or mass. 2. The result of congregating; a gathering, assemblage, or company: a. of men. 7. A body of persons assembled for religious worship or to hear a preacher. (The most common modern use.) 1526-34 Tindale Acts xiii. 43 When the congregation was broken uppe, many followed Paul and Barnabas [so 1611...]

2. James the Lord's brother was the pastor who had the rule and oversight of the Jerusalem Church.

A. Jesus appeared to James after His resurrection after He has appeared to the 12 apostles, and before He appeared to the other apostles (**1Co 15:5-7**).

B. James the Lord's brother was an apostle (**Gal 1:19**), but not one of the original 12.

C. James the brother of John was killed by king Herod early in the days of the spread of Christianity (**Act 12:1-2**).

D. After James the brother of John was killed and Peter was miraculously saved from prison, he told the brethren to go tell the news to James and the brethren (**Act 12:17**).

E. This James appears to be the presiding elder of the church in Jerusalem (**Act 15:13-22; Act 21:18**).

i. James, the presiding elder at Jerusalem, appears to be James the Lord's brother because Paul mentions seeing James the Lord's brother with Peter when he went to Jerusalem three years after his conversion (**Gal 1:17-19 c/w Act 9:26-28**).

ii. This was before the death of James the brother of John in **Acts 12:1-2**.

iii. In the next chapter of Galatians, Paul recounts when he and Barnabas went to Jerusalem 14 years later to dispute with the Pharisees in Jerusalem (**Gal 2:1-5**) which happened in **Act 15:1-2**.

iv. There, Paul met James, Peter, and John (**Gal 2:9 c/w Act 15:7,13-14**).

v. In that Paul had previously referred to meeting James the Lord's brother who was an apostle in Jerusalem in **Gal 1:18-19**, and then mentions meeting James again in Jerusalem in **Gal 2:9** after James the brother of John was dead, it seems reasonable to conclude that James the Lord's brother was the presiding elder in the Jerusalem church in Acts 15.

F. There were many elders in the Jerusalem church (**Act 15:2**) because there were thousands of members to care for (**Act 2:41; Act 4:4; Act 21:20**), but James was the pastor who had the rule and oversight of the church (**Act 15:13-22**).

3. Timothy was the pastor and overseer of the church in Ephesus.

A. The church in Ephesus had many elders (**Act 20:17**).

B. But Timothy was the pastor who had the rule and oversight for a time (**1Ti 1:3**).

4. Titus had the singular authority to set in order the things that were wanting in the church and to ordain elders in every city on island of Crete (**Tit 1:5**).
 - A. Paul had been to Crete (we know this because he *left* Titus there) and had started churches in the cities of the island.
 - B. Paul ordained (appointed) Titus as an elder and then left him in Crete with the oversight of the churches there that didn't yet have a pastor.
 - C. As an ordained elder, Titus had the authority and responsibility to ordain elders in those churches (one elder per church - this will be proven later in Section V,6).
 - D. Paul did not instruct a group of elders in the church to set in order the things that were wanting, but rather Titus who was *the* pastor of the church.

5. The churches of Asia each had their own pastor who was addressed by Jesus Christ.
 - A. The letters to the seven churches were addressed "unto the angel of the church in..." (**Rev 2:1,8,etc.**)
 - B. The angels are represented by the seven stars in Christ's right hand (**Rev 1:20**).
 - i. Angels are messengers.
 - a. Angel *n.* - 1. a. A ministering spirit or divine messenger; one of an order of spiritual beings superior to man in power and intelligence, who, according to the Jewish, Christian, Islamic, and other theologies, are the attendants and messengers of the Deity.
 - b. God used them to send messages to His people (**Dan 9:20-22; Luk 1:28-33**).
 - ii. Angels are ministers (**Heb 1:7,14**).
 - C. Pastors are likewise messengers and ministers of God.
 - i. Pastors are called the messengers of the churches (**2Co 8:23**).
 - a. Prophets are called messengers (**Hag 1:13; Mal 3:1**).
 - b. Priests are called messengers (**Mal 2:7**).
 - ii. Pastors are called ministers of the church (**1Co 3:5; 2Co 3:6**).
 - D. Paul was received by the church as an angel (**Gal 4:14**).
 - E. Pastors watch over and protect the church like guardian angels (**Psa 91:11-12 & Mat 18:10 & Heb 1:14 c/w Heb 13:17**)
 - F. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the angels to whom the letters were addressed were the pastors of the churches.
 - G. This is not an unreasonable interpretation, in that the book of Revelation is *signified* (*To be a sign or symbol of*) (**Rev 1:1**).
 - H. It is *not* reasonable to conclude that John was writing to literal angels when addressing the seven churches of Asia for the following reasons.
 - i. There is plenty of scripture which shows that pastors oversee churches.
 - ii. Outside of Rev 1-3, there is no scripture that indicates that angels are in authority over local churches.
 - iii. If John were writing to actual angels, how was he to deliver the letter to them?
 - iv. If the letters to the churches were addressed to actual angels, how could five of God's holy angels been presiding over churches with moral and doctrinal sin in them?

- v. Rather than oversee churches, angels observe them in order to learn the truth revealed in the preaching of the word of God (**Eph 3:10; 1Pe 1:12**).
 - I. "The angels or pastors of the seven churches, Rev 1:20. The ministers of the Gospel are compared to stars, because of their efficient cause, God, who has made them, and fixed them in their proper place, and for his glory;..." (John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, commenting on Rev 1:16)
 - J. The letters to the churches were each addressed to "the angel of the church" (**Rev 2:1,8,12,18; Rev 3:1,7,14**).
 - i. None of the letters were addressed to "the angels of the church."
 - ii. This means that Jesus held just one pastor responsible for the conduct and state of each church.
 - iii. The church in Ephesus had multiple elders (**Act 20:17,28**).
 - iv. This means that there was one pastor who had the oversight of the church of Ephesus, including its other elders.
6. Jesus taught in a parable that a lord makes a faithful and wise steward to be ruler over his household (**Luk 12:42**).
- A. Steward *n.* - 1. a. An official who controls the domestic affairs of a household, supervising the service of his master's table, directing the domestics, and regulating household expenditure; a major-domo.
 - B. This parable shows that the Lord appoints *one* faithful steward over His house.
 - C. There is only *one* steward per house (**Mat 20:8; Luk 16:1; Gen 15:2; Gen 43:19; Gen 44:4**).
 - D. The local church is the house of God (**1Ti 3:15**).
 - E. The pastor/bishop is *the* steward of God's house, the local church (**Tit 1:7; 1Co 4:1-2**).
 - F. This is yet another proof that a local church is to be ruled by one pastor.
7. A bishop is the overseer of the church.
- A. Bishop *n.* - 1. A spiritual superintendent or overseer in the Christian Church.
 - B. A bishop must be *the ruler* of his own house so that *he* can take care of the church of God (**1Ti 3:2-5**).
 - C. A house only needs one overseer (**Gen 39:1-6**).

III. There were churches in the NT which had a plurality of elders.

- 1. Some examples include:
 - A. Jerusalem (**Act 15:2**).
 - B. Philippi (**Php 1:1**).
 - C. Ephesus (**Act 20:17,28**).
- 2. These churches were very large (Jerusalem had thousands of members - **Act 2:41; Act 4:4**) and therefore needed multiple elders to oversee them.
- 3. Having multiple elders in a church that is large enough to need them is still permissible today.
- 4. But even in churches that had multiple elders, there was always one pastor who had the oversight of the church, as was the case with James in Jerusalem (see Section II,2) (**Act 15:13,19; Act 21:18**) and Timothy in Ephesus (**1Ti 1:3**).

IV. Does **1Ti 5:17** teach that there are supposed to be *teaching elders* and *ruling elders* in the church?

1. Especial *adv.* - In an especial manner; principally, chiefly. Also in phr. †*in especially* (see also *inespecially*). In later use also with adjs.: In an especial degree.
2. Especial *adj.* - 1. In senses now commonly expressed by *special*: a. Special as opposed to general (arch.); also in Law *g especial pleading, especial tail*. †b. Particular, individual, 'specific' (obs.). †c. Provided for a particular purpose (*obs.*).
3. Elders that rule well should be counted worthy of double honour (**1Ti 5:17**).
4. 1Ti 5:17 tells us that elders (in general) are rulers in the church.
5. Those that have the rule *are* those who teach the word of God (**Heb 13:7**).
 - A. There is no such thing as a Biblical elder who is not a teacher of the word of God.
 - B. This is obvious because a qualification to be an elder is that he must be apt to teach (**1Ti 3:2 c/w Tit 1:5-7**).
 - C. Elders both feed the flock (teach) and oversee (rule) them (**1Pe 5:1-2; Act 20:17,28**).
6. The elders who are especially (particularly and principally) worthy of double honour are those elders who rule well *and* labour in the word and doctrine (**1Ti 5:17**).
7. In other words, the elders that are worthy of double honour are those who do both parts of their job (ruling and teaching) well.

V. What about verses that seem to demand that a church have a plurality of elders such as the following?

1. **Heb 13:7,17,24**

- A. These verses tell us to remember, obey, and salute "*them* that have the rule over you."
- B. The book of Hebrews was written to Jewish believers who were members of a church (**Heb 10:25; Heb 3:6 c/w 1Ti 3:15 c/w 1Pe 2:5**).
- C. The church that they were members of must have been the Jerusalem Church which was comprised entirely (or nearly) of Jews.
- D. The Jerusalem Church had thousands of members (**Act 21:17-20**) and numerous apostles and elders (**Act 15:2**).
- E. The apostles and elders in the Jerusalem church were *them* that had the rule over the church.
 - i. They were those who had spoken unto them the word of God (**Heb 2:3-4 & Act 6:2 c/w Heb 13:7**).
 - ii. They were those who watched for their souls and gave an account to God of them (**Act 6:4 c/w Heb 13:17**).
- F. It would be necessary for a church with thousands of members to have a plurality of elders to rule over them.
- G. It is not necessary for a small church to have a plurality of elders since one pastor can do that work himself.

2. **1Th 5:12-13**

- A. "Them" in 1Th 5:12-13 indicates that there was more than one elder in the church in Thessalonica.
- B. It appears that the church of the Thessalonians was a large church.

- i. They were examples to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia (**1Th 1:7**).
 - ii. They spread their faith not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in "every place", so much so that Paul didn't even need to preach in those places (**1Th 1:8**).
 - iii. Achaia was in what is now southern Greece over 200 miles from Thessalonica in northern Greece.
 - iv. Therefore, the church of the Thessalonians appears to have been a large, vibrant, and growing church.
- C. As it was in large churches such as Jerusalem (**Act 4:4; Act 6:7; Act 21:20 c/w Act 15:2**) and Philippi (**Php 1:1**), there was a need to have multiple elders to govern the church in Thessalonica.

3. **Jam 5:14**

- A. James the Lord's brother was the presiding elder of the Jerusalem church (see Section II,2 above).
- B. In that James the Lord's brother was the presiding elder in the Jerusalem church, it is reasonable to conclude that he wrote the book of James which was addressed to believing Jews (**Jam 1:1**), many of whom were members of the Jerusalem church.
- C. The Jerusalem church was very large and had multiple elders (**Act 21:20 c/w Act 15:2**).
- D. The Jerusalem church also had apostles, who were themselves elders (**1Pe 5:1**), who still had the gift of healing by anointing the sick with oil (**Mar 6:7,13**).
- E. Jam 5:14 is yet another example of instruction to a large church which had multiple elders.

4. **1Pe 5:1-4**

- A. Peter was the apostle to the Jews (**Gal 2:7-8**).
- B. Peter wrote a general epistle to Jewish Christians in churches dispersed throughout the known world (**1Pe 1:1**).
- C. Therefore, **1Pe 5:1** doesn't prove that there were a multiplicity of elders in one church, nor that there needs to be.
- D. There could have been one elder in each church, or multiple elders in the larger churches such as Jerusalem to whom Peter was writing.

5. **Act 20:17,28**

- A. There were clearly multiple elders who were overseers and pastors of the church of Ephesus (**Act 20:17,28**).
- B. As has been proven in the previous sections, large churches have a need for multiple elders/pastors to oversee and feed them, which was the case with the church at Ephesus.
- C. Despite having many elders, the church at Ephesus had one pastor who was ultimately responsible for the oversight of the church (**Rev 2:1**) (the angel of the church at Ephesus was its pastor - see Section II,5).
- D. Timothy appears to have been the head pastor of the church at Ephesus for a time (**1Ti 1:3**).

6. **Act 14:23; Tit 1:5**

- A. It is alleged by some that **Act 14:23** and **Tit 1:5** teach that each church must have multiple elders.
 - i. It is alleged that just as "brethren in every city" (**Act 15:36**) means that there were multiple believers in each city, so "elders in every church" and "elders in every city" means that there were multiple elders in each church.
 - ii. This idea is proved false by the following points.
- B. The grammar of the phrases "when they had ordained them elders in every church" (**Act 14:23**), and "ordain elders in every city" (**Tit 1:5**) does not demand that more than one elder was ordained in each church.
 - i. If the grammar of **Act 14:23** and **Tit 1:5** demand that there were multiple elders in each church, then the grammar of **Lev 11:26** likewise demands that each beast had multiple carcasses.
 - a. If an error proves anything, it proves too much.
 - b. Just as each beast had only one carcass in **Lev 11:26**, each church needs only to have one elder according to the similar grammar of **Act 14:23** and **Tit 1:5**.
 - ii. **Exo 14:7** says that there were "...captains over every one of them (chariots)...."
 - a. Anyone who knows what a chariot is knows that there was only one captain over each chariot.
 - b. If the grammar of **Act 14:23** and **Tit 1:5** demand that there were multiple elders in each church, then the grammar of **Exo 14:7** likewise demands that each chariot had multiple captains.
 - c. If an error proves anything, it proves too much.
 - d. Just as each chariot had only one captain in **Exo 14:7**, each church needs only to have one elder according to the similar grammar of **Act 14:23** and **Tit 1:5**.
 - iii. **2Ch 28:24** states that there were "...altars in every corner of Jerusalem..."
 - a. How many altars can there be in one corner? Obviously one.
 - b. "Altars in every corner" simply means that there was an altar everywhere you looked on each corner of Jerusalem.
 - c. Likewise, "elders in every church" can simply mean that there was an elder in each church.
- C. The phrase "Xs in every Y" grammatically means "one X in each Y."
 - i. This terminology is used routinely in everyday language. For example:
 - a. If a hotel manager told his employee to "put centerpieces on every table" in the conference room, the worker would clearly understand that he was to put one centerpiece on each table.
 - b. "The Supreme Court opinions use this phrase over 400 times, of which the classic example is "Sheriffs in every county." It would be an interesting discussion between those who believe in multiple-elder rule and Supreme Court linguists. Let them convince the linguists that they are confusing people by saying there is more than one sheriff in each county." (Ben Townsend, *In Defense of One Pastor*, p. 93)

- c. If a man said, "Governors in every state sign many bills per year," nobody would conclude that he was saying that each state had multiple governors.
 - d. If a man said, "Judges in every court make rulings regularly," nobody would conclude that he was saying that each court had multiple judges.
- D. Likewise, the phrases "when they had ordained them elders in every church" (**Act 14:23**), and "ordain elders in every city" (**Tit 1:5**) mean that one elder (or more if necessary) was ordained in each church.
 - i. In Titus' case, there could have been more than one church in the larger cities of Crete, which would have meant that more than one elder was ordained in those cities (one per church).
 - ii. Also, it is possible that some of the churches in Crete, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch were large enough to need more than one elder.
 - iii. But the fact remains that **Act 14:23** and **Tit 1:5** do not demand that each church must have more than one elder.
- E. **Act 14:23** and **Tit 1:5** use the word "every" which is a plural word, not "each" which is singular word.
 - i. Every *adj.* - 1. Used to express distributively the sense that is expressed collectively by *all*.
 - ii. "The Scripture does not say "elders in each church," or "elders in each city." The word "each" would certainly signify a singularity for the plural word to apply to." (Ben Townsend, *In Defense of One Pastor*, p. 93)
 - iii. If those verses said "elders in *each* church," then there would be Biblical precedent for the need to have more than one elder in a local church, but such is not the case.
 - iv. "If the scriptures wanted more than on elder in *each* church, it would most certainly have said, "Ordain elders in *each* church."" (Ben Townsend, *In Defense of One Pastor*, p. 134)
 - v. In that *every* is "used to express distributively the sense that is expressed collectively by *all*," **Act 14:23** states that they "ordained them elders (plural) in every (plural) church."
 - a. In other words, they ordained them elders in all the churches.
 - b. When it is understood that *every* is used plurally, any idea that **Act 14:23** or **Tit 1:5** demand that there be multiple elders in a local church is shown to be false.
 - vi. If *one elder* were ordained in *each church*, the grammatically correct way to state that fact would be to say, "they had ordained them elders in every church" (**Act 14:23**).
 - vii. If *more than one elder* were ordained in *each church*, the grammatically correct way to state that fact would be to say, "they had ordained them elders in each church."
- 7. None of these verses state that a church *has* to have a multiplicity of elders, they simply state that some churches had multiple elders.
- 8. If the Bible indeed commands that each church must have more than one elder, then the Bible would tell us how many elders must be in each church, but such is not the case.

VI. How would a church function if it was large enough to need multiple elders?

1. If a church was large enough that one pastor could not oversee it and care for the flock adequately, then additional elders could be ordained to share the load.
2. As was already shown, if there were multiple elders in a church, there would be one head pastor who would direct the others and ultimately be responsible for the care of the church.
3. The head pastor would be responsible for setting standards and executing church discipline.
4. "...smaller churches only need one pastor/bishop/elder to lead and take care of the flock, while larger churches need several pastors/bishops/elders, with one responsible pastor/bishop/elder to lead and take care of the flock." (Ben Townsend, *In Defense of One Pastor*, p. 34)
5. If the members were all concentrated in one small geographical area and all met in the same place each Sunday for worship, then the pastors could share the teaching and counseling responsibilities.
 - A. They could alternate preaching every other Sunday, or one for could do the Sunday preaching and the other the Bible studies.
 - B. The church could be divided alphabetically by their last names and each pastor could be responsible for the problems and concerns of their respective group.
 - i. In this case the head pastor would be appealed to in the case of an irresolvable problem.
 - ii. This would be similar to how Moses ruled the nation of Israel when it was too much for him to do single handedly (**Exo 18:13-26**).
 - C. A large church could also be divided into smaller churches with each having its own pastor which would solve a lot of logistical (and other) problems.
 - D. If this were done, it would probably work best to divide the church along geographical lines to avoid the strife associated with deciding who would be members of which church.
6. If the church were spread out across a larger geographical area and were meeting in smaller groups with an elder responsible for each group, then smaller churches could be constituted of those groups and each church could have its own pastor.

VII. Should deacons have the rule of the church? How about using Roberts Rules of Order?

1. Primitive Baptist churches are oftentimes ruled and controlled by deacons, and church business is conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order, both of which are unbiblical forms of church government.
2. Each local church is to be ruled by its own pastor (elder, bishop, overseer, steward, preacher, minister) (**Heb 13:7; Heb 13:17**).
 - A. The one who has the rule of the church is the one who speaks the word of God to them, not the deacons (**Heb 13:7**).
 - i. He is the one who labors in the word and doctrine, not the deacons (**1Ti 5:17**).
 - ii. It is the elder/bishop/pastor who must be apt to teach, not the deacons (**1Ti 3:2**)
 - iii. It is the elder/pastor that is the feeder of the church, not the deacons (**1Pe 5:2; Act 20:28**).
 - B. The pastor/bishop is the steward of the church, not the deacons (**Tit 1:7**).

- i. Steward - An official who controls the domestic affairs of a household, supervising the service of his master's table, directing the domestics, and regulating household expenditure; a major-domo.
 - ii. One minister can perform all the duties of rule in the church and he doesn't need a board of deacons, elders, or trustees to assist or control him (**Tit 1:5; Luk 12:42**).
- C. Deacons were only ordained for one purpose: serving widows' tables (**Act 6:1-6**).
 - i. They were ordained for "this business" (serving widows' tables) (**Act 6:3**).
 - ii. Nowhere in scripture are deacons given the rule of the church.
 - iii. Nowhere in scripture are deacons given a teaching office.
- D. The scriptures alone should be used to govern the church, both in doctrine and in practice (**2Ti 3:16-17; Psa 119:105**).
- E. There are no Robert's Rules of Order in the scriptures.

VIII. Should the church be a democracy?

1. What's so special about a pastor? Can't all church members take part in the oversight and rule of the church?
2. Pastors have a special calling from God to serve as His ministers in His churches.
 - A. Ministers are separated unto the gospel (**Rom 1:1**).
 - B. They are separated for the work of the gospel (**Act 13:2**).
 - C. They are called by God to preach the gospel (**1Co 9:16-17; Act 16:10**).
 - D. God makes them able ministers of the New Testament (**2Co 3:6**).
 - E. God puts them into the ministry (**1Ti 1:12**).
 - F. The Holy Ghost makes them overseers (**Act 20:28**).
 - G. Their ministry is given to them by God (**2Co 5:18**).
 - H. Their ministry is a gift from God that comes by the laying on of hands by another ordained minister (**Eph 3:7-8; 1Ti 4:14; 2Ti 1:6**).
 - I. The gift of the ministry continues to be passed from one ordained minister to another throughout time (**2Ti 2:2; Tit 1:5**).
3. None of the offices of the ministry have ever belonged to all the saints (**1Co 12:29**).
4. There are high qualifications to be a pastor (**1Ti 3:1-7; Tit 1:5-9**).
5. As it was with the OT priesthood, no man takes this honour unto himself (**Heb 5:4**).
 - A. Those who try to will be judged severely by God (**Num 18:7; 1Sa 13:8-14; 2Ch 26:18-21**).
 - B. Korah held to the idea of a democratic church government.
 - i. He thought that every member of the congregation was equally blessed by God with the ability and authority to rule, and he tried to usurp Moses' God-given authority (**Num 16:1-3**).
 - ii. God showed that day who His ministers were and destroyed Korah and his company (**Num 16:23-35**).
 - iii. No weapon that is formed against the servants of the Lord shall prosper and every tongue that rises against them in judgment they will condemn because God is with them (**Isa 54:17**).

IX. Practical examples of proper church government

1. Baptism

- A. The decision of whether or not a candidate is qualified for baptism is made by the pastor (**Mat 3:7-8; Act 8:36-38**).
 - B. Once the pastor has determined that a man meets the Biblical qualifications for baptism, if possible, before baptizing him he should ask the church if anyone has any Biblical reason that the man shouldn't be baptized (**Act 10:47-48**).
 - C. This allows church members to make the pastor aware of something that he was ignorant of concerning the candidate.
2. Church discipline
- A. Church disciplinary proceedings are lead and overseen by the pastor (**1Co 5:1-5; 1Ti 1:20**).
 - B. The pastor brings the case against a commonly known sinner before the church for them to judge him.
 - C. The discipline is executed by a majority vote of the church; it is inflicted by *many* (**2Co 2:6**).
 - D. Restoration of a penitent man after a year of exclusion is accomplished by the church at the request of the pastor (**2Co 2:7-8**).
3. Ordination
- A. The examining, proving, training, and ordaining of a pastor is the pastor's duty, not the church's (**Tit 1:5-9; 1Ti 3:1-7; 2Ti 2:2**).
 - B. The ordination of a deacon
 - i. If the pastor determines that there is a need for a deacon because there are sufficient widows in the church which need food taken to them, he will ask the church to select a man of high moral character to be considered for the office (**Act 6:1-5**).
 - ii. Once the church selects a man, the pastor will examine him and prove him before ordaining him to the office of deacon (**1Ti 3:8-13; Act 6:6**).
4. On black and white issues that arise in the church or in church members' conduct, the pastor, as the executor of the word of God, has the authority to cite a verse of scripture showing what ought to be done or not done and the church must obey his instruction (**Heb 13:17**).
- A. Examples of such black and white issues are:
 - i. The pastor has the authority to (and must) instruct the church to observe communion and to use the proper elements to do so (**1Co 11:23-25**).
 - ii. The pastor has the authority to (and must) instruct the church to observe the ordinance of feetwashing (**Joh 13:14-17**).
 - iii. The pastor has the authority to (and must) instruct the church to sing hymns a cappella (**Eph 5:19; Col 3:16**).
 - iv. The pastor has the authority to (and must) instruct the church to assemble together and not forsake doing so (**Heb 10:25**).
 - v. The pastor has the authority to (and must) instruct parents to discipline and train their children (**Pro 22:6; Pro 23:13-14; Eph 6:4**).
 - B. The pastor has the authority to tell the church, or any church member, to do what God tells them to do in the Bible.
5. Executing the fine details of scriptural commands concerning church matters is the pastor's prerogative. Examples of such include:
- A. Determining when and how often communion is to be observed.

- B. Determining when and how often footwashing is to be observed.
 - C. Determining how many songs are to be sung in the church service.
 - D. Deciding who prays and how many prayers are offered in a church service.
 - E. Deciding the subject and length of the sermons that are preached in church.
 - F. A wise pastor will take into consideration the needs and concerns of church members when making these decisions.
6. Resolving disputes between church members
- A. As the overseer the pastor would oversee the court-type proceeding wherein one church member is requesting a judgment to be made by the church in a matter of disagreement with another church member (**1Co 6:1-8**).
 - B. As the overseer the pastor would pick some wise church members to hear and decide the case (**1Co 6:4-5**).
 - C. The pastor would not be the judge since those chosen for the task are to be "least esteemed" (non-elders) (**1Co 6:4**), whereas the pastor is to be highly esteemed (**1Th 5:13**).
7. Gray areas
- A. There are judgment calls that the pastor must make in gray areas when it comes to church and personal conduct. Some examples are:
 - i. What type of clothing qualifies as modest apparel in church and in public (**1Ti 2:9**).
 - ii. What constitutes hair that is too short on women and too long on men (**1Co 11:4-15**).
 - iii. What type of electronic devices are allowed in the church service.
 - B. Gray areas such as these are either not addressed in scripture (electronic devices in church), or are not spelled out in fine detail (the precise length of hair that constitutes too long or too short, or the precise length a dress or skirt must be).
 - C. In areas such as these, the pastor must make a decision within the framework of the Bible that he can live with in his own conscience (**1Ti 1:19**).
 - D. A wise pastor will try to give as much liberty to the church as possible and not create rules and standards that are not absolutely necessary.
 - E. If the pastor's decision is within the guidelines set forth in the word of God, then the church must submit to it.
 - F. If a church member can't live with the decision, he can find another church.
 - G. If the church as a whole can't live with it, they can ask the pastor to leave.
8. Non-church ministries
- A. A pastor can decide to hold midweek Bible studies that are not church services if he chooses.
 - B. In that it's not a church service, it's not mandatory and church members can decide whether to go or not.
 - C. The Bible study is the pastor's personal ministry, not a church ministry.
 - D. That being the case, it is entirely up to him if, when, where, and how he does it.