
Discovering CTK

Fall 2018

The Government and
Discipline of the Church

The last question

- ❖ *Do you submit yourself to the government and discipline of the church, and promise to study its purity and peace?*
- ❖ Remember the three marks of the church?
 - ❖ Word
 - ❖ Sacrament
 - ❖ Discipline
 - ❖ Some think of discipline as a subset of sacrament. Why?

Presbyterian

- ❖ Presbyterian, not hierarchical or congregational
 - ❖ connected and confessional
- ❖ Two offices - elder and deacon
 - ❖ two kinds of elders, maybe two kinds of deacons
 - ❖ gender specificity in elders
- ❖ Preaching central to worship, weekly communion as theologically consistent with mystical presence

elders

- ❖ *I Timothy 3.1-7 - The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.*

elders

- ❖ *Titus 1:5-9 - This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you — if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.*

elders

- ❖ Two kinds
 - ❖ ruling elders - nominated and elected by the congregation, not usually seminary trained
 - ❖ nominated in the fall, trained through winter, spring and summer, elected the following fall
 - ❖ responsible for the spiritual care of the congregation, teaching and praying.
 - ❖ Currently Bob Sawyer, Greg Russell, Nathan Carter, Tyler Holley, Tim Carter, Leonard Layne, Matt Sherrill, Matthew Huskey, John Zivan in Camb AM

elders

- ❖ teaching elders - ordinarily seminary trained, called by churches, examined and admitted to membership in the presbytery (regional body)
- ❖ senior pastor and associate pastor called by the congregation and vote on the session
- ❖ assistant pastor called by the session and does not vote on the session
- ❖ responsible also for spiritual care of the congregation, also for the preaching of sermons, leading in worship and prayer.

elders

- ❖ Gender specific - only men
- ❖ 1 Timothy 2.12 - *I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.*
- ❖ Very contentious in our context. We offer an entire class each summer on the topic.
- ❖ A bigger issue having to do with being human as male and female.
- ❖ Wary of abusive practices that can ensue.
- ❖ For us it is mostly a matter of heeding the Word of God and putting it into practice against the world.

deacons

- ❖ Also nominated, trained and elected.
 - ❖ Not gender specific (Romans 16.1; 1 Timothy 3.11), although such is disputed in the PCA.
- ❖ Two large responsibility sets
 - ❖ Care and management of the facility, pointedly on Sundays and whenever the building is open.
 - ❖ Care of the physical needs of the congregation
 - ❖ Deacons' Fund collection and distribution

church discipline

- ❖ *Hebrews 13:7, 17 - Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. . . Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.*

- ❖ *Matthew 18:15-17 - “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”*
- ❖ *love is extended even to Gentiles and tax collectors*

- ❖ The elders of the church undertake church discipline in rare instances.
- ❖ Most discipline is preventative, taking place with ordinary structures and relationships.
- ❖ Sometimes active in pursuit, meetings, direct communications. Every effort for peace and restoration is put into practice.
- ❖ The elders never give up hope that the lost will be restored.
- ❖ Your promise is matched by the elders. We all work together for the purity and peace of the church.