

God's Leadership Pattern in the OT

Examples of Defined Leadership

Godhead

- The Trinity are all co-equal (Gen. 1:2; 22:15-16; Exod. 3:2-5; Judg. 2:1-2)
- The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father (John 15:26)
- The Son is subordinate to the Father (1 Cor. 15:28)

Family

- A husband and wife are "one flesh" (Gen. 2:23-24; Matt. 19:5-6)
- The woman is a helper to her husband (Gen. 2:18)

Moses and Aaron

- Moses was the leader and Aaron the spokesperson to Pharaoh (Exod. 4:15-16)

Joshua and Caleb

- Joshua replaced Moses as the true leader of Israel (Numb.27:12-23; Josh. 1:2)
- Caleb was Joshua's assistant, but was subordinate to Joshua

Judges and Samuel

- The Judges were given to lead Israel out of their apostasy
- Samuel was the last Judge and led to the coronation of King Saul and David

David and the Kings

- There was always a King to lead the people
- There was always a High Priest to intercede for God on behalf of the people
- There was always a Prophet to speak God's Word to the people

Examples of Undefined Leadership

Times of the Judges

- When there was no Judge, "everyone did what was right in their own eyes"- (Judges 21:25)
- During the time when there was no judge, apostasy ruled the day. – (Cycles of decline and then periods of repentance and return when a leader or Judge was appointed).

Summary

From the creation until the arrival of the Messiah, it is clear that God's plan was for God's people to be led by an affirmed leader, and that leader's job was to direct the people towards proper worship of Yahweh. Whenever there is not a clearly defined leader, the family breaks down, and Israel breaks down.

Leadership Structure for Churches in the NT

Examples Churches with Some Form of Defined Leadership

Jerusalem

- Peter was the first leader of the church (Acts 2-5)
- James was the affirmed leader after Peter (Acts 15:14-21; Gal. 2:12)
- This was a strong church, and refuted false doctrine

Antioch

- The church was started with no leaders and all Gentiles – (Acts 11:19ff).
- Paul and Barnabas were the recognized leaders and their function was to teach.
- The church was mostly under the Apostolic authority of the Jerusalem church.
- This was a well taught church, and had a correct view of missions.

Ephesus

- Paul started the church at Ephesus (Acts 18:19-21; 19:1-10)
- Apollos began teaching in the synagogue (Acts 18:24-25)
- Timothy was the affirmed Pastor of the church after Paul and Apollos (1 Tim. 1:1-3)
- Paul wrote his epistle to Timothy (the pastor) and not to the Elders
- This was a very established church, but went off when there was no affirmed leader

Colosse

- Epaphras was the affirmed pastor of the church (Col. 1:7; 4:12)
- This was a good church

Crete

- Paul affirmed that Titus was the recognized spiritual authority on Crete (Tit. 1:5)
- Titus was charged with implementing proper doctrine and practice in the churches

Hebrews

- The letter is not written to a specific person, or even a church in general
- There was clear leadership in the church(es) (Heb.13:17)
- The believers were susceptible to the false teaching of Judaism
- There are many leaders—possibly showing many churches (Heb. 13:24)

The Seven Churches in Revelation

- Jesus Christ wrote a letter to all seven churches in the Book of Revelation
- Each letter was given to the respective (*angelos*) or pastor of the church
- Each letter was meant to be distributed to the church members

Examples of Churches with No Defined Leadership

Corinth

- Paul started the church (Acts 18:1-7) and was followed by Apollos
- The church was divided because there was no central leader (1 Cor. 1:11; 3:1-5)
- Paul had to send Timothy to lead them (1 Cor. 4:17)
- The church accepted false doctrine, spiritual pride and heresies

Galatia

- Paul did not write to one specific church, but to many churches
- No leader is specified in the letter to the Galatians
- The church had accepted false doctrine and heresy from false teachers

Thessalonica

- Paul did not write to any specific person or leader in the church
- There is no identified leader or Pastor over the church
- The church members had many doctrinal questions about eschatology
- The church members were allowing confusion into the body (2 Thess. 3:6-15)

Summary

There are no passages of Scripture that prescribe a form of leadership for the NT church. There are many descriptive passages that give us a picture of leadership in several churches. In general, churches that have affirmed leaders (Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Colosse) have the best spiritual maturity and commitment among their members. They were not as open to false teaching and were not fighting doctrinal or holiness issues.

The pattern of biblical leadership is interdependent leadership. In the NT churches, the description is that a “fellow elder” leads the church with joint accountability.

Purpose of Biblical Elders

The main purpose and functions of biblical Elders in NT churches are as follows:

1. To protect the flock from false teaching by refuting error (Titus 1:9-11)
2. To teach the flock sound doctrine from Scripture (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9)
3. Elders ***must*** actively **shepherd** and **teach** people in the church

To accomplish this, Elders must be continually growing in spiritual maturity, be proficient and knowledgeable of the Scriptures, and to be able to recognize error and address it with boldness.

Questions

1. What are the functional expectations of an Elder at CBC?
 - a. Are the expectations of a Pastor-Elder the same as a Lay-Elder?
 - b. What is a good expectation of church attendance?
 - c. What is a good expectation of involvement with church ministries?
 - d. What is a good measurement or expectation on “ability to teach”?
2. Since Pastor-Elders are at the church on a day-to-day basis, should they be given authority to make ministry decisions on a daily / weekly basis without having to meet as an Elder Board?
3. Who takes the total responsibilities of the spiritual well-being of the church members and their ministries?
4. How does the group evaluate all of the ministries of the church?
5. Without leadership, what is the mechanism to authoritatively speak into all of the ministries of the church, and how can decisions be taken to continue or change direction?
6. How do Elders hold each other accountable, especially with Lay-Elders not being a part of the day to day ministry?
7. What are the definitions of “Senior Pastor” and “leaders”? Is there a common definition of expectations of affirmed authority and designated responsibility?
8. What does it mean for a Shepherd to “give account” for the souls of the flock?

Church Leadership

This document is designed to summarize, evaluate, and provide recommendations for the current leadership structure of Christ Baptist Church. The information will be presented as follows:

1. General Introduction to Church Polity (Church Government and Leadership Structure)
2. Biblical terms for the various offices of leadership in the NT church
3. Leadership structure in the churches in the NT
4. Summary of the leadership structure of Christ Baptist Church
5. Evaluation of the leadership structure of Christ Baptist Church (pros and cons)
6. Recommendations

In addition to church leadership and its structure, it must be noted that there are several other important issues to consider for proper leadership.

- All church leadership must demonstrate fidelity to a coherent but concise Church Constitution which serves the church leadership, but does not constrict it in areas of administration and practice of doctrine. From time to time, as the need arises, the Church Constitution may be amended or even rewritten, and various policies and procedures will change as well.
- All church leadership must be fully unanimous in their agreement to uphold the full church doctrinal statement in its entirety in both what the church believes and teaches.
- All church leadership must be fully knowledgeable and in full agreement with the requirements of the biblical qualities of Elders, Deacons, Deaconesses, and Pastors. All people involved in church leadership must meet these biblically mandated qualities.
- All church leadership must be fully unanimous in their agreement with the faithful and regular administration of the ordinances (baptism and communion) to its members.
- All church leadership must be fully unanimous in their agreement with the stated requirements for church membership and the biblical mandate for church discipline.

Protestant Church Polity

Church polity refers to the organizational or governing structure of the church. In effect, within Protestantism there are three distinct forms of church governance: Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational.

- **Episcopal**—This form advocates for a “Bishop” to be head over all the individual churches in a denomination. **The main example of this is the Church of England.** There are lower ranking priests or ministers who guide and direct local churches, but they are subordinate to the governing Bishop. Local priests or ministers are often appointed to local congregations by a ranking Bishop.
- **Presbyterian**—This form advocates for a “Presbytery” or group of Elders who are generally elected for a fixed term and are the governing authority for a local church. **The main example is Presbyterian churches.** The minister (or pastor, often called a “teaching elder”) presides over Presbytery much like a chairman. Each local church is subordinate to a “Synod” which is another group of Elders who serve as a council to guide and direct many of the decisions of local churches. Often, the Synod will appoint specific pastors or ministers to local congregations.
- **Congregational**—This form advocates that each local church has full authority over its own governance. **The main examples are Baptist churches.** There is no higher human authority outside of a local church, such as a Bishop or Synod. The church could be led and directed by a single Elder, Pastor, or Minister, or by a board of Elders (generally led by a Lead Elder). The Congregational form of Government can be run in several different ways.
 - Brethren Model—This model advocates for a “total plurality” where there is no affirmed leader for the group. The Elders make group decisions without a leader. There may be a moderator or chairman to lead the process of decision making, but he does not act with any affirmed authority over the group.
 - Affirmed Leader Model—This model advocates for a plurality among all the Elders, but there is a single leader [at times, there could be co-leaders] that is recognized as “first among equals” to lead the group in areas of ministry, vision, strategy, and doctrine. The group still has the full authority over decisions, but the affirmed leader holds the group accountable in areas of spiritual formation, integrity and maturity.

Leadership Pattern in the Old Testament

The Old Testament is consistent in showing God's pattern for life in the Old Testament. It begins with the Godhead itself, family structure, and finally through the nation Israel.

[The Godhead](#)

The Godhead contains God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit. While the OT does not speak of the Son or God's "Holy Spirit," it does speak of "the Spirit of God." The NT does give some light on this issue. Both the Son and the Spirit proceed from the Father (John 15:26), and the Son is subject to the Father (1 Cor. 15:28). In the OT, "the Angel of the Lord" is shown to be Jesus Christ pre-incarnate (Exod. 3:2-6; Gen. 22:15-16; Jud. 2:1-5; Exod. 33:2 cf. 1 Cor. 10:4). These show equality in the Godhead, yet clearly there is subordination in that "God is the head of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:2). There is leadership with equality.

[The Family](#)

A human family is defined in the Bible in the book of Genesis as being a bond between one man and one woman (Gen. 2:23-24). This bond is defined as "one flesh" (Gen. 2:23; Matt. 19:6) and they are completely interdependent on one another (1 Cor. 11:11). But, in this relationship the man is the leader (1 Cor. 11:9) and the woman is the helper that is suitable for him (Gen. 2:18). Again, there is leadership with equality.

[Moses and Aaron](#)

The nation Israel was led out of Egypt by Moses and Aaron. Moses was the designated leader, but Aaron was the spokesman before Pharaoh (Exod. 4:15-16). They both served according to their giftedness, but Moses was the leader.

[Joshua and Caleb](#)

Joshua and Caleb led Israel into the Promised Land. Joshua was the successor to Moses, and Caleb was his chief General. Both Joshua and Caleb were the only men who were faithful to the Lord when they spied out the land.

[The Judges](#)

For approximately 300 years, God appointed various Judges to lead Israel during their times of darkness and rejection of the Lord. The leaders' main job was to direct the people back to Yahweh, and their effort was focused on worship rather than prosperity or military victory. Samuel was the last Judge, and from this point on Israel had a King, High Priest, and various Prophets were sent to speak for God.

The main point is that Israel was always led by men. Sometimes that leading was wicked and sinful, but the pattern was maintained.

Biblical Terms for Leadership in the NT

Apostle

The word “Apostle” means “sent one,” or “the one who is sent.” The word is used most often to describe the twelve apostles who were with Jesus during His time on earth, and who were witnesses of His resurrection. There are only 12 of these men (not including Judas) and they are all deceased and gone, never to be replaced because they were sent directly by Jesus. Paul of Tarsus was also an apostle of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:1) as well. Other apostles include James the brother of Jesus (Gal. 1:19), Barnabas (Acts 14:14-15), Apollos (1 Cor. 4:6-9), and Adronicus and Junia (Rom. 16:7). These other apostles were sent, but were not included in “the twelve.” **Apostles (those sent by Jesus Christ) were part of building the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20), but are not in existence today, so this particular office in the church is non-existent.**

Prophet

A Prophet is someone who has been called by God to proclaim God’s truth. This can be in the form of forth-telling (which is explaining Scripture), and for-telling (which is predicting the future). Agabus (Acts 11:18; 21:10) was a NT prophet, and there were prophets in the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 14:31). **The office of NT prophet does not exist in the church anymore since the close of the first century (1 Cor. 13:8-10; Rev. 22:18-19).**

Evangelist

The word “Evangelist” could be defined as an office (Eph. 4:11), but is more accurately defined as a responsibility or function, where Timothy was exhorted to do the work of an evangelist (2 Tim. 4:5). One of the deacons Philip, was called an evangelist (Acts 21:8). There are no specific qualifications for being an evangelist or doing evangelism, so this is really a function that people can do.

Pastor-Teacher

A “Pastor-Teacher” is given as a gift by Jesus to the church (Eph. 4:11). While this could reflect two positions (pastors and teachers) the Greek grammar indicates that this is really a single position – that of Pastor-Teacher. This is someone who pastors the flock (church members) and is also a gifted teacher. For someone to fill this office, they need to meet the biblical qualifications of a “Pastor.”

Elder

An “Elder” (*presbuteros*) is someone who is responsible for the shepherding, pastoring, and teaching of church members. This is the most common term for a church leader in the NT. An Elder must be a man, and if they are married can only be a “one woman man” typically meaning married and faithful to one woman – their wife. The qualifications of an Elder are given in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

Overseer—sometimes called Bishop

An “Overseer” (*episkopos*) is synonymous with an Elder. Since the word is found only in 1 Tim. 3:1-2 and Titus 1:7 the word is interchangeable with Elder. The qualifications for an Overseer are the same as the qualifications for an Elder.

Pastor—literally “Shepherd”

The term “Pastor” (*poimen*) as an office in the church is only found in Eph. 4:11, where the term is joined together with “Teacher” to be Pastor-Teacher. The other place in the NT where Pastor (*poimen*) is found refers specially to Jesus Christ as the “Great Shepherd.” Generally, the term “Pastor” is also a synonym for Elder or Overseer.

Deacon

The term “Deacon” (*diakonos*) literally means “servant” or “minister.” The idea of a Deacon is someone who fulfills practical needs with spiritual results. Deacons were selected in Acts 6:1-6, with Stephen being one of the first Deacons. The qualifications of a Deacon are given in 1 Tim. 3:8-12, and they can only be men. Deacons are not required to have a recognized ability to teach Scripture.

Deaconess

The term “Deaconess” (*diakone*) means a woman deacon, or deaconess. The function of this office would be to specifically minister to women in the church. The qualities of a deaconess are listed in 1 Tim. 3:11. The *diakone* defined in 1 Tim. 3:11 could either be a deaconess, or a wife of a deacon. We prefer a deaconess.

Eph. 4:11

According to the Apostle Paul in Eph. 4:11, Jesus Christ gave “gifts” of specific offices to the NT church. These are Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastor-Teachers (all listed above). Apostles and Prophets are no longer in existence, so the office is no longer applicable (Eph. 2:20).

Senior Pastor and Lay Elder

What is important to note is that there are two terms that are completely absent from the pages of Scripture: **Senior Pastor** and **Lay Elder**. Both of these terms are foreign to New Testament commands or models. But, does this mean that they are wrong or in error? The answer lies not in the titles themselves, but in their functionality. There are many titles or functions that are not in Scripture, but are quite helpful in churches today, such as Worship Pastor, Youth Pastor, Organist, and Usher. The New Testament churches are free to create functions of giftedness (Rom. 12:4-6) to be a gift to the church, and these can come and go, and change over time as the needs of the church change.

Leadership Structure of Churches in the NT

Jerusalem (Acts 2-15)

The church officially began in Acts 2 with the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on all those who placed their saving faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:1-13), which was promised by Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:18; Acts 1:8). There was no official leader, as the Peter and the other eleven Apostles began to lead as a collective group (Acts 2:22-40, 42; 3-6). Occasionally it was Peter alone (Acts 2), or Peter and John (Acts 3, 8), or acted in a group (Acts 6:2; 5:35; 8:14). Peter was even challenged by believers in the church because he went to a Gentile house and actually ate with a Gentile (Acts 11:2-3). For the first decade or so, the church in Jerusalem was led by all twelve Apostles, with Peter or Peter and John acting with slightly more initiative.

In Acts 15, there was a serious theological dispute among various professing believers in the church (Acts 15:1-2). This issue was quite serious, as it involved the essence of the Gospel itself and how one was to be saved and gain eternal life. The matter was brought before the Apostles *and Elders* for discussion. What is important to note is that now there are both Apostles and Elders in the church. Peter was just one of the twelve, who related his personal experience in seeing Cornelius the Gentile saved. After this, Barnabas and Paul also related their personal experience on the matter when they had seen God save many Gentiles (Acts. 15:12). When all the discussion was finished, James (the half-brother of Jesus Christ) stood up and made a final declaration. He repeated what was said (v. 14), and then applied Scripture (vv. 16-18), and then issued a strong recommendation (vv. 19-21). After this, both the Apostles and the Elders agreed (v. 22), and they implemented the decision.

Many years later, when Paul had finished his 3rd missionary journey and had travelled back to Jerusalem, he visited the brethren from the church (Acts 21:17), and the following day made a special visit to James with all the Elders present (v. 18). In addition, the Apostle Paul singled James out as somewhat special (Gal. 1:19; 2:9), and even indicated that men had come to Paul “from James” (Gal. 2:12) inferring that they came from the leader of the church in Jerusalem.

These statements provide strong affirmation that James was the leader of the Jerusalem church, even though the church had Apostles and Elders.

Antioch (Acts 11:19-30; Acts 13:1-4)

Unlike the church in Jerusalem, which began through the initial pouring out of the Holy Spirit selectively on Jews (Acts 2-3), the church at Antioch began through evangelism. Mostly Jews who were scattered because of Jewish persecution (Acts 7:54-60; 8:1, 4) were sharing the true Gospel of salvation to other Jews (Acts 11:19). Among these were Jews of Cyprus and Cyrene who had come to Antioch and broke ranks by speaking to Gentiles, who ultimately were saved (v. 20-21).

Evidently, this was such a momentous event that the news of Gentiles coming to faith in Christ in large numbers reached the leadership of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 11:22). When they heard this great news [which was right after Peter's testimony to the church about his visit with the Gentile centurion Cornelius], they sent a recognized spiritual leader in the church, Barnabas (Acts 5:36-37; 11:22), to visit Antioch to monitor the situation and see what he could do to assist.

While Barnabas was at Antioch, "considerable numbers" [mostly of Gentiles] were saved (v. 24). The work was so massive that Barnabas needed help, so he went on a mission to look specifically for Saul and went to Tarsus (v. 25-26). Saul had been saved earlier, and developed a reputation among the believers in Damascus (Acts 9:19b-25) and then Jerusalem (Acts 9:26-29). Barnabas got to know Saul during this time when they were both in Jerusalem, and defended Saul's testimony before the Apostles (v. 27). When it was clear that Saul's life was in danger, the church [obviously the leadership and Barnabas] took Saul and sent him to Tarsus, where he was from.

The incident in Acts 13:1-4 only indicates that there were prophets and teachers in Antioch. These consisted of Barnabas, Simeon (called Niger), Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who was a Gentile brought up with Herod the Tetrarch), and Saul. Of these, while the men were fasting, the Holy Spirit made it clear that Barnabas and Saul would be sent as missionaries to the Gentiles. There is no clear mention of leadership in the church, even after Saul [Paul] and Barnabas returned from their missionary journey to report on their trip. There is only a mention of "disciples."

The main reference to leadership in Antioch is that Paul and Barnabas had a great impact preaching and teaching (Acts 11:25-26; 15:35) and that both Paul and Barnabas were recognized as leaders (Acts 11:26, 30; 13:1; 15:35). While there is no specified leadership structure in Antioch, Paul and Barnabas recognized that they were accountable for their mission activities to the church as a whole (Acts 14:27). In addition, the members [disciples] in Antioch commissioned Saul and Barnabas to send money to the saints in Jerusalem who were suffering due to a famine (Acts 11:27-30). They recognized that Saul and Barnabas were the most trusted men to send with their money.

In some way, the church at Antioch recognized the authority of the Jerusalem church. James, the leader of the Jerusalem church indicated that Paul and Barnabas were the primary men to carry the letter from the council of Jerusalem to Antioch (Acts 15:22, 25). Because the church at Antioch was almost entirely Gentile, and there is no designated leadership, it seems that the church at Antioch was ultimately accountable to the leadership in the Jerusalem church. This is also seen when Jews from the Jerusalem church came and disputed about circumcision with

Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:1-2). When they could not reach a resolution, they appealed to the leadership of the church at Jerusalem for a decision (v. 2). This, along with the fact that James [head of the church at Jerusalem] designated Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas to go to Antioch and read the decision by the Jerusalem Council (vv. 22-30).

Antioch had no recognized authority in their leadership structure, but ultimately recognized the leadership of the church in Jerusalem as their authority. In addition, at a local level, Paul and Barnabas were the informal leaders of the church.

Ephesus

The church at Ephesus was planted by Paul (Acts 18:19-21; 19:1-10). Before Paul “officially” planted this church, Apollos came to Ephesus and began to teach in the synagogue (Acts 18:24-25). While Apollos was a good preacher, his doctrine was not quite accurate (v. 26). He was gently corrected by Priscilla and Aquila, and then went on to Achaia [Corinth]. When Paul returned to Ephesus when Apollos was in Corinth, he began preaching in the synagogue there [there was no church there, but a synagogue where Apollos had tried to explain Jesus Christ through the Scriptures]. Paul continues teaching and preaching the Gospel in the School of Tyrannus for about two years (Acts 19:8-11). At this time, there was no recorded church, but instead Paul was preaching the Gospel in the School of Tyrannus.

During Paul’s time in Ephesus, he appointed Elders in the church. When Paul returned to Ephesus [after his 2 years in the School of Tyrannus and subsequent trip to Corinth, Macedonia and Greece] he spoke with the Elders of the church at Ephesus (Acts 20:17). Paul had been with these men the entire time in discipleship (vv. 18-21). While the men were serving as Elders in the church, it is clear that they all sat and listened to Paul’s last words to them with great interest (vv. 18-35). Paul was clearly the recognized leader at the church of Ephesus in its first years.

Ephesus had always had a pastor or lead elder. It started with Paul, who then transferred the responsibility to his disciple Timothy (1 Tim. 1:1-3). The Apostle John also had some time as the leader of the church at Ephesus before he was exiled to Patmos where he wrote the book of Revelation. It should be noted that when Paul wrote the Pastoral Epistles (1-2 Timothy, Titus), he did not address the elders at Ephesus, but wrote specifically to Timothy (1 Tim. 1:1-3). In this letter, he commanded Timothy to “remain on at Ephesus” as the leader and head pastor/elder to command the pulpit (v. 3). Timothy was to take the lead and express his authority to enforce correct doctrine and practice in the church (1 Tim. 3:14-15). As well, Paul wrote to Titus to “appoint Elders in every city” in Crete (Titus 1:5). This shows that Titus was a recognized authority over a church or group of churches.

Colosse

The church at Colosse most probably had a pastor, who was Epaphras. Epaphras was the first to share the Gospel with the people of Colosse (Col. 1:7), and was “one of their number (Col. 4:12). The Apostle Paul had never been to Colosse, but learned about the church from Epaphras while he was in prison in Rome (Philemon 23).

In summary, most probably Epaphras was the lead pastor of the church at Colosse. He was the spiritual leader of the church.

Corinth

The church at Corinth was established by the Apostle Paul after preaching in a “house church” for about 18 months (Acts 18:1-7). During Paul’s travels, Apollos spent some time at Corinth as the “teaching pastor” or “lead Elder” (Acts 19:1). It seems that not only Paul and Apollos were at Corinth, but the church was also familiar with the Apostle Peter (1 Cor. 1:12; 9:5). When Paul wrote the Epistles of 1-2 Corinthians, he was writing to the entire church. It would seem that the church had no “Senior Pastor” at that time, and the church had many spiritual questions, and also had great spiritual confusion. The Epistle of 1 Corinthians is largely a letter of correction and rebuke because of a lack of discernment by the church members, as well as great spiritual division and contention with one another (1 Cor. 1:11; 3:1-5; 5-14).

Because of the spiritual immaturity of the church at Corinth, their view of sin (Ch. 5), selfishness (Ch. 6), lack of understanding of marriage (Ch. 7), misunderstanding of Christian liberty (Ch. 8-9), holding to tradition (1 Cor. 11:1-16), belittling the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:17-34), tendency toward spiritual pride (Ch. 12-14) and their acceptance of dangerous false doctrine (Ch. 15) Paul had many difficult words of instruction. In this, Paul was clearly seen as the Pastor of the church. He was so concerned for the spiritual welfare of the people, that he sent Titus to find out if they had repented from their sinful actions and attitudes (2 Cor. 7:6).

The church at Corinth had several spiritual leaders; Apollos, Paul, and Titus. But, when the church had no affirmed spiritual leader in the church, there was great confusion, division, and complete lack of discernment. The church was not growing.

Galatia

In the letter to the “churches of Galatia” (Gal. 1:1), there is no reference to any church leaders. Paul is addressing the churches in general, meaning his instructions are to all the church leaders and members alike. The main problem with the churches at Galatia is that they embraced the false teaching of Judaism (circumcision). This is because false teachers came into the church and were not challenged (Gal. 5:12; 6:12-13). There was obviously no qualified spiritual leader in these churches, so the churches all fell into theological error.

Philippi

The church at Philippi was one of the first churches that Paul started (Acts 16:14-40). When Paul, Silas, and Luke were in Philippi, after Paul and Silas got out of jail, they went on to Thessalonica, but Luke was left behind (in Luke's account, he changes from "we" to "they" in Acts 16:10, 40). The church then grew into a stable church that had established "overseers and deacons" (Phil. 1:1).

Paul preached the Gospel to the people of Philippi, but did not remain as he and Silas left right away after they got out of prison (Acts 16:40). It is possible [and quite probable] that Luke was the early leader of the church, since there would be no qualified leaders in the early stages of the church. After there were qualified "overseers and deacons," there is no statements that indicate that there was a single spiritual leader of the church that is also over the Elders and Deacons.

Rome

In Paul's letter to the church at Rome, he does not provide any indication of any specific church leadership. He is writing to the "beloved of God in Rome, called as saints" (Rom. 1:7). Paul could have unofficially started this work when he was imprisoned (Acts 28:30-31).

There is no information on the leadership structure in the church at Rome.

Hebrews

There is no specified leader from the writer to the Hebrews. If this was to the church in Jerusalem, James was already dead and so the church would have a different leader. The letter has no specified recipients. But, the letter does have specific instructions relative to church leadership. Specifically, the letter commands its recipients to "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account." (Heb. 13:17). This command is clear. Church members are to submit to its leaders, so it is expected that there is a specified leadership.

Seven Churches in Revelation

In the Book of Revelation, the Apostle John was told by Jesus Christ Himself to write seven letters to "the seven churches": Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. These were the main churches of Asia Minor in the first century AD. Each of these letters was addressed to "the angel (*angelos*)" of the specific church. The word *angelos* can mean angel or messenger, and in context refers to the Pastor of the church. The reason that this fits the Pastor is that the letter is intended to be read to the church so that the church can either be encouraged to persevere and continue (Pergamum, Philadelphia), or to repent (Ephesus, Smyrna, Thyatira, Sardis, Laodicea). Each church had a specific *angelos*, or Pastor.

Leadership Structure of Christ Baptist Church

Christ Baptist Church (CBC) has adopted a form of Congregational government, and is currently using a Brethren Model within this Congregational system. Although CBC is a member church of the Baptist Union of South Africa (BU), this just means that CBC is aligned with other Baptist churches in a loose affiliation. In other words, CBC agrees with other Baptist churches in general matters of doctrine and Baptist principles (i.e., the Gospel). The BU has no authority over CBC in any way including matters of doctrine, finance, or practice.

The current leadership structure of CBC can be summarized as follows:

- Currently, the Elder Board is made up of Pastor-Elders and Lay-Elders. A Pastor-Elder is an Elder who is a designated Pastor. A Lay-Elder is a man who is not a designated Pastor, and usually carries a full-time secular occupation, or might be retired. The full authority (meaning full decision making power) at CBC lies in a Board of Elders led by a chairman. The chairman is a Lay-Elder, and there is no single authority over the Elder Board.
- From time to time, new Elders are recommended to be added by the Elder Board, and are appointed to the Elder Board subsequent to a vote of affirmation by the congregation.
- Elders are essentially appointed “for life.” This means there is no fixed time frame assigned to their term of service.
- The Chairman of the Elder Board carries no “first among equals” standing or authority over the board. He does, however, govern the meetings and sets agendas.
- The Chairman of the Elder Board is a peer to each member of the Elder Board.
- Many (but not all) of the ministries of CBC are led by an Elder. Each Elder in charge of a ministry is autonomous in managing and developing that ministry.
- Deacons (men only) and deaconesses (women only) serve in the church. Deacons can serve and minister to both men and women, while deaconesses can perform general corporate service and minister to women. Like Elders, Deacons and deaconesses are recommended by the Elders and then appointed to the Deacon Board subsequent to a vote of affirmation by the Congregation.

- Like Elders, Deacons and deaconesses have an indeterminate term of service. There is no fixed time frame assigned to their term of service.
- Deacons and deaconesses have no position of authority in the church relative to decision making.
- Pastors (men who are called full time to the ministry of the Word) also serve in the church, but carry no position of authority in the church relative to decision making. Some Elders are designated as pastors.

In the history of CBC, there has usually been a position of Senior Pastor. This position served as a Pastor-Elder on the Elder Board, and was considered to be a “first among equals” position that led the Elder Board in areas of ministry direction and decision making. However, the Senior Pastor was not authorized to make autonomous decisions. All final decisions remained under the authority of the full Elder Board.

Pros and Cons of the CBC Leadership Structure

The positive aspects of CBC’s Leadership Structure are as follows:

- With no affirmed leader, there is no threat of a single autocratic leader.
- Each Elder can drive their ministry without disruption or interruption.

The negative aspects of CBC’s Leadership Structure are as follows:

- Having no affirmed leader goes against the more frequent model in the NT church.
- With no affirmed leader, there is no individual responsibility to protect the doctrine and practice in the church, which could result in the slow acceptance and toleration of heresies and ungodly practices.
- With no affirmed leader, each ministry could be developed in isolation to the church.
- Each Elder is autonomous, and the various ministries could function autonomously.
- The Elders have no accountability, other than to each other.
- The Elders that have ministry responsibility could manage their ministries in an autocratic way with no check or accountability.

- With the group only being accountable to each other, and with collective decision making, there is no “ultimate responsibility” for checking matters of doctrine and practice in the church.
- With only a Chairman to direct the meetings, there is no process set up to direct the group relative to vision, philosophy, and matters of implementation.
- There is no mechanism to enforce the accomplishment of agreed upon ministries, philosophies or processes.
- There is no accountability to measure and assist the various ministries of the church as they are acting autonomously.
- If the Elders do not have the same level of spiritual discernment, maturity, experience or knowledge, then it will be very difficult if not impossible to reach agreements by principle.
- People led by a group tend to lose accountability for ministries that are outside of their direct control.