

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

Church Decisions and Actions
Matthew 18:15-20; Acts 6:1-6; 13:1-3; 15:22;
1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 16:1-3

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the "Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study". That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.
2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)
3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Bible Study Leader:

Worship Time Leader:

You will need to make copies of the scriptures found at the end of this session to hand out at the beginning of the **Worship Time**.

Music Sources:

The Church's One Foundation

1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

Church Decisions and Actions

Focal Text

Matthew 18:15-20; Acts 6:1-6; 13:1-3;15:22;1 Corinthians 5:1-5;16:1-3

Background Text

Matthew 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47;5:11-14;6:1-6:11:1-18; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:4-5; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 7:17; 16:1-3; 1 Timothy 4:14, 1 Peter 5:1-4

Main Idea

New Testament believers are democratic in their church government.

Question to Explore

How did churches in the New Testament make decisions?

Teaching Aim

To lead the class to describe how New Testament churches were organized and made decisions and what this teaches about church government today

Gathering together:

Open by singing “The Church’s One Foundation” or songs that speak of Christ’s Lordship over the church and over His followers. You may want to include songs about Jesus that children know.

First thoughts:

There are no scriptures in the New Testament that dictate procedures for deciding how to organize a church, but many scriptures describe churches practicing a form of decision making. You may be aware of churches that are directed in a radically different manner than our church. On close examination you may find that many such churches do not make their own decisions. They are given orders from a higher level of authority. Some denominations have a leader with authority over all the churches scattered over the world, or over a much smaller geographical area, called a diocese. Although each local church in such arrangements has a certain amount of autonomy, there is one who approves or disapproves the decision.

It has been an axiom since the founding of several evangelical church groups in the early 1600s that no one or no group would have authority over a local church of their group. Our purpose today is the clarification of beliefs on church government. The position is simply stated: We believe and practice congregational church government. We have no bishops, archbishops, or pope. This means that all decisions concerning a local congregation are decided upon by that church.

Today we will search the scriptures to see what God's word has to say in regard to how a church should be led and governed.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

Church Decisions and Actions

Focal Text

Matthew 18:15-20; Acts 6:1-6; 13:1-3;15:22;1 Corinthians 5:1-5;16:1-3

Background Text

Matthew 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47;5:11-14;6:1-6;11:1-18; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:4-5; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 7:17; 16:1-3; 1 Timothy 4:14, 1 Peter 5:1-4

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Introduction to your personal study:

The Body of Christ Functioning in Our World

The events of September 11th, 2001 became known around the world. People heard stories of countless heroes who used their various gifts and talents to help others. Some were skilled in rescuing, some in counselling the grieving, some in feeding hungry rescuers, some in cleaning inches of dust in neighbouring apartments. Each gifted in unique ways but all working together in a common effort. What a picture of the church of Jesus Christ! Many members, many gifts, many parts, but all in one body (1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12). In this study we will explore how New Testament churches responded to the specific needs they encountered.

Background:

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Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study**”, found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you as well.

Many new churches and groups or organizations of churches tend to look at others to discover how to best organize and govern themselves. However, the New Testament gives us the wisest insights into how to relate within the body of a local church. Our starting point should place us within the teachings of Jesus, the writers of the New Testament, and the experiences of the first churches. For these instructions, we need to study a broad range of related passages. More scripture relates to this topic than we can cover. Yet, the passages that we will study offer us a good view of congregational government.

Focusing on the Meaning:

Responding to the Need for Reconciliation Matthew 18:15-20

Jesus consistently taught that our difficulties with fellow believers will impact our relationship with God. See Matthew 5:23-24. Such difficulties also have the potential to damage the fellowship of the whole church body. In Matthew 18:15-20, Jesus describes a four-step procedure to follow in the event a fellow believer sins against you.

First, Jesus instructs the offended party to go to the offender and discuss the fault, privately. If the offender listens, you have won him over (Matthew 18:15). By discussing the matter between just the two of you, reconciliation may come easier.

If the offender does not listen in the first attempt, take one or two witnesses with you and approach the offender again. Here, Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy 19:15 which requires that every matter be established by two or three witnesses (Matthew 18:16). Both sides would have the opportunity to air their respective positions. Again, reconciliation is the goal.

If the offender remains unmoved after the second attempt, then take the matter to the church body. At the time Jesus instructed His disciples, they would have probably understood this to mean the Jewish assembly; however after the birth of the church at Pentecost, His instructions would have been clearer. In this way the offender has three separate opportunities to repent (Matthew 18:17).

However if the sinning believer is still unwilling to reconcile with the injured party, Jesus instructs the church to treat him as an outsider (Matthew 18:17). Our first reaction is to recoil in horror at the harshness of this pronouncement. As we reflect further, it becomes clear that the offender has chosen to maintain the breach of relationship with the offended brother. By refusing reconciliation, the offender is choosing to reject fellowship with the church at large.

Earlier Jesus had granted Peter the “keys to the kingdom of heaven” which included authority to bind and loose (Matthew 16:19). Jesus emphasized the eternal significance of this authority. Now He includes the right to “bind” or accept members and to “loose” or expel members in the church’s authority.

Jesus emphasizes the importance of corporate church action using the plural pronoun which we would translate “you all” (Matthew 18:18-19). The church, acting under this authority is free to accept into membership any one who has professed faith in Christ as Saviour and Lord. Only those who have been accepted into the kingdom can be members. Conversely, only one who has refused to be reconciled and has rejected the church may be expelled (Matthew 18:17).

Jesus emphasized the power of two or three agreeing in prayer. The body must seek the Holy Spirit’s promised guidance in decision making (Matthew 18:20). Then He declared the wonderful promise that where two or three come together in Jesus’ Name, He is there with them (18:20). When we gather “in His Name”, we seek His will and pray to conform our petitions to His nature.

Responding to Ministry Details Acts 6:1-6 “Getting Organized”

As the Holy Spirit drew more believers into relationship with Jesus, these believers were also drawn together. Thus the church began to grow as well. Jesus left His instructions to the believers to go and make more disciples. As He had promised, His Holy Spirit descended on the believers to guide the details of how the church as a body would grow.

Acts chapter five ends with the apostles going from house to house teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ (Acts 5:42). We see the fruit of their ministry in the beginning verses of Acts chapter six. God was calling Jews from across the Roman Empire to Jerusalem where they were confronted with the Gospel. The Grecian Jews were those Jews who had been scattered throughout the Roman Empire over the years and now were back in Jerusalem and had responded to the Gospel.

The first recorded ecclesiastical difficulty arose in the daily distribution of food to the widows (Acts 6:1). Some of the Grecian believers complained that the widows among them were being neglected by the local or “Hebraic” Jewish believers (Acts 6:2). Wisely, the twelve apostles sought help from the entire body of believers. Their call was to preach the word of God, so they asked the believers to choose seven men from among themselves to handle the food distribution (Acts 6:2-4). Each of these seven was to be known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. This pattern of shared responsibility allows those who are gifted and called in specific areas of ministry to focus on those areas and not to be distracted by numerous other areas of service (1 Peter 4:11).

Responding to a Need for Special Service Acts 13:1-3

The church in Antioch demonstrates how such gifts and ministries are shared. Following the persecution in connection with Stephen some years before, believers from Cyprus and Cyrene had preached the gospel to the Greeks in Antioch (Acts 8:1-4; 11:19). The church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to investigate the reports of many coming to faith in Christ in Antioch (Acts 11:21-22). As his ministry bore even more fruit, Barnabas recruited Saul of Tarsus to help him. For the next entire year they ministered together in Antioch, where believers were first called “Christians” (Acts 11:24-26).

The Antioch church was readily obedient to the leading of the Holy Spirit, sharing both the Gospel and materially with those in need (Acts 11:29-30). Among the believers in this church three individuals are identified as prophets and teachers in addition to Saul and Barnabas: Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) (13:1). During a mighty prayer meeting the Holy Spirit instructed them to set apart Barnabas and Saul for “the work to which I have called them” (13:2). After a time of fasting and praying, they commissioned Barnabas and Saul acknowledging God’s call on them for this special ministry by laying on their hands and sending them off (Acts 13:3). The church in Antioch became a hub of missionary efforts for all the surrounding area.

Responding to Need for Communication Acts 15:22

As these missionaries shared the Gospel, the number of Gentile believers grew (Acts 13:47-48; 14:21). Jewish believers from Judea came to Antioch teaching the need for circumcision of the Gentile believers (15:1). Saul (now called Paul) and Barnabas sharply debated this requirement. Apparently recalling Jesus instructions regarding conflict among believers, (Matthew 18:15-20), the church appointed some believers including Paul and Barnabas to go to the elders in Jerusalem to settle the matter (Acts 15:2).

At the resulting meeting, called the Jerusalem Council, the church body wrestled with just what they would require of Gentiles who came to faith in Jesus. After much discussion, Simon Peter addressed the council (Acts 15:7). He reviewed how God spoke the words of life to the Gentiles through him. God made no distinction between the Jewish believers and the Gentile believers; but purified all their hearts by faith and gave His acceptance through the gift of His Holy Spirit (15:8-9). Should the Council encumber these Gentile believers with such extensive requirements that no one could meet?

No! Simon Peter concludes, we are all saved through the grace of our Lord Jesus. Barnabas and Paul then told the Council of God’s miraculous signs and wonders among the Gentile believers in Antioch (Acts 15:12). Finally, Jesus’ brother James, addressed the Council.

He quoted God’s words from the prophet Amos and concluded that they should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God’s salvation (Amos 9:11-12; Acts

15:13-19). James then summarized the Council's instructions as follows: Gentile believers were not to be required to be circumcised, rather they were to abstain from sexual immorality, from food polluted by idols, from eating strangled animals and from blood (Acts 15:21, 29). Again working as a church, the body in Jerusalem appointed two ambassadors from their fellowship to take the message to the Gentile churches (15:22-25).

Responding to Blatant Sin 1 Corinthians 5:1-5

The first requirement that the Jerusalem Council identified for the Gentile believers is to abstain from sexual immorality (Acts 15:21). In his letter to the church at Corinth, Paul pleaded with the believers to flee immorality (1 Corinthians 6:18-20). Sexual immorality, like no other area of sin, immerses the whole believer in sin both against God and the believer's own body. Each believer's body is a temple of the Holy Spirit of God. Paul emphasized that we are not our own, but we have been bought with a price; with the precious blood of Jesus (1 Corinthians 6:20; 1 Peter 1:18-19). Therefore, we are called to glorify God in our bodies.

The church in Corinth however faced the tragedy of a believer who blatantly engaged in sexual sin (1 Corinthians 5:1). When Paul received this report in Ephesus, he instructed the church to assemble and to address the matter (1 Corinthians 5:4; 16:8). Incredibly, the church maintained an attitude of pride. Paul confronts this pride, questioning if the better response should be that of grief and then action (5:2).

Just as Jesus taught in Matthew 18, the community of faith must take action (Matthew 18:15-20). Where one refuses to turn from flagrant sin, the church body has no choice but to recognize that believer's breach of the fellowship (Matthew 15:17). Paul emphasizes here that the purpose of the expulsion was redemptive (1 Corinthians 5:5).

Paul then focuses on the danger of complacency toward immoral behaviour (1 Corinthians 5:6-13). God calls every community of believers to live for Him, shining as beacons in this sinful world. The church is not to judge the world. That is God's responsibility (6:12-13). Because of the infectious nature of sin, the body of believers must be vigilant in self-judgment (1 Peter 8-9). We cannot afford to be complacent. For the fourth time in this passage Paul emphasizes the need for this community to get rid of sin (1 Corinthians 6:2, 5, 7, 13).

Responding to Fellow Believers' Material Needs 1 Corinthians 16:1-3

God's people have the privilege of introducing the world to Jesus (Matthew 28:19-20). We also have the privilege of meeting the material needs of His people. Here Paul addresses the way the church at Corinth can participate in the collection of resources for other believers in need (1 Corinthians 16:1-3; Galatians 2:10).

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

The body of Christ exists to share the saving message of Christ with the world (Ephesians 3:10-11). God equips the local body with various spiritual gifts and calls each member to use those gifts to spread His redeeming love within that believer's sphere of influence. Together we can respond to the needs around us, in Jesus' name. Your task as the teacher of this study will include a look at the purpose of a local home church in the light of New Testament doctrine—and how you can best achieve that purpose through scriptural self-government.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

Church Decisions and Actions

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the *Focal Text* in their Bibles. Also, share with them the *Main Idea* to be learned from the Scriptures, and the *Questions to be Explored* by the group.

Focal Text

Matthew 18:15-20; Acts 6:1-6; 13:1-3;15:22;1 Corinthians 5:1-5;16:1-3

Background Text

Matthew 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47;5:11-14;6:1-6;11:1-18; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:4-5; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 7:17; 16:1-3; 1 Timothy 4:14, 1 Peter 5:1-4

Main Idea

New Testament believers are democratic in their church government.

Question to Explore

How did churches in the New Testament make decisions?

Teaching Aim

To lead the class to describe how New Testament churches were organized and made decisions and what this teaches about church government today

Connect with Life:

Share: Daily we are faced with decisions and opportunities to minister. As we face each of these opportunities we have to determine, with the leading of the Holy Spirit, just how we will respond. In this lesson we will explore how several New Testament churches dealt with the specific needs God brought to them. Pray asking God to open your hearts to His Word with eagerness and expectancy for the truths He has for you this day.

Guide the Study:

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Share the background information regarding New Testament churches from Beliefs to Cherish Session Five.

Tell the congregation: When we say “church” we can refer to both the universal body of Christ made up of all believers throughout the ages (but more accurately referred to as the Kingdom of God) and to each local fellowship of believers in a given place and time. Today we will focus on how God met needs through local fellowships of believers.

Request someone to read Matthew 18:15-20.

Say: Jesus consistently taught that our difficulties with fellow believers will impact our relationship with God.

Share Matthew 5:23-24.

Comment: Such difficulties also have the potential to damage the fellowship of the whole church body. Let’s look at the procedure Jesus gave us in Matthew 18 in the event a fellow believer sins against you.

Discuss each of the four steps of church discipline using the **Teacher Preparation** material. Emphasize that at each step the goal is reconciliation. Talk about the need for believers to hold each other accountable in their daily lives.

Ask a volunteer to share the importance of agreeing in prayer. Discuss Jesus’ promise in Matthew 18:19-20.

Have someone read Acts 6:1-6.

Talk about the potential difficulties that may arise when believers of various backgrounds fellowship together. Discuss ways to be sensitive to others’ backgrounds.

Share how your church has addressed the need for shared responsibility in ministry.

Ask a volunteer to read Acts 15:22.

Describe the problem facing the Gentile believers in Acts 13:47-48. Using the background material from your Teacher Preparation, tell about the Jerusalem Council. Emphasize how the church body worked together to address these concerns.

Say: The first requirement that the Jerusalem Council identified was to abstain from sexual immorality (Acts 15:21).

Have someone read 1 Corinthians 5:1-5. Share the danger of this area of sin using the background material found in Beliefs to Cherish Session Five. Emphasize the correct response to sin—that of grief.

Ask a volunteer to read 1 Corinthians 16:1-3.

Say: The church meeting in Corinth had the opportunity to contribute to the financial needs of other believers. Discuss the concept of “stewardship” as managing the resources God has entrusted to us. Read 1 Corinthians 4:2. Ask the members to identify the characteristics of giving in 1 Corinthians 16:1-3. Some characteristics include the following: regular giving, in proportion to income, each believer participating, planned giving, for other’s needs.

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the ***Youth!!! Take Ten*** page and allow them to go away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Say: The body of Christ exists to share the saving message of Christ with the world. In sharing that message, we should be sensitive to the various backgrounds and life experiences of those to whom we witness. God equips the local body with various spiritual gifts and calls each member to use those gifts to spread His redeeming love within that believer’s sphere of influence. Clear communication is essential in responding to the needs around us.

Pray, asking God to make your church pure, to show you any areas of sin which need to be addressed, and to protect you from religious legalism which can cripple the preaching of the gospel. Ask God for His wisdom and guidance for your church.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

Church Decisions and Actions

**Matthew 18:15-20; Acts 6:1-6; 13:1-3; 15:22;
1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 16:1-3**

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

Decisions In the Body of Christ

What are ways that your church encourages youth to participate in the affairs of the church? Discuss the relationship which the Scripture encourages for all ages. Do you think your personal expectations for how the church should relate to you are in accord with Scripture? If a new young person appeared at your church today, how would you explain to him/her what it means to be a part of your church body?

3

Copy this section for the Worship Time leader.

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)

Church Decisions and Actions

**Matthew 18:15-20; Acts 6:1-6; 13:1-3; 15:22;
1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 16:1-3**

Beginning the Service:

Begin by singing "The Church's One Foundation". The leader of the opening exercises would find it convenient and less disruptive to have prepared a copy of the scriptures for the day's study on one or more sheets of paper. This can easily be done by someone with a computer.

Offering:

Praying for the World:

Pray for a translation team working to make God's Word available in the heart language of the Go-Land people of the Pacific Rim. Pray that the Holy Spirit will guide the team as they determine when and where to meet together, and will guard against all hindrances, both physical and spiritual.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

Introduction:

Some Christian are unconcerned about church government. Others give their church government into the hands of the presbytery; while others surrender the affairs of the church to a bishop. Many evangelical Christian groups believe and practice the

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freedom of a local church to oversee and make decisions for itself. The six scriptures for today speak of six different actions of three different local churches in the first century and the concept of church in the mind of Jesus.

The church concept in the mind of Jesus: Matthew 18: 15-20

When one Christian (brother) sins against another a certain procedure was to be followed to settle the matter without further outside involvement. The one who sinned is confronted by the one sinned against. If the guilty brother cannot be reconciled at this level the fellow church members are to become involved. If the sinning brother refuses the advice of these witnesses, then the matter is to be taken to the church. This is the point at which the church becomes involved in personal matters of it's members.

There is no higher authority than the church: it acts in freedom from any outside authority. The only recourse for the church if the brother refuses reconciliation is expulsion from the church in hope that his mind can be changed by suffering from an unredeemed culture. Having to live outside the fellowship of other believers may be enough to cause a change of heart.

This is a command of Jesus while he was yet in the flesh, and before the church became a reality. The instructions were given prior to the reality of the church: Jesus foresaw this as a major problem for his people, and gave these directions for their solutions.

Church Number One

1. The first example of a local church acting according to its own dictates is the church at Jerusalem dealing with two different situations.

1) Acts 6:1-6 A problem in the church after Pentecost. In this passage a problem arose in the Jerusalem church. The rapid growth of the church is documented in Acts 1-5, and the problem this growth had caused is described in verse 6:2ff. "...the Greek-speaking Jews among them complained against the Hebrew-speaking community because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food." An early form of sharing among believers was found to be inadequate.

The apostles (the twelve) suggested that the church find seven men full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom to attend to this problem. The church made the search and the church recommended seven to the apostles, who accepted the recommendations of the church. They prayed over them and laid their hands on them. Keep in mind the role of apostles in the early churches: they had the oversight of churches because there was no precedent or established rules for such functions of a church. The church was a new configuration of people with new problems to be faced.

2). Acts 15:22: The church at Jerusalem faced another problem the solution in which they had to participate. Again, the apostles, with the elders, faced the problem created

by the conversion of Gentiles to the Christian faith. The apostles and elders (a new source of wisdom) agreed that the Gentile would not be required to be circumcised in order to become a Believer. Having reached this decision, apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to draft a letter, expressing the decision of the council and to have it presented to all the churches in the area, and to send some of their own members with Saul and Barnabas to the church at Antioch.

Church Number Two

3. Another church that acted under the impulse of the Holy Spirit was the church at Antioch in Syria (Acts 13:1-3). It is fitting that when the Holy Spirit was ready to begin a mission to the Gentiles this church was called upon for those to be sent out. As the church worshipped and fasted the Holy Spirit told the church to set apart two of the men, Saul and Barnabas, for the work which the Spirit had called them.

After the church had prayed and fasted, they lay their hands on these two men and sent them out. Thus begins what is called the first missionary journey of Saul, later to be called Paul. The Spirit spoke to the church at worship, and the church in prayer and fasting acted accordingly.

Church Number Three

4. The third local church taking action on matters under the direction of an apostle was the church at Corinth. Two distinct decisions and actions were made by this church.

1) 1 Corinthians 5:1-5. The situation in the church at Corinth was a man living with his step-mother, his father's wife, while the church had no judgment on the matter. Paul passes summary judgment on the man and instructs the church to put him out of the body of believers. There is no reason to believe that the church did not do as Paul suggested. He was in essence the pastor of the church, having founded it on his second missionary journey and spending over eighteen months there. At least, he exercised his apostolic authority in settling the matter. As an Apostle he also had the authority to make such demands.

2) 1 Corinthians 16:1-3. The church at Corinth was given the opportunity to aid the church in Jerusalem, as were other churches in Galatia. They gladly accepted Paul's instructions and took upon themselves the burden which was on the heart of Paul. He gladly took upon himself the task of raising money with which to aid that church during a crisis caused by a severe drought. A predominately Gentile church responded to the needs of a predominately Jewish church, out of Christian love. It was a church decision and the church's action.

Call to Commitment:

Although there are not scriptures setting out the rules of church government, there are ample examples which show the churches taking action and practicing congregational

church government. Jesus was the first to speak the word “Church,” by a simple assertion he turned the decision over to the church. The church at Jerusalem, the first group called a church, handled its problems as a congregation, as did the church at Antioch and the church at Corinth. Today, let’s recommit ourselves and our church congregation to accept the privilege and responsibility of making our decisions as a group under the Lordship of Jesus.

Concluding the Service:

Ask the congregation to take their benediction scripture sheet and read the verses aloud with you.

- 7. *The law of the Lord is perfect,
reviving the soul.
The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.***
- 8. *The precepts of the Lord are right,
giving joy to the heart.
The commands of the Lord are radiant,
giving light to the eyes.***
- 9. *The fear of the Lord is pure,
enduring forever.
The ordinances of the Lord are sure
and altogether righteous.***
- 10. *They are more precious than gold,
than much pure gold;
They are sweeter than honey,
than honey from the comb.***
- 11. *By them is your servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward. Amen.***

Psalm 19:7-11.

Copy for each participant in the Worship Time.

Benediction Upon the Congregation

- 7. *The law of the Lord is perfect,
reviving the soul.
The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy,
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- 8. *The precepts of the Lord are right,
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The commands of the Lord are radiant,
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- 10. *They are more precious than gold,
than much pure gold;
They are sweeter than honey,
than honey from the comb.***
- 11. *By them is your servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward. Amen.***

Psalm 19:7-11.