

## Lesson Nine

### The Ministry of the Church

#### INTRODUCTION:

- 1) The English word “ministry” is used to refer both to the general service of the church for others and to the role of leadership exercised in performing the work of the church.
- 2) Both aspects of ministry will be considered in this lesson – the work of the church and the ministers who lead in its performance.

#### BODY:

- 1) The Worker and His Works.
  - a) We have learned that the redemptive work of Christ is the source of the church and of its ministry.
    - i) The Redemptive Work.
      - (1) Jesus’ mission was redemptive.
      - (2) His atoning death was a unique and unrepeatable work for human salvation (Heb. 10:12,14).
      - (3) The church, however, shares in Jesus’ redemptive work in the sense that it, too, exists to seek and save the lost.
      - (4) God’s goal is the salvation of all (1 Tim. 2:4), and the church participates in that.
      - (5) God works through the church to bring the benefits of Jesus’ atoning death to bear on lost human lives.
    - ii) The Earthly Ministries of Jesus.
      - (1) Two passages associated with Peter give a twofold description of the ministry of Jesus – proclamation of the kingdom and demonstration of its effects in the good that he did for people.
        - (a) Acts 10:36-38 summarizes Jesus’ ministry as “preaching peace” and “doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil.”
        - (b) 1 Pet. 4:11 summarizes the ministries of the church as speaking the words of God and serving (cf. Acts 6:2, 4).
      - (2) Matthew gives a threefold summary of the work of Jesus. Mt. 4:23; 9:35.
        - (a) These words are preparatory to the mission discourse in Mt. 10.
        - (b) The disciples were sent forth under the limited commission to proclaim the good news and to cure the sick (10:7, 8).
    - iii) The Work of the Church.
      - (1) The new creation in Christ Jesus results in the doing of good works, the same types of good works with which Jesus was concerned.
        - (a) The church continues the work that Jesus did in his earthly ministry.
        - (b) The church is the body of Christ.
        - (c) Christ does his work in the world now through the church, and the work of the church is to offer Christ to the world.
        - (d) When the church fails to do the work of Christ, it becomes the corpse of Christ instead of his body.

- (2) Matthew's threefold description of the earthly ministry of Jesus corresponds to the activities of the church.
- (a) Evangelism.
- (i) Evangelism formed the content of the risen Jesus' last commands to his disciples in the "Great Commission" with which the gospels conclude (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47; John 20:21, 23).
  - (ii) The early church was an evangelistic church.
    - 1. They went everywhere preaching the word (Acts 8:4).
    - 2. Those who did not proclaim assisted through prayer (2 Thess. 3:1; Col. 4:3f), material help (Phil. 4:14-19), hospitality (3 John 8), and by being lights through their faithfulness to the word (Phil. 2:15f).
  - (iii) As Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God, so the church bears witness to the reign of God and calls people to repentance in view of Christ's coming again.
  - (iv) The church is central in God's saving history.
    - 1. As an extension of Christ's saving mission, the church engages in evangelistic and missionary activity.
    - 2. By its nature it reaches out to embrace all whom God calls.
      - a. Evangelism is the lifeblood of the church.
      - b. Where the church is not evangelistic, it dies.
      - c. The true church must be a preaching church.
- (b) Edification.
- (i) Edification (the building up in the faith) is a natural outgrowth of evangelism.
    - 1. Matthew's version of the Great Commission follows the command to baptize with the command to teach those baptized to obey which was commanded (Matt. 28:20).
    - 2. The New Testament church obeyed this command; it grew in:
      - a. Number (Acts 6a;7; 12:24; 19:20; cf. 1 Cor. 3:6-7; Col. 1:16);
      - b. Faith (2 Cor. 10:15);
      - c. Righteousness (2 Cor. 9:10 – a reference to benevolent works);
      - d. Knowledge of God (Col. 1:10);
      - e. Grace and knowledge (2 Pet. 3:18);
      - f. Into salvation (1 Pet. 2:2);
      - g. Into Christ (Eph. 4:15; cf. 4:13).
    - 3. What is involved in edification?
      - a. Perhaps the fullest exposition is found in 1 Cor. 14 where Paul addresses the problem in Corinth of speaking in tongues, a gift that became an expression of pride and selfish individualism.
      - b. From Paul's corrections, we learn some things that edification is not.
        - i. It is not a feeling of uplift or what makes one feel good.
        - ii. It is not a matter of emotion, private experience, or sentiment.
        - iii. It is not what benefits, makes to feel good, or pleases the individual.

- c. Although Paul granted that the tongue-speaker edified himself, he disparages this practice (14:4, 19).
  - d. In contrast, Paul's emphasis on edification in the assembly gives priority to the good or benefit of the group (14:2-5).
  - e. Edification requires the mind, instruction, and understanding (1 Cor. 14:16-19).
    - i. If no one understands, no edification takes place.
    - ii. The assembly of the church should be directed toward the benefit of others, and at its heart is intelligible speech that gives instruction, encouragement, and consolation.
4. What is the importance of edification?
- a. Edification is the stated purpose or goal of many activities in the church, and these statements demonstrate its importance.
    - i. It is the members goal for the church itself (1 Cor. 14:12).
    - ii. It is the purpose of the assembly of the church (1 Cor. 14:26).
    - iii. It is the goal of ministry in the church (2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10; Eph. 4:11-12).
    - iv. It is a goal of personal relations (1 Cor. 10:23-24; Rom. 15:2; 1 Thess. 5:11).
  - b. For this to be achieved, a person's speech must aim at what is edifying (Eph. 4:29; 2 Cor. 12:19).
5. What produces edification?
- a. Faith is the beginning (Jude 20).
  - b. Love accomplishes edification (1 Cor. 8:1).
  - c. Peace promotes edification – in personal relations (Rom. 14:19) and in the absence of persecution (Acts 9:31).
  - d. Good examples are edifying, even as bad examples may encourage one in doing wrong (1 Cor. 8:10).
  - e. The word of God produces edification (Acts 20:32).
- (c) Benevolence.
- (i) Deeds of mercy characterized Jesus' ministry (Matt. 11:4-5).
    - 1. His merciful deeds were motivated by compassion for human need (Matt. 4:14; 15:32; 20:34; Luke 7:13).
    - 2. Jesus instructed his followers to be concerned about meeting human needs, declaring that judgment would be determined by such conduct and teaching that he was to be seen in each needy person (Mt. 25:31-46).
    - 3. The early church readily responded to human needs (Acts 4:34; 11:29-30).
  - (ii) New Testament teaching is abundant on the benevolent requirements of the Christian life, from Paul in Romans 12:13 to James in 1:27; 2:15-16.
    - 1. Love required expression in practical assistance (! John 3:16-18; 4:7-11, 19-21).
    - 2. Although recognizing a first responsibility to fellow believers (Gal. 6:10), Christians extended loving service to non-Christians as well (Mt. 5:43-48; 1 Thess 3:12; Rom. 12:14, 20).

- (iii) The important point is that Christ continues his work through the church.
- 2) The Giver and the Gifts.
- a) Gifts, Service, and Leadership – their source.
- i) Eph. 4:7-11 asserts that each of us was given grace, and includes among the gifts of Christ to his church various ministers in addition to the apostles: prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.
- (1) The New Testament presents a close correlation between gifts of God’s grace given to each of his people, the use of these gifts in service to one another, and leadership as a result of the service performed.
- (2) Every ministry in the church is based on a grace-gift, and every minister of the church in the exercise of his/her ministry is a gift of Christ to the whole.
- b) Gifts, Service, and Leadership – their nature.
- i) Gifts.
- (1) The principal passages on gifts, in addition to Ephesians 4, are found in Romans 12, 1 Cor. 12, and 1 Peter 4.
- (2) These passages stress the variety of gifts bestowed by God through his grace on human beings.
- (a) Every Christian has a “gift” and possesses the “Spirit.”
- (b) In this sense all believers are equal and of the same spiritual rank.
- (c) However, this equality allows for diversity of gifts.
- (d) In the N.T., there were both supernatural (prophecy, healing, working miracles) and natural gifts (teaching, exhorting, assets to give in benevolence, showing compassion, etc).
- (3) Paul, who has the most to say on gifts, quickly moves in 1 Cor. 12 from exclusively the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:1-3) to include Christ and God (1 Cor. 12:4-6) and from the individual to emphasize the welfare of the whole body (1 Cor. 12:7, 12-26).
- (4) The variety of gifts originates unity (1 Cor. 12:4-11), and all gifts are to contribute to unity (1 Cor. 12:12-26).
- (5) Paul further offers standards for the use of gifts.
- (a) The gifts must confess Jesus (1 Cor. 12:3).
- (b) Their use must accord with his nature (1 Cor. 12:12, 27; Eph. 4:13-16; cf. John 16:12-15).
- (c) The gifts must be exercised in love (1 Cor. 13).
- (d) The gifts must produce a community benefit (1 Cor. 14).
- (6) The fundamental biblical viewpoint on gifts of all kinds is expressed in 1 Cor. 4:7.
- (a) No amount of practice will make one a concert pianist who does not possess the “gift” of music.
- (b) No gift will make a person outstanding in an endeavor who does not use, develop, and work at it; gifts must be used.
- ii) Service.
- (1) The gifts are not given for selfish enjoyment, but for ministry to others.
- (2) 1 Cor. 12:7 states the basic principle.
- (3) This common good refers specifically to the welfare of the church (Eph. 4:11-12).
- (4) Since the abilities are not a person’s own, but are gifts, the user is in the position of a steward with a steward’s responsibilities for their use (1 Pet. 4:10).

iii) Leadership.

- (1) According to the New Testament perspective, leadership is based on service.
    - (a) The biblical teaching long ago invoked the modern discovery of the business world of “servant leadership.”
    - (b) Jesus stated the principle clearly and invoked his own example as their model (Luke 22:24-27; cf. Matt. 20:25-28; Mark 10:42-45).
    - (c) Authority among the followers of Jesus is the moral authority of those who show the most interest in and do the most in the way of loving service for others.
      - (i) 1 Thess. 5:12-13.
      - (ii) 1 Cor. 16:15-16.
      - (iii) Heb. 13:17.
  - (2) This perspective on leadership coincides with the manner the word for servant (*diakonos*) is used for virtually every category of persons in the church.
    - (a) If the word “office” is to be used in the church, it is not to be thought of as “official” in the sense of governmental or military officials, but as referring to a function (2 Tim. 4:5).
    - (b) The designated or recognized workers in the church have a task, a ministry, a service to perform, not a title or official position.
  - (3) Who are the natural leaders in the congregation?
    - (a) Those who do the work, those active in serving others, those taking the lead in doing what needs to be done.
    - (b) The kind of service determines the position of leadership.
  - (4) To summarize, gifts lead to service and service results in leadership.
    - (a) God gives the ability and with it the opportunity and responsibility to use it for the good of the community.
    - (b) Three things are prerequisites for leadership in a congregation of Christ’s people:
      - (i) The necessary gifts (abilities or qualifications) for doing the work;
      - (ii) The use of these gifts in service to others in such a way as to show that one can and will do the work; and
      - (iii) Recognition or acknowledgement of the leadership and thus a willingness to follow by the people among whom the work is to be done.
  - (5) From these principles it follows that the leaders of a congregation perform an enabling ministry.
    - (a) Leaders are that: leaders.
    - (b) They do not do the work for others.
    - (c) They show others how and help others to do it.
    - (d) They provide the ideas, the example, the “know-how” of knowledge and experience (Eph. 4:11-16 – the gifts were to “equip the saints.”)
  - (6) Ministry has as its goal helping others to grow in Christ Jesus.
- 3) The Minister and the Ministers.
- a) Jesus Christ is *the minister* of the church.
    - i) All ministry in the church derives from him.
    - ii) The work of the church is to continue Jesus’ work among human beings.

- iii) Because of the all-sufficiency of Christ's priestly ministry (Heb. 7-10), no provision is made in the New Testament for a continuation of his priestly functions, and no minister of the church is called a priest..
- iv) As in the Old Testament, the whole people are priestly and royal (1 Pet. 2:5, 9 and Rev. 1:6, following Exod. 19:6), but unlike the Old Testament, there is no special priestly class among the New Testament people.
- b) Classification of Ministries.
  - i) There are several ways that the ministries of the church may be classified so as to bring out their relationship to Christ, the church, and its work.
    - (1) From the standpoint of the work of the church.
      - (a) Peter summarizes the ministries of the church in two groups: 1) whoever speaks, and 2) whoever serves.
      - (b) Similarly, Acts 6:2 and 4 speak of the ministry of table and the ministry of the word and prayer.
      - (c) Paul uses *diakonia* (ministry) for both his apostolic ministry of the word (Rom. 11:13; 2 Cor. 5:18) and his relief efforts for the poor in Judea (Rom. 15:25, 31; 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:1, 12).
    - (2) From the standpoint of office.
      - (a) There are ministries of evangelism, edification, and benevolence.
      - (b) These correspond to the functionaries known as evangelists (proclaimers), pastors (those who give spiritual nurture), and deacons (those who serve other needs).
    - (3) From the standpoint of commission.
      - (a) The functionaries who fulfill the work of the church ultimately receive their commission to serve from the Lord.
        - (i) This authorization, however, comes in different ways, according to the nature of the function and the circumstances under which it is performed.
        - (ii) The commission may come directly from the Lord, mediately from the church, or spontaneously from the situation.
        - (iii) There were **temporary** (extraordinary) ministers, who were personally commissioned by Jesus and/or endowed with supernatural gifts by the Spirit (apostles, prophets, inspired teachers, and workers of miracles); **appointed** (ordained) ministers, who were recognized by the church to serve as its leaders in evangelism, pastoral care, and others forms of service (evangelists, pastors, and deacons); and **ordinary** ministers, i.e., all Christians, who by reason of opportunity, need, or circumstance may according to their ability tell their neighbor about Jesus, deal with a spiritual problem, or meet a need.
    - (b) Temporary/Occasional Functionaries.
      - (i) Apostles.
        - 1. "Apostle" means "one sent" and refers especially to ones sent on a mission and possessing the authority conferred by the sender.
        - 2. Christ himself served as the pattern for the New Testament apostolate (Heb. 3:1).
        - 3. The word is applied to various types of messengers in the New Testament.

- a. Messengers of the churches (2 Cor. 8:23) commissioned by the Gentile churches to carry a monetary gift to the Jewish churches.
  - b. In some passages it seems to carry a meaning equivalent to “missionaries” (a word in English derived from what is roughly the Latin equivalent of the Greek “apostle”).
  - c. A limited technical use to refer to the Twelve and Paul, and it was this meaning that came to prevail in church terminology.
- (ii) Prophets.
1. Prophets usually follow apostles in the Pauline listing (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11).
  2. They were closely linked with the apostles in the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20), because they shared with them in the revelation of divine truth (Eph. 3:5).
  3. Prophets in the biblical sense were spokespersons for God, receiving divine messages and communicating them to the people.
  4. Individual prophets received only partial revelation, so they only “knew in part” (1 Cor. 13:9, 12).
    - a. They might need to have their message clarified, and their messages were subject to discernment by other gifted persons (1 Cor. 14:37f.).
    - b. An individual prophet was not the judge of his own message; the community had to test the prophets because there were false prophets (1 Cor. 14:29; 1 John 4:1).
    - c. Paul, therefore, submits the prophets to the necessity of discernment, including:
      - i. Judgment by the community (1 Thess. 5:19-22);
      - ii. Judgment by other prophets (1 Cor. 14:29); and
      - iii. Accord with Apostolic teaching (1 Cor. 14:37).
- (iii) The “Once-for Allness” of Certain Functionaries.
1. In 1 Cor. 12:28 Paul refers to functions performed in the early church that were temporary in nature.
  2. In 1 Cor. 13 he contrasts the permanent, abiding qualities of faith, hope, and love with the temporary and passing phenomena of prophets, speaking in tongues, and revealed knowledge.
  3. He uses three illustrations:
    - a. The difference between the partial and the complete;
    - b. The difference between what is appropriate for the child and for the adult; and
    - c. The difference between the dimness of what is seen in a metal mirror and the clarity of face-to-face perception.
  4. The temporary nature of certain gifts was the recognition of the church itself in its early history.
    - a. The provision within the New Testament for a settled ministry of persons with natural qualifications shows the expectation of a church existing without the continuous presence of charismatic leaders.

- i. The instructions concerning bishops and deacons in 1 Tim. and Titus anticipated the passing from the scene of prophets and teachers.
    - ii. In the Pastoral epistles there is no anticipation of the continuing presence of divinely inspired prophets and teachers who would be available on a regular basis to speak the word of the Lord and interpret its meaning.
  - b. In the nature of the case these extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit belonged to the beginning of the church and not to its continuation.
    - i. When the revelation was given and confirmed (Heb. 2:3-4) and the church was established, the special guidance of Spirit-inspired functionaries was not needed.
    - ii. Indeed, such could be detrimental to individual spiritual growth in discernment and maturity.
  - c. The extraordinary ministers belonging to the foundation period of the church have a continuing function through their testimony to the resurrected Christ and revelation of his message.
    - i. They do not (and in some respects cannot) have personal successors; the church still has the same apostles and prophets as in the first century, for their words of testimony and revelation preserved in scripture form the foundation of the church's message and faith.
    - ii. This feature belongs to the once-for-allness of the original revelation (e.g., 1 Cor. 15:8; Eph. 1:9-10; 3:5-11).
- (c) Appointment to church office.
  - (i) The fullest account of appointment to church office in the New Testament occurs in Acts 6:1-6.
  - (ii) It involved:
    - 1. Recognition of a need (6:1-2).
    - 2. Instructions on qualification for person to meet the need (6:3).
    - 3. Examination of who had the requisite qualifications (6:3).
    - 4. Selection by the congregation (6:5).
    - 5. Presentation of the persons chosen (6:6).
    - 6. Setting apart for the work (6:6).
- 4) The Shepherd and the Shepherds.
  - a) The New Testament provides for the continuation of ministers who will have a personal and living presence in the church.
    - i) Jesus, as the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:4) or Great Shepherd (Heb. 13:20), is the model of the pastoral ministry in the church.
    - ii) Peter, who was commissioned by Jesus to feed the Lord's sheep (John 21:16), makes extensive use of pastoral language (1 Pet. 2:25; 1 Pet. 5:1, 4).
    - iii) The function of shepherd or guardian was a definite office, or better, "good work (1 Ti. 3:1), or place in the church.
    - iv) Qualifications of Shepherds.
      - (1) Qualifications of elders are found in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.



- (2) Two opposite tendencies, both incorrect, have been taken toward these qualifications.
  - (a) One sets the standard so high that no one can meet them and so no one can be appointed to the work.
  - (b) The others is to minimize the requirements with the attitude of choosing the best available even in unqualified.
  - (c) Both have the consequence of ignoring or setting aside the qualifications and thus not taking seriously the biblical standards for congregational leadership.
- v) Duties of elders to congregation and vice versa.
  - (1) Each name given to the office reveals something about the duties of the office.
    - (a) Elder – lead by reason of experience and wisdom.
    - (b) Bishop, Presbyter – manager, administrator, or supervisor.
    - (c) Steward – cares for property of another, sees that jobs are done, cares for finances and general welfare.
    - (d) Shepherd – cares for well-being of others.
  - (2) Congregational duties to elders.
    - (a) It is proper to provide financial support for elders who devote their time to the teaching and leading of the people (1 Tim. 5:18).
    - (b) An accusation against an elder must be supported by the evidence of two or three witnesses (1 Tim. 5:19).
    - (c) 1 Thess. 5:12-13 (which presumably covers elders/bishops/pastors though not using those names) commands members to respect their leaders.
    - (d) Heb. 13:7, 17 commands that leaders be esteemed very highly in love, that they be obeyed, and that members submit to them.
    - (e) These commands are to understood in the context of servant leadership and Jesus teaching about the attitudes of leaders (Luke 22:25-26) discussed above.
    - (f) The authority of elders is the moral authority that comes from their loving service, their example, and their spiritual knowledge and experience.
- b) Teachers.
  - i) Teachers shared with pastors the work of edifying believers.
    - (1) Some teachers were undoubtedly inspired in the early church, but inspiration was not essential to the teaching task.
    - (2) Teachers were especially associated with moral instruction and the practical application of the revelation.
    - (3) The act of teaching occurs much more frequently in the New Testament than does the title “teacher.”
    - (4) The ability to teach is one of the gifts of the Spirit (Rom. 12:7).
    - (5) The activity of teaching and the principle of financial support for teachers are expressed in Galatians 6:6.
    - (6) Hebrews 5:12 expresses the expectation that Christians will become teachers of others.
  - ii) The fullest discussion of the teaching office is found in James 3 where James warns not many to be teachers (3:1).
    - (1) Peter identified himself with elders; James identified himself with teachers.
    - (2) His reminder of the seriousness of teaching is followed by the discussion of the use of the tongue (3:2-12).

- (3) The last paragraph of the chapter (3:13-18) returns more directly to the function of the teacher.
  - (a) James talks about the wise person, taking up the theme of wisdom from the Old Testament.
  - (b) In addition to kings, priests, and prophets, Judaism had known the office of the wise (cf. Jer. 18:18).
  - (c) These were teachers, and they produced the wisdom literature of the Jews.
  - (d) In later Judaism the rabbis continued to be known as “the wise.”
  - (e) James contrasts the heavenly wisdom to be exemplified by the true teacher with earthly wisdom.
  - (f) His words are a challenging description of the qualifications and work of the Christian teacher.
- 5) The Preacher and the Preachers.
  - a) The Synoptic Gospels and Acts summarize Jesus’ ministry in terms of the proclamation of the Gospel (Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:18-19; Acts 10:36-37).
    - i) Christ was a preacher, *the preacher*.
    - ii) Preachers or evangelists continue the evangelistic work of Christ and take the lead in personifying the evangelistic task of the church.
  - b) The term “preaching the gospel” occurs more often in the New Testament than the noun “evangelist,” which appears only three times; however its uses are significant.
    - i) Philip, one of the Seven in Acts 6, is called “the evangelist” (Acts 21:8), appropriate in view of his preaching (Acts 8).
    - ii) Eph. 4:11 lists evangelists after apostles and prophets as among the gifts of the risen Christ to the church.
    - iii) 2 Tim. 4:5 exhorts Timothy to do the work of an evangelist.
    - iv) In addition to other terms, Timothy is addressed as “minister” (1 Tim. 4:6), the “Lord’s servant” (2 Tim. 2:24), and a “man of God (1 Tim. 6:11).
  - c) Qualifications.
    - i) The letters to Timothy and Titus gives lists of qualities to be possessed by evangelists, although not as clearly demarcated as the lists about elders and deacons.
    - ii) 2 Tim. 2:24-25, in wording similar to 1 Tim. 3, requires ability in teaching, kindness, patience, and gentleness.
    - iii) A long list of requirements is contained in 1 Tim. 6:3-11.
      - (1) Verse 11 says that the conduct of verses 3-10 is to be avoided and tells the “man of God” what he is to pursue.
      - (2) Purity was required (1 Tim. 5:22).
      - (3) So, too, was exemplary conduct in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity (1 Tim. 4:12).
      - (4) As a general summary, Timothy was expected to pay close attention to himself and to his teaching (1 Tim. 4:16; cf. other general statements in 2 Tim. 3:14-15; 4:1-5).
  - d) Work.
    - i) “Evangelist” means “one who preaches the gospel.”
    - ii) The accounts of the activities of evangelists indicate various kinds of preaching and associated activities.

- (1) The evangelist Philip labored to win new converts, as in his evangelizing Samaria (Acts 8:5-13) and the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-39).
- (2) The preaching ministry involved both traveling (Acts 8:40) and locating for a period of time (Acts 21:8 – Philip was still in Caesarea some twenty years after Acts 8:40).
- (3) Having made converts, or arriving at a place with a deficient church life, the evangelists worked to organize churches. Titus was left in Crete to put in order, what remained to be done and to appoint elders (Titus 1:5).
- (4) Timothy and Titus were to strengthen the faith of those already converted and refute false teaching in already well-established churches (1 Tim. 4:6).
  - (a) Refutation of false teaching (1 Tim. 1:3, 5-20);
  - (b) Matters of worship (1 Tim. 2:1-15).
  - (c) Church organization (1 Tim. 3:1-13).
  - (d) Warnings of apostasy (1 Tim. 4:1-5).
  - (e) Sound doctrine (Titus 2:1).
  - (f) Instruction in Christian living to different ages and groups (Titus 2:2-10).
  - (g) Rebuke of unsound teachers (Titus 1:13).
- (5) Evangelists were to perpetuate the evangelistic work of the church (2 Tim. 2:2).
- (6) A summary of the public work of the evangelist is found in 1 Tim. 4:13; it included convincing, rebuking, and encouraging (2 Tim. 4:2).
- iii) Evangelists were to be supported by those to whom they preached the gospel (1 Cor. 9:14).
  - (1) This indicates that evangelists had a specific function intended to be permanent in the church.
  - (2) They had a definite work or ministry to perform (2 Tim. 4:5), and provision was made for the continuation of persons to perform the task (2 Tim. 2:2).
- 6) The Servant and the Servants.
  - a) Jesus chose to describe his Messianic work as not to be served, but to serve and give his life a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).
    - i) His career was a life of going about doing good (Acts 10:38).
    - ii) His work of providing physical and spiritual healing to people is continued in the church, where it is represented especially by the deacons, the appointed servants to take the lead in this broad ministry in the church.
  - b) The function of a *diakonos* could be enormously varied.
    - i) The term usually described a role of a subordinate nature, but not necessarily one that was menial.
    - ii) The term itself is used to describe persons performing many different types of service:
      - (1) Christ (Rom. 15:8);
      - (2) The apostles (Mark 9:45; 10:43);
      - (3) Paul's coworkers (who may be included in the next two categories – 1 Thess. 3:2; Col. 1:7; 4:7);
      - (4) Missionaries (1 Cor. 3:5);
      - (5) Evangelists (1 Tim. 4:6);
      - (6) All believers (John 12:26);
      - (7) Civil magistrates (Rom. 13:4);
      - (8) Messengers of Satan (2 Cor. 11:15);

- (9) Waiters (John 2:5, 9); and
- (10) Special functionaries in the church (Phil. 1:1).
- iii) The difference between these is the type of service rendered and for whom.
- iv) Here we are concerned with the special servants to whom Christian usage gave the technical designation of “deacon” (this use is rare in the New Testament compared to the many other uses of the term).
- c) Qualifications.
  - i) A list of qualifications is found in 1 Tim. 3:8-13.
  - ii) It contains qualifications similar to those for elders or bishops but with a special concern for those qualities necessary for the special work of deacons.
- d) Work.
  - i) While the term did not carry with it inherent limitations on the nature of the duties of a deacon, and the New Testament does not impose the limitations sometimes practiced today.
  - ii) However, there are a number of principles implied by the New Testament texts that suggest some distinctions applicable to the work of deacons.
    - (1) The name “deacon” suggests that these are assistants who serve under the supervision of the elders.
    - (2) Some distinguish between elders and deacons by assigning to the former spiritual affairs and to the latter temporal affairs.
      - (a) Support for this position is found in Acts 6 where those chosen are sometimes described as the first deacons.
      - (b) However, given the wide use of the term in the New Testament (Acts 6:4 a related noun form is used of the apostles to “serve the word”), the passage lends little support that those chosen were the first deacons.
      - (c) Serving tables was not beneath the apostles, but it made little sense for them to cease doing what they could do to perform tasks that many others could do as well or better.
      - (d) Still, on that basis, deacons have often been given primary responsibility for temporal affairs in the church.
    - (3) This distinction between temporal and spiritual can be overdone.
      - (a) Deacons were servants in every area of the church’s life.
      - (b) Even among the Seven, Stephen and Philip were soon found preaching and not just administering a benevolent program (Acts 6-8).
      - (c) Nevertheless, it is appropriate that some persons be given leadership in the physical, benevolent, and related activities, so that others can devote their primary time to evangelistic and pastoral work.

#### CONCLUSION:

- 1) Some conclude that the organization and ministry of the church is a matter of indifference, an attitude that has resulted in departures from the pattern revealed in the New Testament.
- 2) Such departures can never be, and will never be, countenanced by those who are committed to Christ and Lord and Savior.
- 3) Where the Word has spoken, it will be followed.