



# FIRST BAPTIST of Hayden

**3/13/2024**

**The Baptist Faith and Message  
2 The Church**



# Outline

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**Preface**

The church is God's method for reaching the world for Christ. The church has been *called out*, (gk. *ecclesia*), of the world and into fellowship, with the express purpose of glorifying God through Service - Community - Worship. When we are united in our commitment to Christ through our commitment to one another, we become a light for our community that draws those in darkness to us.

The primary purpose of the church is to reach the world with the good news that God has provided a means of returning to him through repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. That comes as a free gift of God's grace but is worked out in our lives in practical reality, within the church.

It is in the church that we grow into the full measure of Christ. It is through the church that God uses us as Christians, who are maturing, to reach the world. There is no plan 'B' with God's purpose, we grow in the church, and we reach the world through the church.

So, tonight, let's look once again at The Church.



## 6. The Church

**BFM:** A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an *autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth.* Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its two scriptural offices are that of pastor/elder/overseer and deacon. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor/elder/overseer is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all ages, believers from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation.

1. Autonomous local congregation of baptized believers:
2. Associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel:
3. Observing the two ordinances of Christ:
4. Governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth:

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5. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes:

We believe in the “priesthood of the believer.”

1 Peter 2:9–10 (ESV): 9 *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.* 10 *Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

We accept that all believers are equal before God. There is no rank when it comes to speaking to God nor is there one who gets more of the Holy Spirit than another. Many churches believe that the priest or pastor is the one who may intercede for others. We are a royal priesthood, all of us, any believer who has turned to God from his sin and accepted Christ as savior. We have equal responsibility in the telling of the gospel. We will be held equally accountable for our obedience to him and his calling upon our lives. Thus, we all have an equal voice in the direction of and the decisions made regarding the church.

We are the people of God, dispersed throughout the earth in order to declare the excellencies of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have equal voice in the telling and we have equal voice in the deciding. There is no master except the One Master who is Lord over all. And it is to him that we all will give an account.



6. Its two scriptural offices are that of pastor /elder/overseer and deacon. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor/elder/overseer is limited to men as qualified by Scripture:

Baptists have recognized these two offices since the earliest days of the New Testament church. By Baptist, I do not mean, those called Baptist, but those who practice believer's baptism. Many churches throughout the history of the church have practiced infant baptism, or baptism of the dead or dying. This became more prevalent as the church expanded and newer theologies were birthed to accommodate people's false ideas.

Infant baptism began as a result of infant mortality rates. A baby was born but was sick and died. Certain priests/pastors who were not trained in the scriptures did not know if that baby would go to heaven or not. So, parents began to demand that, as early as possible after birth, a baptism was to be performed. Thus, ensuring eternal salvation for the infant were it to die. The first mention of this practice known as pedo-baptism is AD 150. There is nothing that has been found in the earliest writings of the early church that indicates this practice before 150.

Now, back to the offices recognized by Baptists. From the earliest days of the church, three words were used to refer to the pastor. Referring to these three words, Larry Weeden says this:

### **Leadership in the New Testament**

*“It seems to me that where the Bible touches on the matter of Christian leadership, it supports the strong leadership role for the pastor. Three Greek words for this role are fairly interchangeable in the New Testament:*

- *shepherd or pastor (ποιμεν/ποιμεν),*
- *elder (presbuteros/πρεσβυτερος), and*
- *bishop (episkopos/επισκοπος).*

*The bishop is an overseer or a guardian. The elder is respected because of the wisdom of age and is a ruler. The relationship of a shepherd to a flock of sheep is one of the biblical metaphors used to describe God-ordained Christian leadership. A pastor, by definition, is related to a flock as its leader.”*

Weeden, Larry K., editor. *The Magnetic Fellowship: Reaching and Keeping People*. Christianity Today, Inc.; Word Books, 1988, p. 22.

Each of these titles are interchangeable regarding a local church pastor. We need to be careful regarding how other church systems use these words, as if somehow in our contemporary world, we have a better understanding of the church’s leadership than the early church.

The second office is that of deacon. The word deacon means servant, and both men and women are referred to as servants in the New Testament. However, only men are called deacons of the church, in regards to the office.

*1 Timothy 3:8–13 (ESV): 8 Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. 9 They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. 11 Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. 12 Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. 13 For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.*

This office is one of attending to the matters of the church. Take note that the Apostles believed it necessary that they give themselves to prayer and study of the Word, so they called attendants to tend to widows and orphans.

*Acts 6:1–6 (ESV): 1 Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution.*

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*2 And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. 3 Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. 4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." 5 And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. 6 These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.*

The Apostles gave their approval of those men selected by laying their hands upon them and praying over them. This was an ordination service.

We, in truth, don't need to change the way the church was established; we simply need to structure it according to the biblical text and honor Christ by doing it the way he has directed. Jesus gave us the church the way he wanted it, and he wants the church the way he gave it.

The pastor/elder/bishop teaches and instructs the congregation. He equips the church to do gospel ministry. The deacon(s) attends to the matters of the church regarding families, widows, or other issues that may arise. It is our responsibility to respond correctly and in a godly manner to those God has placed in these offices.

7. The Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all ages:

Those who are saved are those who, by faith, trust in God's promise. Those who are the Old Testament saints believed in God's promises of the coming Messiah. The New Testament saints believed in God's promises that are in Jesus.

Jesus is the Messiah, concealed in the Old Testament, revealed in the New Testament, and all who believe God are justified by faith. It is then when we become a part of the body of Christ, we become the bride of Christ joined together in local assemblies for worship, teaching, encouragement, and fellowship.

### **Additional Scripture:**

Shepherd: Mt 9:36, Mt 26:31, Mk 6:34, Mk 14:27, Heb 13:20, 1Pt 2:25

Elder: Acts 11:30; Acts 14:23; Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22; Acts 16:4; Acts 21:18; 1 Timothy 5:17, 19; Titus 1:5; 2 John 1:1; 3 John 1:1; 1 Peter 5:1, 5; with τῆς ἐκκλησίας added, Acts 20:17; James 5:14.

Bishop: Acts 20:28; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7

Body of Christ: Ephesians 4:1-16