

The Church v2

Lesson 9

The Organization of A Local Church

The Church v2

1. What is the church?
2. The nature of the universal church
3. The nature of a local church
4. Unreliable sources of religious authority
5. The only source of Divine authority today
6. How to establish Divine authority
7. Things that are expedient

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The Church v2

8. Respecting the silence of the Scriptures
9. The organization of a local church
10. The work of a local church
11. Independence autonomy and cooperation of local churches
12. Institutionalism
13. The social gospel
14. The unity of the church

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Respecting The Silence of The Scriptures

1. What does it mean when God is silent?
2. God's silence in the Old Testament is restrictive
3. God's silence in the New Testament is restrictive
4. Denominational examples of disrespecting God's silence
5. Churches of Christ examples of disrespecting God's silence

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Introduction

- Not long after the spread of the gospel and establishing of local churches in many places, men began to change how a local church was organized
- Instead of local churches overseeing their own work, some local churches claimed authority over other local churches
- This resulted in changes to how members of a local church related to their elders and how local churches related to each other

5

Introduction

- Therefore, changes occurred and still do today in how the universal church is organized, installing leaders with power over many local churches controlling and commanding how they must work together as one
- For example comparing the organizational structure of the Roman Catholic church to the New Testament, we find no visible resemblance to what God intended

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Introduction

- When the organization of a local church is changed, its purposes and work are also changed in violation of the apostles' teaching
- Let us learn about how God authorizes a local church to be organized so we do not partner with those who disregard His authority in this or any other matter

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Beware of Changing Local Church Organization

- Paul warned the elders at Ephesus to watch themselves, the flock and their teaching
- Over time they departed from the truth changing local church organization eventually leading to the Catholic church
- History tells us that one elder was designated as supreme among the other elders in a local church, unauthorized by the New Testament

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Beware of Changing Local Church Organization

- Then, the chief elder began to rule over other local churches which is unauthorized by the Word of God
- Eventually authority over many local churches became concentrated in just two men
- Then, the Pope, one universal elder or bishop, evolved which we have today, just as unauthorized now as it was when it began

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Beware of Changing Local Church Organization

- The New Testament clearly reveals that elders are restricted to overseeing the work of the local church to which they belong
- Sadly, many churches of Christ have unlawfully expanded local church oversight and treasury to do unauthorized centralized work

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Beware of Changing Local Church Organization

Act 20:26 "Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men.

Act 20:27 "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.

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Beware of Changing Local Church Organization

Act 20:28 "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

Act 20:29 "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;

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Beware of Changing Local Church Organization

Act 20:30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

Act 20:31 "Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.

13

Beware of Changing Local Church Organization

Act 20:32 "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

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The Universal Church Has No Earthly Organization

- Jesus' universal church is that assembly of individuals in the world that He saves
- Therefore His universal church is composed of individuals and not local churches
- Jesus is the head of His universal church directing it by the apostles' teaching, the New Testament

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The Universal Church Has No Earthly Organization

- The apostles have no earthly successors but have left only their authoritative teaching to guide His universal church today
- Therefore, Jesus' universal church has no earthly overseers or a centralized headquarters like the Roman Catholic Church
- The apostles restricted church oversight and treasury to the local level

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Jesus' Universal Church Is That Assembly of Individuals In The World That He Saves

Act 2:36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified."

Act 2:37 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

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Jesus' Universal Church Is That Assembly of Individuals In The World That He Saves

Act 2:38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Act 2:41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

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Jesus' Universal Church Is That Assembly of Individuals In The World That He Saves

Act 2:42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Act 2:47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

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His Universal Church Is Composed of Individuals And Not Local Churches

1Co 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

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Jesus Is The Head of His Universal Church Directing It By The Apostles' Teaching

Eph 5:22 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

Eph 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.

Eph 5:24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

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Jesus Is The Head of His Universal Church Directing It By The Apostles' Teaching

Act 2:42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

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The Apostles Have No Earthly Successors

2Pe 1:12 Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you.

2Pe 1:13 I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder,

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The Apostles Have No Earthly Successors

2Pe 1:14 knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.

2Pe 1:15 And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.

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The Apostles Have No Earthly Successors

2Pe 3:1 This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder,

2Pe 3:2 that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles.

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The Apostles Have No Earthly Successors

2Pe 3:14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,

2Pe 3:15 and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you,

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The Apostles Have No Earthly Successors

2Pe 3:16 as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

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The Apostles Have No Earthly Successors

2Pe 3:17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness,

2Pe 3:18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

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The Apostles Restricted Church Oversight And Treasury To The Local Level

Act 14:23 When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

1Pe 5:2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;

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The Apostles Restricted Church Oversight And Treasury To The Local Level

1Co 16:1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also.

1Co 16:2 On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.

1Co 16:3 When I arrive, whomever you may approve, I will send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem;

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Some Examples of Unauthorized Universal Church Organization

1. Roman Catholic Church
2. The Jehovah's Witnesses
3. The Mormon Church
4. The International Churches of Christ

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The Organization of A Local Church

1. Beware of changing local church organization
2. The universal church has no earthly organization

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Each Local Church Must Oversee And Fund Their Own Work

- A local church is an assembly of saints in a specific location that agree to worship and work together as Christ has commanded them
- Each local church is to oversee and fund their own work
- No local church is to oversee the work of any other local church

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Each Local Church Must Oversee And Fund Their Own Work

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1Pe 5:2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;

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Each Local Church Must Oversee And Fund Their Own Work

Tit 1:5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you,

Php 1:1 Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:

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Each Local Church Must Oversee And Fund Their Own Work

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The Work and Qualifications of Elders

- We look now at the work elders are given to do by Jesus in the apostles' teaching
- This work is to be done among the local church of which they are also members
- To do this work, God has also revealed their qualifications or characteristics

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The Work and Qualifications of Elders

- All men to be appointed elders must first meet all qualifications
- All men serving as elders must maintain these qualifications
- In order for a local church to have men appointed as elders, there must be at least two men who are qualified according to God's Word

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Elders Are To Oversee The Flock Among Them

1Pe 5:2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;

1Pe 5:3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

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Elders Must First Watch Themselves and Shepherd The Flock

Act 20:28 "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

Act 20:29 "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;

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Elders Must First Watch Themselves and Shepherd The Flock

Act 20:30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

Act 20:31 "Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.

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Elders Must First Watch Themselves and Shepherd The Flock

Act 20:32 "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

42

Elders Must First Watch Themselves and Shepherd The Flock

Heb 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

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Elders Must Rule Guided By The Apostles' Teaching In All Decisions

1Ti 5:17 The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.

Heb 13:7 Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of *their* conduct.

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Elders Must Rule Guided By The Apostles' Teaching In All Decisions

1Ti 3:4 He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity

1Ti 3:5 (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?),

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Elders Must Defend The Flock Against Errors

Tit 1:9 holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

Tit 1:10 For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision,

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Elders Must Defend The Flock Against Errors

Tit 1:11 who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain.

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The Qualifications of Elders

1Ti 3:1 It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do.

1Ti 3:2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

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The Qualifications of Elders

1Ti 3:3 not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.

1Ti 3:4 He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity

1Ti 3:5 (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?),

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The Qualifications of Elders

1Ti 3:6 and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.

1Ti 3:7 And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

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The Qualifications of Elders

Tit 1:5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you,

Tit 1:6 namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion.

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The Qualifications of Elders

Tit 1:7 For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain,
Tit 1:8 but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled,

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The Qualifications of Elders

Tit 1:9 holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

Tit 1:10 For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision,

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The Qualifications of Elders

Tit 1:11 who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain.

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What If There Are Not At Least Two Men Who Qualify As Elders

- In many local churches, there may not be at least two men qualified to be elders
- Instead of appointing unqualified elders, the local church should function as best it can with the men taking the lead in overseeing the work of the local church
- Beware that women are not placed in positions where they rule over men in the oversight and work of the local church

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What If There Are Not At Least Two Men Who Qualify As Elders

1Ti 2:11 A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness.

1Ti 2:12 But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.

1Ti 2:13 For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve.

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What If There Are Not At Least Two Men Who Qualify As Elders

1Ti 2:14 And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

1Ti 2:15 But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.

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The Organization of A Local Church

1. Beware of changing local church organization
2. The universal church has no earthly organization
3. Each local church must oversee and fund their own work
4. The work and qualifications of elders

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The Work and Qualifications of Deacons

- Deacons are servants who assist the elders in doing the work of the local church
- A possible example of deacons working is found in Acts 6 showing their role in distribution of alms to the needy saints in the Jerusalem congregation
- They too are to be men who meet certain qualifications revealed in the apostles' teaching

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A Possible Example of The Work of Deacons

Act 6:1 Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food.

Act 6:2 So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables.

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A Possible Example of The Work of Deacons

Act 6:3 "Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.

Act 6:4 "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

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A Possible Example of The Work of Deacons

Act 6:5 The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch.

Act 6:6 And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them.

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A Possible Example of The Work of Deacons

Act 6:7 The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

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The Qualifications of Deacons

1Ti 3:8 Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain,

1Ti 3:9 but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

1Ti 3:10 These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach.

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The Qualifications of Deacons

1Ti 3:11 Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.

1Ti 3:12 Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households.

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The Qualifications of Deacons

1Ti 3:13 For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

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Evangelists Teachers And Saints

- Under the oversight of qualified elders who are aided by qualified deacons, the saints composing a local church are to worship and work together in the Lord's service
- Among these saints (holy ones) in a local church, there are evangelists (those who spread the gospel), and teachers (those who edify the local church)

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Evangelists Teachers And Saints

- And, Christians serving the Lord and one another according to their God-given talents
- As the local body of saints function together as God commands, they grow both spiritually and numerically to God's glory in His way

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Evangelists Teachers And Saints

Eph 4:11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,

Eph 4:12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

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Evangelists Teachers And Saints

Eph 4:13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

Eph 4:14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

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Evangelists Teachers And Saints

Eph 4:15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,

Eph 4:16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

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Evangelists Teachers And Saints

2Ti 4:1 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:

2Ti 4:2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

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Evangelists Teachers And Saints

2Ti 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,
2Ti 4:4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

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Evangelists Teachers And Saints

2Ti 4:5 But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.
2Ti 2:2 The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

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Evangelists Teachers And Saints

1Co 12:18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.
1Co 12:19 If they were all one member, where would the body be?
1Co 12:20 But now there are many members, but one body.

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Evangelists Teachers And Saints

1Co 12:21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."
1Co 12:22 On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary;

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Evangelists Teachers And Saints

1Co 12:23 and those members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable,
1Co 12:24 whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked,

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Evangelists Teachers And Saints

1Co 12:25 so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.
1Co 12:26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.
1Co 12:27 Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.

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Evangelists Teachers And Saints

1Co 12:28 And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

1Co 12:29 All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they?

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Evangelists Teachers And Saints

1Co 12:30 All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?

1Co 12:31 But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.

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Evangelists Teachers And Saints

1Co 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,

1Co 13:5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,

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Evangelists Teachers And Saints

1Co 13:6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;

1Co 13:7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

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Evangelists Teachers And Saints

Rom 12:3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

Rom 12:4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function,

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Evangelists Teachers And Saints

Rom 12:5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

Rom 12:6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;

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Evangelists Teachers And Saints

Rom 12:7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching;

Rom 12:8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

The Organization of A Local Church

1. Beware of changing local church organization
2. The universal church has no earthly organization
3. Each local church must oversee and fund their own work
4. The work and qualifications of elders
5. The work and qualifications of deacons
6. Evangelists teachers and saints