

Week 22: The Church – Nature and Government

Grudem_{ST} 44-47; Grudem_{BD} 26; Ryrie 69-73

A. Definition:

1. An assembly of people who have been called together (Ryrie, 625)
2. Gr. *ekklesia*: originally a secular political assembly. In NT, refers to the people, assembled or not

B. Nature of the Church:

1. Invisible (as God sees it [Heb. 12:23]), yet visible (as Christians see it)
2. Local (Rom. 16:5; 1Cor. 1:2; Acts 9:31) and universal (Eph. 5:25)
3. The Church and Israel
 - a. Supersessionism [Grudem] – “the church has now become the true Israel of God and will receive all the blessings promised to Israel in the Old Testament” (Grudem, 863) **also called Replacement Theology** (cf. Rom. 2:29; 9:6-8; Gal. 3:7, 9, 29)
 - b. Dispensationalist view [Ryrie] – “the church stands distinct from Israel and did not begin until the Day of Pentecost” (Ryrie, 462)
 - c. Jesus said, “I will build my church” (Matt. 16:18), implying this is something new
 - d. God has yet unfulfilled promises for natural Israel (Dan. 9:24-27; Ezek. 37-39; Zech. 12, 14; Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; Rom. 11; Rev. 7, 12, 14)
 - e. How does this doctrine affect our view of current events? Of biblical prophecy?

C. Purposes of the Church: (Grudem, 867-868)

1. Worship (ministry to God): (Eph. 1:12; 5:16-20; Col. 3:16)
2. Nurture (ministry to believers): (Eph. 4:12-13; Col. 1:28)
3. Evangelism & Mercy (ministry to the world): (Matt. 28:19)

D. Purity and Unity of the Church: (Grudem, 873-883)

1. Purity: its degree of freedom from wrong doctrine and conduct, and its degree of conformity to God’s revealed will for the church
 - a. Signs of a more pure church: biblical doctrine, proper use of ordinances, right use of church discipline, genuine worship, effective prayer, effective witness, effective fellowship, biblical church government, spiritual power in ministry, personal holiness of life among members, care for the poor, love for Christ
2. Unity: its degree of freedom from divisions among true Christians (John 17:21-23; Eph. 4:1-6, 12-13; Phil. 2:2)
3. Reasons for separation 1) doctrinal reasons; 2) matters of conscience

E. Church Government: (Grudem, 904-944)

1. Officers
 - a. Apostle (Grudem, 906-912)
 1. Gr. *apostolos* broadly = “sent one”; narrowly = “office of apostle of Jesus Christ”
 2. To qualify... 1) had to see the risen Christ, 2) to be appointed by Christ personally
 - b. Pastor (Gr. *poimen*) (Eph. 4:11 – pastor-teacher) (related verb *poimaino* = to shepherd)
 - c. Elder (Grudem, 912-918)
 1. Gr. *episkopos* – overseer/bishop; Gr. *presbuteros* – elder, older person
 2. Functions (1Tim. 5:7; 1Pet. 5:2-5); Qualifications (1Tim. 3:2-7; Titus 1:6-9)
 - d. Deacon (Grudem, 918-920)
 1. Gr. *diakonos* – servant
 2. Qualifications (1Tim. 3:8-13)
2. How should officers be chosen? By congregation (Acts 1:15-23; 6:3; 15:22; 2Cor. 8:19)
3. Forms of church government (Grudem, 923-937)
 - a. Episcopal: archbishop > bishops > rectors > congregation
 - b. Presbyterian: general assembly > presbytery > local elders > congregation
 - c. Congregational: single elder (pastor); pastor & deacons; elders & pastor; corporate board; pure democracy; no government but the Holy Spirit
4. Should women be church officers? (Grudem, 937-944) (2Cor. 14:33-36; 1Tim. 2:11-14)

F. Church Discipline: (Grudem, 894-900)

1. Purposes
 - a. Restoration and reconciliation of the believer who is going astray (Matt. 18:15; Jas. 5:20)
 - b. To keep sin from spreading to others (1Cor. 5:6-7; 1Tim. 5:20; Heb. 12:15)
 - c. To protect the purity of the church and the honor of Christ (Rom. 2:24)
2. When? Biblical examples: divisiveness (Rom. 16:17; Titus 3:10); disobedience to Scripture (2Thess. 3:14-15); blasphemy (1Tim. 1:20); false teaching (2John 10-11)
3. How? Should start with the smallest group, then increase in strength (Matt. 18:15-17)