

Study 9
Doctrine of the Church

I. Introduction

A. After securing salvation for mankind, Jesus ascended to heaven.

1. Before leaving Jesus promised that He would return for His disciples.
2. It is during the time between Christ's ascension and the rapture of the Church that Jesus said he would establish His Church.

B. In order to gain a clear picture of the Church this study will focus on the meaning of the Church, her distinctiveness, function and purpose.

C. In the last portion of our study will be given as to who her leaders are and how they govern her activities.

II. The meaning of the Church

A. While very little dispute surrounds the idea that the Church exists there is discussion over whom the Church is and what she is supposed to do.

1. In this section on the doctrine of the Church time will be spent defining the Church, considering when she was birthed, what forms the Church takes, and the figures of speech used in the New Testament to explain her relationship with Christ.

B. Definition of "Church"

1. The Church is comprised of those who put their faith in Christ for salvation.
2. The Greek word for Church is ἐκκλησία (*ekklēsia*) and BDAG defines it as "the global community of Christians, (universal) church."¹

¹ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 304.

3. The Greek- English Lexicon by Louw and Nida asserts that, “The term ἐκκλησία (*ekklēsia*) was in common usage for several hundred years before the Christian era and was used to refer to an assembly of persons constituted by well- defined membership.”²

4. A simple definition for the Church - ἐκκλησία (*ekklēsia*) refers to people who have put their faith in Jesus Christ as their savior and who assembled to worship the Lord.

5. I agree with the above statement but also believe the Church is a group of believers that began on Pentecost and will continue through the rapture of the Church.

a) This above thought will be expanded later in our study.

C. Birth of the Church

1. An important feature in understanding who the Church is requires an exploration into when the Church was born.

a) Those who do not see Israel and the Church as two distinct groups define the Church differently than the definition given in the above section.

b) Thus, believers have differing opinions when answering the question of when the Church began.

2. Wayne Grudem understands the beginning of the Church to have started before the era of the New Testament, suggesting, “it is appropriate to think of the church as constituting all the people of God for all time, both Old Testament believers and New Testament believers.”³

a) This view stands in distinction to Paul Enns who believes that, “an examination of the New Testament indicates the

² Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 125.

³ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House, 2004), 854.

church is a peculiar New Testament entity that had not previous existed.”⁴

b) I agree with Paul Enn’s.

3. Jesus declared in **Matthew 16:18, “I will build my Church.”**

a) The word “build” is the Greek word οἰκοδομέω and it is a future, active, indicative verb.

b) Enns writes, “**This point is important. It emphasizes that the church was not yet in existence when Jesus spoke these words. He was making a prediction concerning His future building of the church.**”⁵

4. Jesus did not declare that there would be a continuation of the Church but that Church would have a beginning.

a) **The Church began in Acts 2:1–4 with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the upper room.**

Acts 2:1–4 (NKJV) ¹ When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

b) **This building of the Church continued with another significant event recorded in Acts 11:15.**

Acts 11:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵ And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning.

c) Here the Holy Spirit was again poured out but this time upon a Gentile gathering.

d) The beginning to which Peter refers is the beginning of the Church.

D. Forms of the Church

⁴ Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, 348.

⁵ *ibid.*

1. The Church exists in two common forms.
2. The first form is referred to as the local Church.

a) The local Church refers to specific gatherings of believers in specific geographical locations (Rom 16:1).

Romans 16:1 (NKJV) ¹ I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea,

3. The second form of the Church is the Church universal (1 Cor 12:12–14).

1 Corinthians 12:12–14 (NKJV)¹² For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ.¹³ For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. ¹⁴ For in fact the body is not one member but many.

a) Thiessen understands this form as one which “consists of all those who, in this age, have been born of the Spirit of God and have by that same Spirit been baptized into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13; 1 Pet. 1:3, 22–25).”⁶

b) While local congregations are included in the universal Church one should not conceive of the Lord as having many Churches.

4. The Lord has only one Church spanning time, geography, language and culture.

5. It is also important not to allow distinctive features of the local gathering to needlessly fragment the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:25).

1 Corinthians 12:25 (ESV)²⁵ that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.

E. Metaphors used for the Church

1. The New Testament writers used some familiar metaphors when referring to the Church.

⁶ Henry Clarence Thiessen and Vernon D. Doerksen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), 311.

a) These metaphors can be taken, based on context, to refer to both the local and universal Church.

b) In each of these word pictures there is a beautiful aspect of the Church's relationship with Christ that comes into view.

2. Paul, in, likens the Church to the body of Christ,

I Corinthians 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

a) In this metaphor Jesus is the head of this spiritual body (Col 1:18) and each believer is likened to a member of His body.

Colossians 1:18 (NKJV)¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

b) This picture communicates the unity that believers share with one another.

c) There is a vital dependence that each follower of Christ has upon another.

d) In addition, this word picture speaks of the intimate connection the believer has with the Lord.

(1) When Saul was on his way to Damascus to persecute the Church, Jesus confronted him and said, **"Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me" (Acts 9:4b)?**

(2) These words of the Lord, spoken from heaven, **reveal the intimate connection** Jesus has with the Church—the body of Christ.

(3) To touch the body of Christ is to touch the Lord.

3. A second metaphor that powerfully drives home the Lord's love for the Church is the analogy of a bride and her husband.

a) In **Ephesians 5:2–25** Paul develops this metaphor likening the Church as the bride of Christ, the husband.

b) Although this Ephesians passage gives commands to the husband/wife relationship it also reveals how tender and devoted the Lord is to His Church—the bride of Christ.

4. Three other metaphors worthy of further exploration are the **priesthood** of believers (**1 Peter 2:5, 9**), the abiding relationship of **branches** to the vine (**John 15:1–5**), and the Good Shepherd’s care for the **flock** (**John 10:16**).

a) Each of these metaphors are intentional word pictures the Holy Spirit inspired writers of the New Testament to use.

b) The priesthood of believers reveals the service we offer to the Lord.

c) The vineyard highlights the dependence we are to have on Jesus.

d) The flock metaphor reminds us of the attentive care Jesus has for His people.

III. Distinctiveness of the Church

A. The focus of this section will consider the Church’s relationships.

1. First the distinctive nature that exists between Israel and the Church will be examined.
2. A further look at how the Church is distinct to Kingdoms mentioned in the Bible.
3. Finally, the relationship the Church has with Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

B. In Relation to Israel

1. Covenantalists do not see a distinction between the Church and Israel.

a) Consider Wayne Grudem as he expresses this view stating, “The church is the community of all true believers for all time. This definition understands the church to be made of all those who are truly saved... But that must include all true believers for all time, both believers in the New Testament age and believers in the Old Testament age as well.”⁷

b) In contrast Charles Ryrie believes, “The church stands distinct from Israel and did not begin until the Day of Pentecost, and thus did not exist in the Old Testament period.”⁸

2. Henry Thiessen provides a succinct summary explaining that the Church is not new wine poured into the old wineskins (Matt 9:17).

a) His three reasons for this distinction are as follows: “First, Israel and the Church are not synonymous terms. Paul distinguished between Jews, Gentiles, and the Church (1 Cor. 10:32). Further, Paul speaks of the Church as one new man (Eph. 2:15; cf. Col. 3:11), composed of believing Jews and believing Gentiles. And finally, God has yet a future for Israel.”⁹

Ephesians 2:15 (NKJV)¹⁵ having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace,

b) I hold the position that Ryrie and Thiessen have taken.

c) The Church is a distinct entity from Israel and that God has revealed different plans for Israel and the Church.

d) This view is inescapable if one takes a consistent, grammatical-historical, literal approach to interpreting Scripture in the both the Old and New Testament.

C. In Relation to the Kingdom

⁷ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 853.

⁸ Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 462.

⁹ Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, 309.

1. The Church's relationship to the Kingdom is one that according to Ryrie "Much confusion exists because of the failure to carefully define."¹⁰
2. In seeking to clear up this confusion it will be helpful to understand unique concepts of the Kingdom.
3. There is the *Universal Kingdom* where God rules over all creation during all time (Psa 103:19).

Psalm 103:19 (NKJV)¹⁹ The LORD has established His throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all.

4. The *Davidic or Messianic Kingdom* refers to the one thousand-year reign of Christ over the earth (Rev 20:1–3) as a physical descendant of David (2 Sam 7:12–16).

Revelation 20:1–3 (NKJV)¹ Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ² He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³ and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

2 Samuel 7:12–16 (NKJV)¹² "When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. ¹⁵ But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took *it* from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶ And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever." ' ' "

5. Third - the *Mystery Kingdom* it spans the time between the first and second coming of Christ (Matt 13:11, 39–40) with God as ruler.

Matthew 13:11 (NKJV)¹¹ He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.

Matthew 13:39–40 (NKJV)³⁹ The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. ⁴⁰ Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age.

¹⁰ Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 460.

a) The subjects of this Kingdom according to Ryrie are, “people on the earth who have related themselves in a positive, neutral, or negative way to “Christendom” (including true believers, professing people, rejecters, and even opponents).”¹¹

6. The *Spiritual* Kingdom is the fourth and the one to which believers are associated (Col 1:13).

Colossians 1:13 (NKJV)¹³ He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

a) This Kingdom exists presently in the Church and with Christ as the ruler and the subjects being all who have put their faith in Him, whether Jew or Gentile.

D. In Relation to Christ and the Holy Spirit

1. The Church is the result of the Lord’s plan to build the Church (Matt 16:18).
2. Jesus gave birth to the Church on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).
3. Today the Lord is still building His Church and equipping her for the work of the ministry (Eph 4:1–16).

E. Understanding the Church’s relationship with Israel, the Kingdoms, Jesus and Holy Spirit helps to prevent confusion.

1. Knowing that Israel is distinct from the Church helps the reader interpret prophecy.
2. Being aware that the Church is a spiritual Kingdom guides the reader to understand the Church is not commissioned to govern this world.
3. Being aware that Jesus is the head of the Church and empowered by the Holy Spirit to evangelize the world helps the Church keep her priorities in line with God’s plan.

IV. Functions and Purpose of the Local Church

¹¹ Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 461.

A. The function and purpose of the Church has been variously understood and carried out since Pentecost.

1. Fortunately, the Bible is very clear as to what the priorities of the Church should be.
2. While it is easy to establish what the Bible declares the Church should be doing, traditions and preconceived ideas have made this task more difficult than necessary.
3. The goal of this section is to take a fresh look at biblical text and hear directly from the Lord as to what the Church should be doing.
4. Acts 2:42–47 provides a model for how the Church should conduct herself as she gathered.

Acts 2:42–47 (NKJV)⁴² And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. ⁴³ Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, ⁴⁵ and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. ⁴⁶ So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

5. From this and other New Testament passages we learn that worship, prayer, teaching, fellowship, evangelizing, Baptism and participation in the Lord's communion are the foundation for how the local Church should function today.

B. Worship

1. It is true that every aspect of the believer and the Church should be worship to the Lord.
2. The idea of compartmentalizing life in such a way that there can be a division of spiritual and non-spiritual is a dangerous practice.
3. That being said this section will focus specifically upon the activity of the corporate worship service.

a) Grudem defines worship as the “**activity of glorifying God in his presence with our voices and hearts.**”¹²

b) Jesus declared to the Samaritan woman in John 4:23 God is looking for those who would worship Him “in spirit and truth.”

c) That this is the desire of the Lord within the Church is inescapable. Consider the exhortation to:

Heb 13:15 continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to His name.

d) Again, Paul instructed believers in that they should be:

Ephesians 5:19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

e) Peter gives a similar exhortation in 1 Peter 2:9.

f) It is this author’s belief that when the Church engages in sincere corporate worship certain spiritual works are accomplished.

g) These include God being glorified, the believer fulfilling their purpose as worshippers, and the hearts and minds of God’s people being prepared to receive teaching from the Word of God.

C. Prayer

1. Closely related to the activity of worship is that of offering prayers to the Lord.

2. Paul instructed Timothy to make certain that prayer was a vital part of the Church (1 Tim 2:8).

1 Timothy 2:8 (NKJV)⁸ **I desire** therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;

3. Jesus declared that God wanted the Temple gathering “to be a house of prayer” (Matt 21:13).

¹² Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1003.

4. Prayer is that means by which the believer can worship God and petition God for those things we need.
5. Pastor Chuck Smith exhorted us pastors to “get your people praying and keep them praying.”
6. This exhortation will only be fulfilled through much diligence and effort.
7. Though it is recognized that this task of getting holy hands lifted in prayer will be challenged, the command stands that the Church of Jesus Christ is to be a praying Church.

D. Teaching

1. When Jesus was recommissioning Peter into ministry Jesus exhorted Him to “feed My lambs” (John 21:15).
2. The teaching and instruction from the Word of God that Jesus desires for His flock is an irreplaceable function of the Church.
3. Paul instructed Timothy, “Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching” (2 Tim 4:2).
4. Paul even warned that a time would come when people would no longer “endure sound doctrine” (2 Tim 4:3).
5. The New Testament not only provides clear instruction to teach the people of God the Word of God it also presents this **example**: In Acts 2:42 we read that the early Church gathered diligently to be taught by the Apostles.
6. Again, in Acts 20:27 Paul said to the Ephesian elders “For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.”
7. It is therefore both commanded and modeled in the New Testament that the Church should be a place to be taught and disciplined in the Word of God.

E. Fellowship

1. One of the wonderful blessings the Church provides for believers is fellowship (Acts 2:42).
2. The word fellowship is from the Greek word κοινωνία.
3. BDAG offers this definition for κοινωνία “close association involving mutual interests and sharing, association, communion, fellowship, close relationship.”¹³
4. The sharing that these believers experienced was their like faith and mission in Jesus Christ.
5. As they associated around these foundational elements they also engaged in sharing the burdens of one another as they followed Christ (Acts 4:32).

Acts 4:32 (NKJV)³² Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.

6. Although nearly 2,000 years have passed since the first Church gathered, the purpose remains unchanged.
7. Believers come together with a like faith to encourage one another sharing the joys and burdens of life and ministry.

F. Evangelizing

1. In Acts 2:47 we read that people were daily coming to faith in Jesus Christ.
2. Their care for lost souls was in obedience to the command from the Lord (Matt 28:20) to be His witnesses in all the earth.
3. Paul accurately expresses the attitude every Church in every generation should have towards this mission stating, “to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Cor 9:22).

¹³ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 552.

4. Additionally, in Romans 1:14 Paul declares that he was a “debtor to both Greeks and barbarians, both to wise and to unwise.”
5. The proclamation of the gospel should continue to occupy the Church’s energies, resources and focus.
6. The Church today should feel this same indebtedness that preoccupied the Apostle Paul and should not be viewed as an optional activity.

G. Ordinances

1. That the Church has been given practices to participate in is agreed by both Protestants and Roman Catholics alike.
 - a) As to what these ordinances are and the significance of participating in them, there is a divergence of opinion.
 - b) Some refer to these rites as sacraments and believe these activities convey a spiritual grace when one engages in them.
 - c) Enns clarifies this difference noting “many Protestants have preferred the term *ordinance*, which does not have the connotation of conveying grace.”¹⁴
 - d) Ryrie defines ordinance as “A God-ordained rite or symbol administered in the church.”¹⁵
 - e) Beyond having a different understanding of the function of these rites believers differ on the number of rites the Church should be participating in.
 - f) Roman Catholics believe there are seven while many evangelicals would hold that Baptism and Communion are the only two ordinances.

2. Communion

¹⁴ Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, 359.

¹⁵ Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 629.

- a) On the night Jesus ate the Passover meal with His disciples before being crucified, Jesus instituted what is commonly referred to as the Lord's Supper.
- b) Jesus took this very well-known Jewish feast and infused this meal with a fuller meaning than had ever been realized before (Luke 22:14–23).
- c) In this meal He declared that the bread they were eating was His body that was to be broken and that the cup of wine they drank was His blood that would be shed for the cleansing of sin—the cup of the new covenant (Luke 22:19–20).
- d) Furthermore, Jesus instructed them that every time they ate and drank in this manner they would be declaring His death until He returns (1 Cor 11:26).
- e) Believers are divided as to what significance this meal holds for the believer.
- f) Here at CCL we hold to the memorial view.
- g) Enns summarizes this position writing “**the memorial view is the notion that the bread and cup are figurative only; they are a memorial to the death of Christ.**”¹⁶
- h) What a joy that the Lord has left behind an activity that touches our hearts, minds and senses in such a powerful way.

3. Baptism

- a) The second ordinance that believers are instructed to participate in is baptism (Matt 28:19).
- b) The meaning of Baptism is defined by Ryrie as “**an act of association or identification with someone, some group, some message, or some event.**”¹⁷

¹⁶ Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, 361.

c) For the believer **Baptism is an association with the teaching of the gospel and an identification with Jesus Christ.**

d) It is the position of this author that Baptism is not the means by which a person experiences salvation but rather a symbolic act that identifies with the death and resurrection of Jesus (Rom 6:3–4).

e) Furthermore, it is the practice of the author to baptize believers who are able to express their faith in Christ with a full immersion of water.

H. This section of the doctrinal summary has focused on the importance of worship, prayer, teaching, fellowship, evangelizing, Baptism and participation in the Lord's Supper.

1. The Church is the Lord's and it is His work.
2. While opinions abound as to who the Church is and what she should teach and do the final arbitrator is the Word of God.

V. Leadership and Government of the Local Church

A. Having defined the Church, explored her function and considered her ordinances it is now time to explore the Church's key leaders and the governance by which she conducts herself.

1. The leaders that will be considered are elders, deacons and pastors.
2. With regard to governance we will explore the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational and independent model of Church government.

B. Elders

¹⁷ Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 488.

1. Elder is the Greek word πρεσβύτερος and is defined by William Mounce as, “a title of leadership in the church (Acts 11:30; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4; 1 Pet. 5:1).”¹⁸

2. Paul wrote to Timothy about appointing elders and states that men who would fill such a role must be able to care for the Church (1 Tim 3:5).

1 Timothy 3:5 (NKJV)⁵ (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?);

3. To Titus he wrote that one of the main functions of an elder is to protect the flock of God from those who would bring in false teaching to the Church (Titus 1:9).

Titus 1:9 (NKJV)⁹ holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

4. Men who are appointed to this position must meet the qualifications listed in Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Timothy 3:1–7.

5. In summary, an elder should be a man whose spiritual life is in order and is capable for caring for the spiritual needs of the body of Christ.

C. Deacons

1. Deacons (διάκονος) are another specifically mentioned leader in the Church of Jesus Christ.

2. These men, like elders, must meet certain spiritual qualifications to carry out their ministry to the Church (1 Tim 3:9–13).

3. The primary purpose of these men is to provide practical service to the body of Christ.

4. This role appears to be indicated first in the very meaning of διάκονος which is servant.

5. In addition, Paul notes that men who are qualified for this ministry position are “those who have served well” (Titus 1:13).

¹⁸ William D. Mounce, *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 208.

6. A Church that has men who are spiritually mature and desire to serve their brothers and sisters is a blessed Church indeed.

D. Pastor

1. In Ephesians 4:11 Paul gives a list of four gifted leaders that are to help equip the Church for the work of the ministry.

2. Of particular interest in this paper are “pastors and teachers”. Paul wrote in **1 Timothy 5:17** “Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.”

3. While not conclusive, it seems that there were particular elders who ministered specifically in the word.

4. These men are both gifted for the shepherding of the flock and the instruction of the flock.

5. It is acknowledged that different local bodies may organize their leadership team differently and employ different titles.

6. What is important is that the flock of God is cared for and taught by men who are spiritually gifted by Jesus Christ to teach and to tend.

E. Governance Model

1. The means by which the governance structure is established within the local Church varies significantly.

a) The emphasis a person places on the limited New Testament passages that address this issue effects one’s view.

b) Outside of Scripture matters such as culture, one’s national government style and other factors play a significant role on what conclusions are drawn for the governance of the Church.

2. The most common forms of Church government are Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational and Pastor-led.

a) It is worth noting that the New Testament is not explicit in its description of how the Church is to be governed.

b) What is emphasized is the character of the men who lead.

c) CC Lynchburg is a Pastor-led, elder-supported governance model.

d) In this model the Pastor is free to lead the body of Christ spiritually but is accountable to a group of elders in matters of doctrine, character and financial matters.

3. The leaders of the Church are men who are gifted by the Lord and of high moral character.

a) These men are to model the servant-style leadership of Jesus.

b) As these men lead the Church a form of Church government must be adopted to most effectively lead the Church in her mission to encounter God, equip the flock and evangelize the world.

VI. Conclusion

A. In this chapter attention has been given to define the Church and note her beginnings.

B. In addition, time was spent on the form of the Church, the figures of speech used to describe her relationship with Christ, explore her purpose and the leaders given to govern her affairs.

C. While not all matters are easily agreed upon by all believers the New Testament gives a sufficient understanding of the Church and what she should look like in the world today.

D. All must be careful to not be persuaded by tradition or current trends but allow the Word of God to be the final authority for how the Church functions today.