

# **Blueprint For Christ's Church**

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**Matt. 16:13-19**

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Most people are familiar with blueprints. They give dimensions, specifications, etc., that are to be followed when constructing a building. It would be difficult to build a house without a blueprint.

## **The concept of a blueprint goes back to God**

God gave Noah instructions as to how to build the ark. Gen. 6:14-16, “Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, *and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.*” (Gen. 6:14-16).

There are reasons that God wanted Noah to build the ark exactly as He prescribed. The purpose of the pitch was to seal the joints inside and out to prevent water from leaking into the ark. What do you think would be the result if Noah decided not to use pitch because it was too “sticky”?

Shipbuilders for several decades have discovered the proportional dimensions of the ark were just perfect to keep large ships afloat on the seas of the oceans, even in a storm. If they wanted to build a ship twice as long, they would also double the width and height of the ship. Any other ratios used would peril the ship. What if Noah decided to build the ship only half as wide? That would present two problems:

- Not all of the animals that God wanted to be on board the ark would fit. God knew when he designed the ark just how big it should be.
- Also, the ark would be very unstable from side-to-side. If the ark were to turn sideways to the wind it would tip over because of its height. God knew what He was doing when He designed the ark.

The same is true for “Christ’s church”. Let us study what is involved in Christ’s blueprint for His church.

# God is the architect

Man cannot improve upon anything that God has designed. Did you know that God kept His plans for the Kingdom secret from the foundation of the world? *“That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.”* (Matt. 13:35).

The church was not an afterthought; it was very import to God. If someone changed His plan, they would be destroyed. *“Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.”* (Deut. 4:2). Also, *“Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.”* (Prov. 30:6). We must all face Him at the Day of Judgment. Do you want Him to call you a liar at that time if you “improve” upon the plan He gave for the church?

## The one true builder is Jesus Christ

Jesus said He would build **His** church, *“When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock **I will build my church**; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”* (Matt. 16:13-19).

Only Jesus Christ had authority to build the foundation. Some think it is an improvement to add to or subtract from His plans. Consider the warning God gave in Psalms 127:1, *“Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.”* If we build something that God has not given us, our effort is worthless. Not only is it worthless, but our soul will be lost in hell. *“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”* (Rev. 22:18-19).

## We must refuse any other builder than Jesus Christ.

Some say we remove structure by being so strict. They are wrong. *“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in*

sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." (Matt. 7:13-20). Many are willing to make changes to God's design of the church so that many others can be members of the church. So, false leaders of the church widen the rules to make more entry possible. This was not God's plan. He provided the way narrow for His purposes.

Some years ago I wanted to have a woodshop that was designed to my likening, so I drew up my blueprint designs and submitted them to the city for approval. I designed windows to be on the east side of the shop that faced the driveway so that I could see when any visitors arrived when I was working. On the west side of the shop I designed to have a lumber storage area, thus I did not design windows for that side. If I were to have someone build my shop I would want them to build it just as I designed it. What if a builder thought to himself, "The west side of the shop has a great view, I'll bet the owner would be happy to see such a great view of that horse pasture from his shop."; so he builds windows into that side of the shop. I'll admit that would have been a great view. Would I have been happy? No, I would not, for it would have deprived me of a convenient lumber storage in my shop. I designed it for my purposes, not because of what someone else thinks it should be.

We need to consider that when God gives us instructions as to how we are to build something, His ideas are a lot better than ours. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isa. 55:7-9).

## **All other buildings will fail!**

We are told by Jesus that not all "righteous" people will be saved. "*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." (Matt. 7:21-27).*

Why would Jesus say to anyone who claims to do many wonderful works in His name, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity"? The answer is in the very thing of

God's blueprint that many religious people reject — baptism. It is when we are baptized that our sins are washed away, that we are added to the church, and our names are recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life (Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; & Phil. 4:3; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38-41; 8:12; 10:48; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27; 1 Pet. 3:21).

Great will be the fall of those who build the church on sand.

## **No building is stronger than its foundation**

The Church of Jesus Christ has a strong foundation. It was built upon a rock: Jesus Christ. *"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."* (Matt. 16:16-17). We cannot lay another foundation than that which is already laid. *"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."* (1 Cor. 16:16-17).

The blood-bought church must be on the true foundation. *"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."* (Acts 20:28).

## **The structure of the church**

Christ's church is not made of bricks, stones, or wood. It is a group of people who are His true followers. *"... And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."* (Acts 2:47). Also, *"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."* (1 Pet. 2:5). The church is Jesus' spiritual body on the earth of which He has full authority. *"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."* (Col. 1:18). If He has the preeminence in all things to the church, does that leave anything for us to have preeminence? The church is His body to do with as He pleases. *"Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church."* (Col. 1:24).

## **Jesus is the head of body, the church**

God gave Jesus all power over the church. *"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."* (Eph. 1:22-23). In our physical bodies we have many parts; do we allow our hands to decide what they are going to work on; or our feet to decide where they are to go? No, that decision comes from our head; our hands and feet have no decision-making power. The same is true in the church; we, as His body have no decision-making power; that all belongs to Christ.

## The church is to wear the name of Christ

The church is the bride of Christ. *“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”* (Eph. 5:22-32).

Is it seemly to you that in a marriage between a man and a wife that she should wear the name of another? Any man would be upset if his wife wore the name of another. Were you aware that the practice of the wife taking the name of the husband goes back to Adam and Eve? *“Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.”* (Gen. 5:2). Individually, God called them Adam and Eve, but as a married couple, God called them Adam.

## What name does the Bible call the church?

*“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.”* (Acts 20:28). We see that the church was called *“the church of God”*. Whose blood purchased the church? God the Father, or God the Son. Jesus told Peter He would build His church (Matt. 16:13-19).

The apostle Paul in his letter to the church at Rome made a number of salutations in the 16th chapter; he ended the salutations in the 16th verse with: *“...The churches of Christ salute you.”* (Rom. 16:16). He recognized the church as belonging to Christ; we should do the same.

In fact, we are told to use no other name. *“Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”* (Acts 4:10-12). Jesus is the cornerstone in the foundation of the church. What is the purpose of a cornerstone in a building today? It has the date of construction, who owns the building, and the contractor who built it.

What is Jesus the head of? The church! He is the cornerstone of the church. No other name is allowed under heaven, given among men to the church other than Jesus Christ. The church was established in 30 A.D.

## The divine blueprint specifies how a person becomes a Christian

- **Faith.** Heb. 11:6, *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”* When I was in high school (I was about 17 years old), a neighbor boy my same age told me he was an atheist. Since I had been baptized, I took the opportunity to talk to him about the scriptures. He told me that he could see that living the life of a Christian was good, but he wasn’t sure if he believed there was a God. But to be on the safe side, maybe he should go to church, and when he dies and stands before God (if there is a God) on the day of Judgment (if there is a Judgment), maybe if God sees that he has gone to church and lived a good life that God would send him to heaven (if there is a heaven), and not to hell (if there is a hell). I told him, “It doesn’t work that way. You have to believe in Him with all your heart or you cannot please Him.”
- **Repentance.** Acts 2:38, *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”* Acts 11:18, *“... Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.”* If while you were sleeping, you heard a noise in the other room, and you think to yourself, “There’s a burglar in my house!” So you reach for your cell phone, and as quietly as you can, you call the police, tell them there is a burglar in your house, and you give them your address. Soon, you heard them arrive and capture the thief. He yells, “I’m sorry; I’m sorry!” What is he sorry for? He is sorry that he got caught; not that he stole. In true repentance the thief would be sorry that he ever stole and wants to change his life so that he would never steal again. That is true repentance. It is a change of mind that brings about a change of action. That is what we have to do before we can become a Christian.
- **Confession.** Rom. 10:9-10, *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”* What do we confess? That we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Note that in the above scriptures that faith (believing), repentance, and confession are **“UNTO”** righteousness, life, or salvation. “Unto” means toward something; not that one has already attained.

It is baptism where righteousness, life, and salvation is attained. Jesus, himself, was baptized to fulfill all righteousness, *“But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”*



(Matt. 3:14-17). Jesus was baptized because God said it was the right thing to do. Did you see how pleased God was about Jesus being baptized? Jesus also said *“it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.”* We are baptized because it fulfills His righteousness, not because it is of our righteousness.

In fact, if we are not baptized, we are still in our sins. *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”* (Acts 2:38). Peter, what did you say the reason of baptism is? *“for the remission of sins”*. Why would anyone want to leave out the step that removes our sins?

Jesus commanded that to reach salvation we must be baptized. *“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth **and** is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”* (Mark 16:15-16).

Ananias told Saul (before he was rename Paul) the very same thing, *“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”* (Acts 22:16). Baptism is a requirement given by God.

Baptism is called a burial. *“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”* (Rom. 6:4). Our old man is to be dead to us. *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”* (Rom. 6:3-6). Baptism is God’s blueprint for applying the blood of Christ in our lives by baptism. We are free from our old sins only when we are baptized.

This doesn’t mean “sprinkling. The scripture above says baptism is a burial. We don’t take a dead body to the cemetery and sprinkle a little dirt over it; we bury the body.

## The divine blueprint also specifies the things we are to do in worship

- **Sing.** Every New Testament involving music in the church says to “sing”; such as, *“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,”* (Eph. 5:19). It doesn’t say, “clap”, “play a drum”, “play a keyboard”, or any other such instrument created by man. It is presumption to think we can do anything otherwise than “sing”. We are told in Psalms 19:13, *“Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.”* There are those who claim, “Yes, but David played musical instruments!” Yes, he did; but was God pleased? In fact, he was not: *“Woe to them ... That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of musick,*

like David;” (Amos 6:1,5). We cannot use David as an example for using instruments of music..

- **Pray.** When the apostle Paul was traveling he asked the churches to pray for them, “Brethren, pray for us.” (1 Thess. 5:25). He also said they kept the churches in mind in their prayers, “Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Thess. 1:11-12). We also pray for each other. “Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” James 5:13-16). In Bunda, Tanzania, there were two teenage boys that disappeared. They were gone for a few days; no one knew where they went. Word got around to various congregations in East Africa, and I sent word to the congregations in America. A lot of prayers went up to God for the safety of those two boys. Shortly after that, the two boys reappeared. The story they told was frightening! A man told them , “If you’re interested, I have a good paying job for you boys; but we have to travel to another part of the country for you to work.” They accepted. The man took them to a witch doctor who kills people for their body parts. During this time is when all those prayers were going up to God. The transaction between the man and the witch doctor failed. Normally, when a transaction like this fails, the captor would kill his captives for they could identify him. In this case, the captor let the boys go. They made it back home safely. Prayer works!! The boys’ father was not a Christian, but he was so impressed by the effect of all those prayers that he became a Christian himself shortly after the boys got home.
- **We are to pray and sing with the spirit and understanding.** “What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.” (1 Cor. 14:15). We are to pray and sing from our heart and we should think about what we are praying and singing. I have heard the following mentioned in the prayers of some members: “Lord, we ask you to answer all the prayers that are in people’s hearts.” How can we say amen for something of which we don’t know? Maybe someone is praying for something in which they can consume upon their lusts. Also, I have seen members singing verses in songs that are unscriptural. We need to be aware of these things.
- **Worship on the first day of the week.** Acts 2:1, “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.” The Day of Pentecost always appeared on the first day of the week in the Jewish observances. That is when the church started. We are also told in Acts 20:7, “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them,

ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.” The Old Testament practice of worshiping on the Sabbath was done away when Jesus died on the cross.

- **Lord’s Supper.** The early Christians always observed the Lord’s Supper on the first day of the week. *“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.”* (Acts 20:7). Also, 1 Cor. 11:26-29, *“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.”*
- **Contribution.** *“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”* (1 Cor. 16:2). We see the our giving was also to be done on the first day of the week; in fact, the Greek “Kata mien sabatoon” means “Every first day of the week”.
- **Women to be silent in the church.** *“Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.”* (1 Cor. 14:34-35). Don’t blame the preacher for mentioning this passage and don’t blame Paul for writing it, because he said it was god’s commandment. We must accept everything Paul wrote for he was an apostle guided by the Holy Spirit. *“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”* (1 Thess. 2:13).

## The church has the oversight of leaders

Eph. 4:11-12, *“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”*

An evangelist is one who traveled and preached the gospel of Christ.

### Pastors & shepherds.

In the New Testament “*pastors*” is only mentioned in the above verse. The Greek word for “*pastors*” is “*poy-mane*”; which means “to tend or feed a flock”. “*Poy-mane*” is also translated as “*shepherds*” 15 times in the New Testament. “*Pastors*” and “*shepherds*” are referring to the same office in the church in which they are to tend or feed the flock of Christians in a congregation.

In the Old Testament pastors and shepherds also had the same meaning. Jer. 23:1-4, *“Woe be unto the **pastors** that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD.*

Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD. And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. And I will set up **shepherds** over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD.”

The Hebrew word in this passage for “Pastors” is “ra’ah”; which means “to tend or feed a flock”. The Hebrew word for “shepherds” in the same passage is also “ra ah”; “to tend or feed a flock”.

In both the Old and New Testaments “pastors” and “shepherds” mean the same – “to tend or feed a flock.” It is the same duty.

## Elders.

“And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.” (Acts 20:17). In verse 28 Paul instructed the elders of the church, “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.” The elders were to oversee the flock, to tend to the flock, to feed the flock. It’s the same job description given to the pastors or shepherds; hence, pastors, shepherds, and elders are the same position.

In Titus 1:5-7 we have the qualifications for the office of the elders (pastors & shepherds): “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;” We see here that the elders are the same as bishops; those who oversee a flock; a bishop is not someone who presides over many congregations. Bishop simply means one who oversees.

So the bishops are also those who tend or feed a flock.

Jesus was called the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls; further tying those two names together in one office: “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.” (1 Pet. 2:24-25).

So we have the same office of tending and feeding the flock being referred to by four different names: pastors, shepherds, elders, and bishops. Each of these are always given in the plural; the practice of one man called a pastor leading a congregation is unscriptural.

There are also deacons of the church who are to take care of the physical needs of the church. “Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have

*used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.” (1 Tim. 3:8-13).*

Both of the elders and deacons must be proved before they can use the office.

We saw the need for deacons in the church in Acts 6:1-4, *“And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.”*

We find both offices were filled at the church at Philippi. *“Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Phil. 1:1-2).*

There are only two office positions in the church: Those who are to oversee or tend and feed the flock (congregation): pastors, shepherds, elders, or bishops; and those who have the oversight of taking care of the physical needs of the congregation, the deacons.

## **Call no man Father, Master, or Reverend**

Matt. 23:9-10, *“And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.”*

The members of the Sanhedrin insisted they be called Father or Master because of their “wisdom and experience in which they excelled”. This is the usage of Father and Master to which Jesus referred that we should not do.

The word Reverend is only used once in the Bible: Psalms 111:9 (chapter subject: Praises to the Lord), *“...holy and reverend is his name.”* Only God is to be called Reverend.

## **Conclusion**

### **The church:**

- God is the architect.
- Christ is the builder.
- Christ laid the foundation.
- Christians are the structure of the church.

## **We have been given the steps to become a Christian.**

- Faith.
- Repentance.
- Confession.
- Baptism.

## **We have been given things which we are to do in our worship.**

- Sing.
- Pray
- Worship on the first day of the week.
- Communion.
- Contribution.

## **We are told what we are not to do – allow women speaking in the church.**

### **There are those who have the oversight of the church.**

- Pastors, shepherds, elders, or bishops – oversee the spiritual needs of the flock.
- Deacons – oversee the physical needs of the flock.

### **Names chosen for God and Christ not to be used by man.**

- Father
- Master
- Reverend



