

Dear Friends and Family,

Did Timothy and Titus serve as Pastors?

What does elder, pastor, and overseer mean?

Is it the same as in today's church?

This week, as we dive into Scripture, we will see the works of these men and how this passage applies to the church today.

Timothy and Titus filled an important role in the first century which bridged the gap between the ministry of the Apostles and the founding of self-sufficient churches.

According to William Mounce, "Timothy and Titus stand outside the church structure. They are not bishops or elders, and are not members of the local church. They are itinerant, apostolic delegates sent with Paul's authority to deal with local church problems, just as they do in Acts. Timothy and Titus are never told to rely on their institutional position in the local church for authority; rather they rely on the authority of Paul and the gospel."

This is precisely why these letters are so fundamental to the church today. While the book of Acts describes the Apostle's missionary journeys, the Pastoral Epistles give us the structure upon which to build the church. This structure is just as relevant today as it was 2,000 years ago.

Pastor's Point of View

The big question: **What is the Biblical order of the church?**

Day 1 - READ Titus 1:5-9

1. For what reason did Paul leave Titus in Crete?
2. While we don't know what else might have been out of order in any particular church, what one thing did Paul emphasize here that Titus needed to accomplish?
3. What qualifications must an Elder have?
4. Compare this list in Titus to the previous list in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. What similarities and differences do you see?

Day 2 - READ Titus 1:10-11

1. Consider the warning Paul gives here concerning "many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers." What does Scripture say is the only way to combat individuals like this?
2. Read verse 9. What is the culmination of the Elder's role?
3. Elders, as the leaders of the church, take on not only teaching duty, but also a role of protecting the church.

Day 3 - READ Titus 1:12-14

1. Paul gives Titus an object lesson here.
2. No doubt Titus knew this man Paul spoke of. Paul drew Timothy's attention to him and something he said, likely common knowledge.
3. Paul then used this opportunity to point out how it was wrong and divisive, and how Titus would be needed to keep the people from following after similar issues.
4. What are some current cultural issues the church is being drawn into which have turned away from the truth?
5. What should our response be?

Day 4 - READ Titus 1:15-16

1. Paul next differentiates between the pure and the defiled and unbelieving.
2. He says very little about *the pure* except that all things to them are pure. Certainly Paul is not decreeing that every action is pure. In the context of "Jewish myths and commandments" Paul is talking about ritual cleanliness. The pure (Christians - Acts 15:9), need not follow the Old Testament laws of purity, instead "all things" (meat, foods, drink), are pure. This is because of Christ's atonement on the cross, fulfilling the law and the rituals of cleanliness it required.
3. Paul contrasts our new state with the state of sinfulness when he says to them "nothing is pure". What does it mean that they are defiled?
4. There is a specific type of person who is of harm to the church. These folks profess to know God, but through their actions, they deny God. It is the duty and the responsibility of the Elders to keep watch over and protect the church from corruption. Why is this important?

Take a moment and consider this picture.

Compare us, the church body, to a deep well or a stream of water. Our mission is to provide fresh, clean, pure water to those who are thirsty. Just like the woman at the well, who desired fully to have the living water Jesus spoke of, so does this generation seek the same satisfaction. As a church, we know the source of satisfaction, Christ Jesus!

Now, remember for a moment, that point in Exodus, when Moses and the Israelites crossed the Red Sea. That miracle beyond miracles, the Red Sea was parted, and then, the people feel stranded. No water. For three days. Over 1 million men, women and children, in the wilderness, with no water, for three days. Then lo and behold, they come to water! What rejoicing there must have been, what an answer to prayer, they come to Marah! Water! Finally! What a joy. But no. The water at Marah was bitter. They could not drink. Which answers why they named the place Marah. Marah means bitter.

Our church is the same way. We can not just *look* clean and pure. If we have impurity among us, if we are tainted with corruption, those who come to sample and see will leave bitter and frustrated. May we ask God to make us clean and pure before him. God provided a solution to Moses in the desert to make the bitter sweet. Moses obeyed God's instruction and the people did indeed drink from that once-bitter water. May our church body seek the Lord diligently, seeking purity in word and in action.

*Obey your leaders and submit to them,
for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account.
Let them do this with joy and not with grief,
for this would be unprofitable for you.
Hebrews 13:17*

May we listen to the voice of God,
Pastor Matt

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Dr. Matthew Long
Senior Pastor
[FBC of Havelock](#)

*Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us **RUN** with endurance the race that is set before us -- Hebrews 12:1*