

# LEADERSHIP & BAPTIST POLITY

**I. The local church is led by the pastors**

**II. The local church is served by deacons (διάκονος)**

**III. The local church is governed by the congregation (members)**

Baptists have always held to and been identified by the ideas that local churches are to be:

- Self-governing
- Self-propagating / perpetuating
- Self-supporting

Congregational church government does not mean congregations know & vote on every detail!

**What does it mean?**

**1. The congregation disciplines its own members**

Matthew 18:15 Moreover **if** thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: **if** he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. Matthew 18:16 But **if** he will not hear thee, **then** take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. Matthew 18:17 And **if** he shall neglect to hear them, **tell it unto the church: but if** he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

1 Corinthians 5:4 In the **name** of our Lord Jesus Christ, **when** ye are **gathered together**, and my spirit, **with** the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Corinthians 5:5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. 1 Corinthians 5:13 But them that are without God judgeth. **Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.**

2 Corinthians 2:5 But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. 2 Corinthians 2:6 Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, **which was inflicted of many (ὕπο τῶν πλειόνων).**

1 Timothy 5:19 Against an elder receive **not** an accusation, **but before two or three witnesses. 1 Timothy 5:20 Them that sin rebuke before **all**, that **others** also may fear. 1 Timothy 5:21 I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. 1 Timothy 5:22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure. 1 Timothy 5:24 **Some** men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and **some** men they follow after. 1 Timothy 5:25 Likewise also the good works of **some** are manifest beforehand; and **they** that are otherwise cannot be hid.**

**2. The congregation elects its own officers**

Acts 6:1 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Acts 6:2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, **It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.** Acts 6:3 **Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you** seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. Acts 6:4 **But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.** Acts 6:5 **And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose** Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: Acts 6:6 **Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.** Acts 6:7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Acts 14:21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, Acts 14:22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. Acts 14:23 And when **they had ordained (Χειροτονήσαντες)** them **elders (πρεσβυτέρους κατ' ἐκκλησίαν)** in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

**Titus 1:5** For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and **ordain elders** (καταστήσης κατὰ πόλιν πρεσβυτέρους) in every city, as I had appointed thee: **Titus 1:6** If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. **Titus 1:7** For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; **Titus 1:8** But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; **Titus 1:9** Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

**2 Corinthians 8:18** And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout **all the churches** (διὰ πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν); **2 Corinthians 8:19** And not that only, but who was also chosen (χειροτονηθεὶς) of the churches (ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν) to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind:

**1 Timothy 3:1** This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. **1 Timothy 3:2** A bishop then **must** be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

**Acts 2:42** And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

**2 Thessalonians 2:15** Therefore, brethren, **stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.**

**1 Timothy 3:2** A bishop then **must** (Δεῖ) be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; **1 Timothy 3:15** But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou **oughtest** (δεῖ) to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

**How does this help us?**

- **This allows for freedom & flexibility in the details and is thus highly adaptable**
- **This combines the pastors and the people**
- **This is all under the authority of the Scripture - apostolic doctrine**
- **This does not allow one insider to dictate / appoint**
- **This does not allow any outsiders to dictate / appoint (“bishops” / some kind of agency man)**
- **This does not allow a small group to dictate / appoint (“elders” / “deacons”)**
- **This requires the congregation to choose!**

### **3. The congregation determines its own relationship with sister churches.**

**Acts 14:27** And when they were come, and had gathered (συναγαγόντες τὴν ἐκκλησίαν) the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. **Acts 14:28** And there they abode long time with the disciples.

**Acts 15:1** And **certain men** which came down from Judaea taught the brethren (τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς), and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. **Acts 15:2** When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. **Acts 15:3** And being brought on their way by the church (προπεμφθέντες ὑπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας), they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto **all the brethren** (πᾶσιν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς). **Acts 15:4** And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church (ὑπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας), and of the apostles (τῶν ἀποστόλων) and elders (τῶν πρεσβυτέρων), and they declared all things that God had done with them.

**Acts 15:5** But there rose up **certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed**, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. **Acts 15:6** And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. **Acts 15:7** And when there had been much disputing, **Peter** rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. **Acts 15:12** Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to **Barnabas and Paul**, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. **Acts 15:13** And after they had held their peace, **James** answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me:

**Acts 15:22** Then pleased it the apostles (τοῖς ἀποστόλοις) and elders (τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις), with the **whole church** (σὺν ὅλῃ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ), to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: **Acts 15:23** And they wrote letters by them after this manner; **The apostles (Οἱ ἀπόστολοι) and elders (οἱ πρεσβύτεροι) and brethren (οἱ ἀδελφοὶ) send greeting unto the brethren (τοῖς ... ἀδελφοῖς) which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: Acts 15:24** Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: **Acts**

**15:25** It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, **Acts 15:26** Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Acts 15:27** We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. **Acts 15:28** For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; **Acts 15:30** So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle: **Acts 15:31** Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.

#### **4. The congregation collects, distributes, & safe-guards its own finances**

**1 Corinthians 16:1** Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. **1 Corinthians 16:2** Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. **1 Corinthians 16:3** And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. **1 Corinthians 16:4** And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.

**2 Corinthians 8:16** But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you. **2 Corinthians 8:17** For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you. **2 Corinthians 8:18** And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches (διὰ πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν); **2 Corinthians 8:19** And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches (χειροτονηθεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν) to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind: **2 Corinthians 8:20** Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: **2 Corinthians 8:21** Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

**Ezra 8:24** Then I separated twelve of the chief of the priests, Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them, **Ezra 8:25** And weighed unto them the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, even the offering of the house of our God, which the king, and his counsellors, and his lords, and all Israel there present, had offered: **Ezra 8:26** I even weighed unto their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels an hundred talents, and of gold an hundred talents; **Ezra 8:27** Also twenty basons of gold, of a thousand drams; and two vessels of fine copper, precious as gold. **Ezra 8:28** And I said unto them, Ye are holy unto the LORD; the vessels are holy also; and the silver and the gold are a freewill offering unto the LORD God of your fathers. **Ezra 8:29** Watch ye, and keep them, until ye weigh them before the chief of the priests and the Levites, and chief of the fathers of Israel, at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the LORD. **Ezra 8:30** So took the priests and the Levites the weight of the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, to bring them to Jerusalem unto the house of our God. **Ezra 8:31** Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem: and the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way. **Ezra 8:32** And we came to Jerusalem, and abode there three days. **Ezra 8:33** Now on the fourth day was the silver and the gold and the vessels weighed in the house of our God by the hand of Meremoth the son of Uriah the priest; and with him was Eleazar the son of Phinehas; and with them was Jozabad the son of Jeshua, and Noadiah the son of Binnui, Levites; **Ezra 8:34** By number and by weight of every one: and all the weight was written at that time.

#### **5. The congregation commissions its own missionaries**

**Acts 13:1** Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. **Acts 13:2** As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. **Acts 13:3** And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. **Acts 13:4** So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. **Acts 13:5** And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.

**Acts 14:21** And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, **Acts 14:22** Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. **Acts 14:23** And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. **Acts 14:24** And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. **Acts 14:25** And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia:

**Acts 14:26** And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. **Acts 14:27** And when they were come, and had gathered the church together (συναγαγόντες τὴν ἐκκλησίαν), they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. **Acts 14:28** And there they abode long time with the disciples.

## Missions:

- **Begins in a local church**
- **Resulted in local churches**
- **Reported back to the local church**

## **6. The congregation receives and safe-guards the gospel / truth**

**Philippians 1:1** Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

**Philippians 1:7** Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, **and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.** **Philippians 1:27** Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that **ye** stand fast in one spirit, with one mind **striving together** for the faith of the gospel;

**1 Timothy 3:15** But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, **which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.**

**1 Corinthians 16:1** Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order **to the churches of Galatia (ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Γαλατίας), even so do ye.** **1 Corinthians 16:2** Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

**Revelation 1:4** John **to the seven churches (ταῖς ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησίαις ταῖς ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ) which are in Asia:** Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

**Acts 14:27** And when they were come, **and had gathered (συναγαγόντες τὴν ἐκκλησίαν) the church together,** they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. **Acts 14:28** And there they abode long time **with the disciples.**

**Acts 15:1** And **certain men** which came down from Judaea taught **the brethren (τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς),** and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. **Acts 15:2** When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. **Acts 15:3** **And being brought on their way by the church (προπεμφθέντες ὑπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας),** they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy **unto all the brethren (πᾶσιν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς).** **Acts 15:4** And when they were come to Jerusalem, **they were received of the church (ὑπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας), and of the apostles (τῶν ἀποστόλων) and elders (τῶν πρεσβυτέρων),** and they declared all things that God had done with them. **Acts 15:5** But there rose up **certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed,** saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. **Acts 15:6** And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. **Acts 15:7** And when there had been much disputing, **Peter** rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. **Acts 15:12** Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to **Barnabas and Paul,** declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. **Acts 15:13** And after they had held their peace, **James** answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: **Acts 15:22** Then pleased it **the apostles (τοῖς ἀποστόλοις) and elders (τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις), with the whole church (σὺν ὅλῃ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ),** to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: **Acts 15:23** And they wrote letters by them after this manner; **The apostles (Οἱ ἀπόστολοι) and elders (οἱ πρεσβύτεροι) and brethren (οἱ ἀδελφοὶ) send greeting unto the brethren (τοῖς ... ἀδελφοῖς) which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia:** **Acts 15:24** Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: **Acts 15:25** **It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord,** to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, **Acts 15:26** Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Acts 15:27** We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. **Acts 15:28** **For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us,** to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; **Acts 15:30** So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: **and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle: Acts 15:31** **Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.**