



# What Do We Believe?

## Lesson 44

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## Lesson 44: The Church: Membership and Ministers

### Scriptures:

Mark 9:35-37; John 15:14-16; Acts 1:8, 6:1-6, 13:1-3, 14:27; Acts 15; Romans 10:14, 15; 12:4-8, 9-21; 1 Corinthians 12:12-30; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3; 1 Peter 2:4-10

### Lesson Goals:

To describe for the learner Christian beliefs about church membership  
To describe for the learner the conduct of church business  
To describe for the learner Christian beliefs about church ministers

### Scripture Memory:

**Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood. Acts 20:28**

### The Lesson:

Last week we said that the people of God are the church. The church is not a building. The church sometimes meets in a building, but the church is the people - believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. In a local church, the people democratically guide the work of the church. In the pattern of the New Testament, everyone has a vote and the whole church votes on important matters. Such an event is described in the sixth chapter of Acts. In some churches, chosen leaders make decisions that, in other churches, are made by the whole congregation. Jesus is the head of the church and all that the church does must be in agreement with what He has created the church to be and do. The fifteenth chapter of Acts describes the way one major issue was handled by the church.

Individual members come together as the church (the fellowship of believers) for Christian education, worship, fellowship, and mission strategy. The church is one place where believers study the Word of God together. They worship God as they sing and pray, as well as when they listen and accept the truths of God's Word for themselves. Fellowship also takes place between believers when they work together, learn together, and share life experiences together. And the local church is where many are sent out from to tell others about Christ. Though churches vary in prerequisites for membership, baptism is a generally accepted requirement. Individual members go out to do the work of the church. Early Christians were called disciples, which means learners. The book of Hebrews calls us priests. We must assume full responsibility for our own relationship with God. No one prays us into heaven and no one else can ask for forgiveness of our sins for us. The choice is our own personal one. The primary task of every Christian, to be encouraged by the church, is making disciples of others. That includes encouraging initial relationship with God...sometimes called evangelism, and growth in relationship with God...sometimes called discipleship.

The choosing of believers, by God, is a miraculous blessing. It is also a commission to be on mission for God. If that is true of individual believers, how much more is it true of believers who come together as the church? God intended the church to be His mission on earth. The church not only represents God on earth, we are doing the work of God on earth. In the Revelation 22:17, Scripture says, "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.'" The church (the bride) joins God's Holy Spirit in inviting people to come to Christ as Savior. The mission, or task, of the church then is to tell everyone about God as revealed in Christ, to assist believers to grow in their faith, and to be the loving presence of Christ to those who are in need.

One of the words used to describe the church is household. When the members of a household are together, there should be fellowship, friendliness, and good family relationship. They should be able to get along well. They should be able to settle differences in a healthy way. They should enjoy being together. They should enjoy sharing the tasks of the household, whether it is household tasks, cooking and clean-

ing, or supporting one another in what they do outside the home. It should be that way as the church gathers. We should celebrate our fellowship and support one another in ministry.

Jesus sent God's Holy Spirit to empower the church (John 15:26). Just as individuals relate to God spiritually, the church is in spiritual relationship with God. The church is also a spiritual relationship of people to people.

Two offices of the church are clearly designated in the Bible. They are pastor and deacon. Other ministry functions are also mentioned. The third chapter of I Timothy outlines some qualifications of pastors and deacons. Christian churches differ significantly in the assignment of titles and functions of church leaders. In Scripture, pastors are also called elders and bishops (or overseers). Pastors have the role of wise guidance of the work of the church and of feeding the flock like a shepherd (See Acts 20:28). In the New Testament, all the churches seemed to have more than one pastor. The title "deacon" literally means servant. Deacons serve the church in material and spiritual matters.

### Life Application:

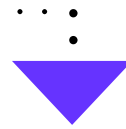
As we have already stated, the church is not a building with a steeple or with statues. It is not a complex of beautiful buildings where Bible study and worship takes place. The church consists of people.

Long ago, after the garden of Eden when God wanted to live in the midst of His chosen people, Israel, He came in the form of a cloud and filled first the tabernacle and then the temple. Then God did an amazing thing. He sent His one and only Son to earth. The Message describes His coming this way, "The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood." (John 1:14) Jesus lived among us. But something even more amazing has happened as a result of Jesus death and resurrection. When we, in faith, believe that Jesus is God's Son, when we place our trust in Him and turn our lives over to Him, God-in the form of the Holy Spirit-comes to live in us!

Is that something you have done; have you trusted Jesus and given Him control of your life? If not, won't you do it now? And if you have, have you also followed the Lord in baptism? Baptism doesn't save you, but it lets others know about the decision you've made to follow Christ. Have you also begun to fellowship with other believers, worshipping and serving with them as you follow Christ in obedience? Won't you do that here?



**Planning for Lesson 45:  
Ordinances: Orders  
for the Church**



- ◆ **Memory Verse Activity** - Talk about the scriptural use of sheep and shepherds. Discuss the memory verse and practice it many times, even forming teams that will compete to see who says the verse the loudest.
- ◆ Remind your students that the church is made up of believers. Take this opportunity to review the last couple of lessons. Encourage your students to practice giving their testimony as well as the Roman Road, or other forms of evangelism. Remind them of the need to always be ready as well as the importance of sharing their faith with others. Read Romans 10:14-15.
- ◆ Sing “We’re the People of God,” “Family of God,” “The Church’s One Foundation,” “Come, All Christians, Be Committed,” “Living for Jesus,” “Have Thine Own Way, Lord,” “Take My Life, and Let It Be,” and “The Lord Has A Will.”
- ◆ **Dig Deeper:** Read Romans 12:4-21 and I Corinthians 12:12-30. Discuss God’s plan for the church. Talk about the different gifts we have. How should those parts work together? What is the church described as? What does that mean for you and your church?
- ◆ **Dig Deeper Still:** Read through the supplemental Scripture. Discuss what the church is. What should it be doing?



**Keep watch over yourselves  
and all the flock  
of which the Holy Spirit  
has made you overseers.**

**Be shepherds  
of the church of God,  
which he bought  
with his own blood.**

**Acts 20:28**

How can they call on him  
unless they b\_li\_ve in him?

How can they believe in him  
unless they \_e\_r about him?

How can they hear about him  
unless someone p\_ea\_hes to them?

And how can anyone preach  
without being s\_\_t?

It is written,

**"How beautiful are the feet  
of those who bring good news!"**

Romans 10:14-15 (Nlrv)

# Word Search



P	R	E	N	S	P	F	H	S	B	E	D	A	E	L	C	T	E
A	K	N	O	C	A	E	D	F	R	Y	A	T	S	I	M	N	O
S	T	R	A	E	V	L	T	A	I	S	E	N	D	E	C	G	A
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I	R	O	T	S	A	P	L	M	I	D	E	R	U	I	T	E	D
G	O	I	N	A	E	I	P	I	S	L	D	R	R	O	O	B	P
D	O	A	D	I	H	N	E	S	X	A	D	T	C	L	H	O	R
A	V	C	H	E	W	A	C	S	E	R	S	N	H	R	C	N	O
E	A	E	V	O	D	N	A	I	A	D	A	I	E	S	A	I	P
L	M	O	L	S	I	W	F	O	E	S	A	S	S	I	E	M	H
U	D	L	S	T	L	K	E	N	H	U	R	E	S	G	R	A	E
S	E	I	Q	S	M	A	L	B	N	O	S	S	E	I	P	F	C
F	R	I	E	N	G	E	O	F	K	H	O	W	M	E	R	C	Y

household

bride

church

fellowship

friendliness

on mission

pastor

deacon

believe

hear

preach

send

# Word Search



P	R	E	N	S	P	F	H	S	B	E	D	A	E	L	C	T	E
A	K	N	O	C	A	E	D	F	R	Y	A	T	S	I	M	N	O
S	T	R	A	E	V	L	T	A	I	S	E	N	D	E	C	G	A
R	T	O	L	O	U	L	D	E	V	I	V	R	E	R	T	J	N
I	D	L	H	O	I	O	A	L	E	I	E	V	L	G	D	O	G
R	E	A	C	O	S	W	R	E	O	A	I	H	W	A	E	D	E
F	E	A	L	G	Q	S	D	G	E	H	L	P	O	R	P	S	L
T	G	P	I	O	T	H	E	O	G	R	E	O	C	S	A	T	E
B	S	G	H	O	R	I	R	N	O	D	B	S	H	W	S	L	A
I	R	O	T	S	A	P	L	M	I	D	E	R	U	I	T	E	D
G	O	I	N	A	E	I	P	I	S	L	D	R	R	O	O	B	P
D	O	A	D	I	H	N	E	S	X	A	D	T	C	L	H	O	R
A	V	C	H	E	W	A	C	S	E	R	S	N	H	R	C	N	O
E	A	E	V	O	D	N	A	I	A	D	A	I	E	S	A	I	P
L	M	O	L	S	I	W	F	O	E	S	A	S	S	I	E	M	H
U	D	L	S	T	L	K	E	N	H	U	R	E	S	G	R	A	E
S	E	I	Q	S	M	A	L	B	N	O	S	S	E	I	P	F	C
F	R	I	E	N	G	E	O	F	K	H	O	W	M	E	R	C	Y

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