

Organized to Magnify Christ
Shepherds, Superstars & the Bible

KSBC 08.24.08

Titus 1:1-16

Intro Our assignment for the month of August is to learn and consider what the Bible teaches regarding how we as a local assembly of Christ followers should be organized in order to have the maximum impact on our community and world with the good news. Our 'Organized to magnify Christ' sermon series focuses on the three components of church structure and relationships of congregation, deacon and elder.

Organization or structure in a church should reflect what the Bible teaches regarding where authority resides and how decisions are made. Who leads, how are leaders recognized, what are their job descriptions and how are they to lead are all important structural issues for the assembly of believers who are committed to God being glorified in the church.

KSBC is going through a process that began in 2006 of a major change in how we organize or structure our approach to leadership. The basic content of my message this morning regarding the roles of congregation, deacon and elder is the result of careful study and interaction of our current leadership team. Statements of understanding for elders, deacons and congregation have been written by a team of leaders over the last year or so and approved by the Advisory Council.

By way of review and to set our final two studies in context let's look quickly at what we are learning over the first two messages of this series:

4 Reasons Why KSBC Should Change Leadership Structure

1. To establish clarity in current leadership structure.
2. To realign with biblical norms regarding leadership structure.
3. To promote unity in our church through leadership structure.
4. To advance the gospel of Jesus Christ through clear every-member ministry.

How deacons and church members can glorify God in our church:

Role of the deacon.

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| 1. Assistant to the elders. | Acts 6:1-7; Philippians 1:1 |
| 2. Servant – leader to the church family. | 1Tim. 3:13 |
| 3. Tested trend setter for church family. | 1Tim. 3:8-10 |

Role of church member/congregation.

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| 1. Submit to and follow leaders. | Hebrews 13:17; 1Thess.5:12-13 |
| 2. Hold leaders accountable. | 2Cor. 11:4; Gal.1:6-9; 1Tim.5:19 |
| 3. Express church authority. | Matthew 18:15-17; 1Cor.5:12-13 |

This morning we begin to look at the role of the elder or pastor in a church that is organized to magnify Christ. Please open your Bibles to Titus 1 where we will use the Apostle's instructions to Titus regarding elders as our source for understanding God's will regarding the role of elders/pastors.

What are your expectations of pastoral leaders? What is their role in a church that effectively magnifies Christ? Our prayer today is that we would understand and conform our thinking and behavior to God's truth for the glory of Christ and his church.

We live in confusing days regarding the role, expectations and responsibilities of pastors. Most of the confusion and cynicism is expressed in the two most frequent pictures that are generated by both our so called Christian and secular media. One picture is that of the disgraced pastor or church leader. The one who has fallen into sin, primarily sexual sin but not exclusively. The other picture is that of the 'super star' pastor who excels as a businessman, psychologist, entertainer, author, strategic leader or media figure. While I do not equate the morality or character of the two, neither type gives us much help in understanding God's intended gift to his church of pastoral leadership in the role of eldership.

Read Titus 1:1-16

Churches in Crete were experiencing difficulties that Titus was assigned to address. His key assignment was to appoint or 'put in charge' elders in each place. The issues facing these churches include . . .

- Inadequate leadership structure 1:5
- Harassment from false teachers 1:10-11; 3:10-11
- Unacceptable behavior by church members 2:1-10; 3:1-3

The repeated message of this letter that Titus is to teach these troubled churches is that life and behavior must conform to truth. 1:1 1:9 1:16 2:7 2:10 2:11-12

The Apostle's instructions to appoint elders include clear expectations of what these church leaders are responsible to be and do. **Both our church corporately and you as an individual follower of Christ need the ministry of elders. God provides for our good a multiplicity of godly men who fulfill crucial roles in our progress toward Christ likeness.**

The role of the pastor/elder

Elders lead. 1:7 *'since an overseer is entrusted with God's work . . .'*

3 lines of evidence supporting leadership responsibility of elders:

1. Delegated authority implied in 'appoint.' 1:1-5 Heb.13:17; 1Thess.5:12-13
2. Parallel use of elder and overseer. 1:7 cmp. Acts 20:17, 28

Elder character and maturity of a man responsible for others
Overseer caring for and watching over others
Pastor/shepherd feeding, nurturing and protecting others

3. Use of 'steward' metaphor. 1:7 cmp Acts 20:28, 31

Responsible for/in charge of God's work entrusted with
Manager who is accountable to his supervisor . . . Heb. 13:17; 1Peter 5:4

Elders feed. 1:9 *'so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine. . .'*

Note 2 dimensions of this responsibility . . .

1. Read Titus 1 – 3 as a group. As you read, observe what themes or terms are repeated or emphasized.
2. Review the roles of congregation and deacon together. What observations or questions do you have about these? How important do you think these roles are to our success as a church in leading people in a growing relationship to Jesus?
3. What are the ways you need godly elders in your life? What are some expectations that you have of pastoral leadership? Do you have any that may not match with the roles as taught in this study? Review the roles of lead, feed and protect.
4. According to Heb. 13:17 and 1Thess.5:12-13, what are appropriate responses to church leadership? Evaluate and share some of the reasons why this joyful submission to leadership is difficult or challenging.
5. In what ways have you recently been encouraged, rebuked or warned by healthy teaching of truth? What are some recent changes you have made as a result of being instructed in biblical truth?
6. What are some examples of unhealthy or dangerous teaching that need to be exposed and corrected in our lives and church today? How do you distinguish between false teaching and preferences or opinions?
7. Spend time in prayer for our pastors and church family as we seek God's favor during this process of change and growth.