



**ASSOCIATION OF BIBLE
CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL**
PO Box 953, Ocklawaha, Florida USA 32183

ABCI RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

All matters of rules and regulations must agree with Biblical principles.

Each church should determine what special rules are necessary for the ongoing work of the Lord. These rules may vary from one region to another. If any rules are necessary, they should be voted upon by the majority of members in that church.

The pastor shall have the authority to veto any rule or regulation which he feels goes against Biblical principles.

Rules and regulations should be kept to a small number, and in some cases, especially in a smaller church, rules and regulations are unnecessary. This is true when a church congregation is familiar with Biblical principles and enjoys a sense of unity among its people. The principles behind all practical rules is already established in the Bible. Where there is usually a cooperative nature among the people and a desire to get things done for the Lord there is rarely a need to have large numbers of rules, if any at all (other than those specified in the Bible).



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THE BIBLICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

We need to be as true to the Bible as possible. Therefore, God-called men should be recognized ONLY by the terms that the Holy Spirit uses in God's Word.

- APOSTLE
- BISHOP
- PASTOR
- EVANGELIST
- PROPHET
- DEACON

***Any of the above may be considered to be ELDERS. This term is used to recognize God-called men who have any of these callings or gifts and long experience in the Lord doing whatever the Lord has assigned to them. (So that a pastor may also be an elder. A deacon may also be an elder. A Bishop may also be an elder, etc.). The term ELDER implies spiritual maturity.

- ADMINISTRATION (Treasurer, maintenance, etc.)
- HELPS (Secretaries, teacher assistants, etc.)

WHAT AUTHORITY DO EACH OF THESE CALLINGS FROM GOD HAVE WITHIN THE LOCAL CHURCH ? We see these Biblical offices described in Scripture by the people who hold those offices.

APOSTLE. is a man that has been used of God to establish more than one church. It is not a "voted on" position, but instead, it is a recognition of what they have already done.

BISHOP. Is a man who supervises the spiritual welfare of at least several churches.

PASTOR. Is a man who has evident gifts of the Spirit who has been called to oversee the flock of God in a local community. In some cases, he is recognized to oversee the flock of God in several locations.

EVANGELIST. Is a saved man or woman who has evident gift of the Holy Spirit in the work of bringing souls to know Jesus Christ as Savior.

PROPHET. Is a man or woman with an obvious gift from God to prophesy. One evidence is that his or her prophecies are never wrong. One incorrect prophesy disqualifies the person from being a true prophet of God.

DEACON. Is a man that has shown a sincere desire to help others. The deacon will

sacrifice his own blessings to provide for the needs of other people. Deacons typically help in the material work of the church as those who help the pastors.

Although deacons can also hold other offices with a Biblical church, such as teaching, or evangelism, their primary interest is helping those who have material needs. Through a long experience with the Lord and spiritual maturity, deacons can become elders.

WHAT IS ORDINATION ?

Offices within the church usually involve ordination at some point. Most offices must prove themselves to have the gift required for their work before they are ordained.

Ordination is a public acknowledgement that the person has actively shown the gifts necessary for the office.

Ordination must come from a recognition that the person by exhibited the gifts which are required for the office. Ordination does not make a person a pastor or an evangelist. Ordination simply recognizes that the person has shown the gifts necessary for those offices.

Ordination is the laying of hands on the person who has shown those gifts.

WHAT ARE THE PROCEDURES FOR ORDINATION ?

The candidate for ordination should be examined by the elders of the church. Often, several churches will cooperate, and elders from each church shall examine the person to verify if they have been given and are using specific gifts of the Spirit which apply to the office.

The congregation of local church body must hear the recommendation from the elders and recognize those gifts and by vote determine if that person should be "Ordained."

If the local church votes to ordain the person, a date and service is set for the ordination.

The elders who examined the candidate as well as other elders from other churches, may participate in laying on hands to officially recognize the gifts and calling of the candidate.

A "Charge" is given to the ordained person by one or more elders, whereby he is to be held accountable to use his gifts from God for God's purpose only.

An ordained person may receive an official certificate acknowledging his ordination from the local church or ABCI.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

CAN A DEACON ORDAIN ANOTHER DEACON ?

Once again we must seek any example from Scripture. From my research, there is no example of deacons ordaining deacons.

There seems to be a principle in Scripture where someone with a senior position is responsible for ordaining a person. Elders generally are called together to ordain a person into a specific ministry, such as a pastor, deacon, or evangelist.

The English word, **ordain**, is translated from the Greek word (Strong's concordance 5500) χειροτονεω cheirotoneo khi-rot-on-eh'-o

- 1) to vote by stretching out the hand
- 2) to create or appoint by vote: one to have charge of some office or duty
- 3) to elect, create, appoint

Notice where this word is used in Scripture.

Acts 14:23 *And when they had **ordained <5500> them elders in every church**, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.*

2 Corinthians 8:19 *And not that only, but **who was <5500> also chosen <5500> of the churches to travel with** us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind:*

2 Timothy 4:22 *The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen. «The second epistle unto Timotheus, **ordained <5500> the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians**, was written from Rome, when Paul was brought before Nero the second time.»*

Titus 3:15 *All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen. «It was written to Titus, **ordained <5500> the first bishop of the church of the Cretians**, from Nicopolis of Macedonia.»*

So, basically, we do not have any example of a deacon ordaining a deacon. However, the Biblical principle that an elder must do the ordaining suggests that even an elder deacon might be able to be on the presbytery and ordain a new deacon.

*The Bible principle is that **a higher-ranking officer of the church must do the ordaining**. This is seen in Acts 14:23, where the apostles ordained elders.*

HOW CAN DISPUTES BE SOLVED ?

CHRISTIANS SHOULD SETTLE THEIR DIFFERENCES IN PRIVATE.

Matthew 18:15 *Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.*

16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

CHRISTIANS SHOULD SETTLE THEIR DIFFERENCES AMONG THEMSELVES (where private discussion has failed), BUT IF THAT FAILS, THEY SHOULD TAKE IT BEFORE THE CHURCH.

1 Corinthians 6:12-7:8 *For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person. Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? 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? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. 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 brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.*

Differences should be resolved on the local church level. However, when this is not done, a Bishop may step into the situation, hear the case, and prayerfully insist on a specific resolution.

WHAT IS THE POWER OR FUNCTION OF A PASTOR IN REGARD TO DIFFICULTIES IN THE CHURCH ?

The pastor (literally, "shepherd") has complete authority over his sheep. Since the Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments, refers to pastors as shepherds, this would apply to a pastor having authority over his flock (congregation).

In many cases, a pastor does not know or understand the Biblical basis for resolving problems. The previous Scriptures deal with judging a problem, and yet pastors often overlook the Biblical requirements. BUT, how will the people know what to do unless they are taught what the Bible says by their pastor ?

A good time for the pastor to teach on this is when there are no major problems within the church.

While problems and conflicts exist, and the pastor does not know what to do, or he has not taught it to his flock, an overseer, or Bishop who is knowledgeable in the Word should step in and (1), Educate the pastor, and (2). Bring the people involved in the conflict to resolve it on the basis of the Word of God.