

## **WHAT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BRETHREN?**

Have the brethren abdicated their Christian responsibility to the church hierarchy?

Do the Brethren have certain leadership responsibilities over the Ministry?

Or, should they just pay, pray and have no say?

What is the example given to us by the early church?

### **WHO SELECTED DEACONS IN THE EARLY CHURCH?**

Acts 6:2-5

2 “Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

3 “Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

4 “But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

5 “And the saying pleased the whole multitude” (and they then proceeded to choose seven men).

**Thus, deacons were not selected by the ministry but by the brethren.**

## **A DIRE WARNING**

**An easy way to sin, and destroy a congregation**

Leviticus 19:16 AMP

“You shall not go up and down as a dispenser of gossip and scandal among your people, nor shall you [*secure yourself by false testimony or by silence* and] endanger the life of your neighbor. I am the Lord”



**But, what are we to do when problems arise among the brethren?**

## **THESE ARE THE WORDS OF CHRIST**

Matthew 18:15-20 AMP

15 “If your brother wrongs you, go and show him his fault, between you and him privately. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother.

16 “But if he does not listen, take along with you one or two others, so that every word may be confirmed and upheld by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

17 “If he pays no attention to them [refusing to listen and obey], tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a pagan and a tax collector”

**Thus, the church (the body of believers) not the ministry is to settle disputes among the brethren.**

Many very important decisions, guided and based on God's word, are to be made by the church body.

18 “Truly I tell you, (*who is he talking to?*) whatever you forbid and declare to be improper and unlawful on earth must be what is already forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit and declare proper and lawful on earth must be what is already permitted in heaven.” (*God's ordinances are to be our guide NASU & Amp*).



**Did he mention a church official, a bishop, a pastor general, or a pope?**

19 “Again I tell you, if two of you on earth agree (harmonize together, make a symphony together) about whatever [anything and everything] they may ask, it will come to pass and be done for them by My Father in heaven.

20 “For wherever two or three are gathered (drawn together as My followers) in (into) My name, there I AM in the midst of them.”



**No church hierarchy mentioned here either. Christ is talking to you.**

**WHAT ARE WE PREPARING OURSELVES FOR?**

I Corinthians 6:2-5

2 “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the

smallest matters?” *Notice He did not say the Ministry, the Priests or church hierarchy.*

3 “Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life?

4 “If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.” (How would you like to be judged like that?)

5 “I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? No, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?”

But doesn't the Bible tell us not to judge? Yes, but this is often wrongly used to compromise sin in the church. Matthew 7:1-5 warns us not to judge hypocritically, but John 7:24 explains, “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.” KJV.

*Brethren not just the ministers are to judge, but neither should condemn.*

## **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR SALVATION?**

Philippians 2:12-16 KJV

12 “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

13 “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

14 “Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

15 “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.”



**Not a priest, minister, or any other man, but you!**

Galatians 6:4-8

4 “But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

5 “For every man shall bear his own burden.

7 “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

8 “For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

*It has been well said, “Your actions speak so loud I can’t hear what you say.”*

**Our responsibility is to learn to digest the solid food of the word of God.**

Hebrews 5:14

“But solid food is for full-grown men, for those whose senses and mental faculties are trained by practice to discriminate and distinguish between what is morally good and noble and what is evil and contrary either to divine or human law.”



## WHEN SHOULD WE NOT FOLLOW A LEADER?

Isaiah 8:20

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

*Have you ever heard someone say the law has been done away, nailed to the cross? This is a total misunderstanding of Colossians 2:14, and there is no light in them that say it.*

I Corinthians 11:1-3

1 “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

2 “Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.

3 “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”



*Did you notice that Paul is not mentioned in here anywhere? What about a Minister, Priest, or even some great charismatic personality? But only as they follow Christ!*

## CHARGES AGAINST THE MINISTRY

I Timothy 5:19-22 AMP

19 “Listen to no accusation against an elder unless it is confirmed by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

20 “As for those who are guilty and persist in sin, rebuke and admonish them in the presence of all, so that the rest may be warned and stand in wholesome awe and fear.”

*Some denominations just quietly transfer them, also often done by the church hierarchy with little or no input from the laity.*

21 “I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the chosen angels that you guard and keep [these rules] without personal prejudice or favor, doing nothing from partiality.”

*Have you ever seen favoritism among the church hierarchy?*

22 “Do not be in a hurry in the laying on of hands [giving the sanction of the church too hastily in reinstating expelled offenders or in ordination in questionable cases], nor share or participate in another man's sins; keep yourself pure.”



## **WHAT SHOULD YOU DO WHEN A MEMBER REFUSES TO QUIT SINNING?**

I Corinthians 5:4-5:

4 “In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,

5 “To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

*Again, it was the congregation that acted.*

## **DO NOT SEEK TITLES**

Matthew 23:8-12 AMP

8 “But you are not to be called rabbi (teacher), for you have one Teacher and you are all brothers.

9 “And do not call anyone [in the church] on earth father, for you have one Father, Who is in heaven.

10 “And you must not be called masters (leaders), for you have one Master (Leader), the Christ.

11 “He who is greatest among you shall be your servant.”  
*Humility, the key to greatness!*

## **OUR PERSONAL INVITATION TO GO DIRECTLY TO GOD:**

Hebrews 4:16

“Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Hebrews 10:19-20

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,  
By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.”

The holiest is where only the High Priest could go, as that represented the very throne of God here on earth. When the veil was ripped from top to bottom, it symbolized our invitation to approach the throne of grace individually and personally with no one in between. Obviously, God has a high regard for his church member’s intelligence and abilities, and holds them to a much higher standard and responsibility than we may have thought.

Collectively the members have been given a lot of responsibility, proving that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. That's called value added and proves that two plus two can sometimes equal five, which explains the effectiveness of group prayer, as when the church prayed for Peter when he was bound in prison (Acts 12:7-17).

Every member is expected, and has a responsibility, to develop his God given talents and abilities, and to help and encourage others to do the same.

### **WHAT IS THE DOCTRINE OF THE NICOLAITANES THAT GOD HATES?**

To the church at Ephesus God says:

“But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate” (Rev. 2:6).

Also, to the church at Pergamos:

“So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate” (Rev. 2:15).

It is generally understood that Nico = lord over, or power over. Laity = people. Therefore, we could assume that it would apply to those who would place themselves between the laity (people) and God. Preaching another gospel and/or exerting a power over the people that is not theirs to exert. This is a common problem in many organizations, denominations, and even some congregations.

No man should set himself up as the “*anointed*” go-between, or mediator, or to stand in any way between God and man. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man (I Tim. 2:5). You have direct access to the Father through Christ so why would you go to another to get to Christ when it was He who died for you?

Are the Brethren always right? No, but history has shown that the church hierarchy has often been wrong and is capable of much more damage.

## **WHO IS THE HEAD OF GOD’S CHURCH?**

Colossians 1:18

“And HE is the HEAD of the BODY, the CHURCH: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things HE might have the preeminence.”

**No man should ever claim himself to be the head of God’s Church. Christ is the head! We are all servants.**

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Other study guides of interest:

ANSWERS TO THOSE WHO HAVE CREPT IN UNAWARES  
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LET’S TALK ABOUT THE DOCTRINES OF CHRIST  
OLD AND WORN OUT EXCUSES AGAINST GOD’S SABBATH  
SELF RIGHTIOUSNESS

## Some words from God to keep in mind

### II Timothy 4:3-5:

3 “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

4 “And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

5 “But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make **full proof** of thy ministry.”

### II Peter 2:1-3:

1 “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2 “And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

3 “And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”

### Jude 4:

4 “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

### Titus 1:16:

16 “They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.”

### Proverbs 1:20-23

20 “Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets:

21 “She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying,

22 “How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?

23 “Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.”