

Decision-Making in the Local Church

Introduction:

- A. Recently the method of making decisions for the local church has become an issue.
 - B. What is the New Testament pattern for congregational decision-making? - 1 Peter 5:1-4
 - I. The divine arrangement for congregational decision-making is elders in every church.
 - A. There are to be elders in every church. - Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5
 - B. Elders are to rule in the local church. - Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4; 1 Timothy 5:17
 - C. To rule is to make decisions that others are obligated to follow. - Exodus 18:21-26; cf. 1 Kings 20:40
 - D. To refuse to follow the scriptural rule of God-ordained rulers is to rebel against God.
 - 1. the rebellion of Aaron and Miriam - Numbers chapter 12
 - 2. the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram - Numbers 16:1-40; esp. vv. 1-3,7,11
 - 3. Israel's demand for a king - 1 Samuel 8:1-8
 - II. How should elders make decisions for the local church?
 - A. In matters of opinion the elders should:
 - 1. learn and consider the needs and opinions of the members. - Acts 6:1
 - 2. make decisions for the church. - Acts 21:18,23-24
 - 3. inform the whole church of decisions that affect the whole church. - Acts 6:3; 15:19-20
 - B. In matters of faith elders should:
 - 1. decide privately what they believe is scriptural in order to have a united eldership. - Acts 15:5-6; Galatians 2:2
 - 2. inform the church of their position and their reasons for it and give the entire church the opportunity to discuss the issue and to express approval or disapproval. - Acts 15:7,12,22
 - III. The whole church should:
 - A. select its own officers (method a matter of liberty). - Acts 6:3
 - B. withdraw from impenitent sinners (in the assembly). - 1 Corinthians 5:4-5
 - IV. How are decisions to be made in congregations which have no elders?
 - A. Men still make decisions for the church. - Acts 13:1-3
 - B. Women may not rule over (help make decisions for) men. - 1 Timothy 2:12
 - C. The younger should submit to the elder. - 1 Peter 5:5
 - D. No one should seek or be allowed to have preeminence. - 3 John 9-10
 - E. All members of the church (including women) have the rights to:
 - 1. have their opinions and needs considered. - Acts 6:1
 - 2. be kept informed. - Acts 6:2-4
 - 3. have their approval sought. - Acts 6:2-5
 - V. Whether a congregation has elders or not, all should:
 - A. strive for unity and peace. - Ephesians 4:1-3
 - B. strive to please others and not to cause others to stumble. - 1 Corinthians 10:31-33
- Conclusion:
- A. The New Testament pattern for congregational decision-making is for elders to rule the local church.
 - B. Even in the absence of elders, mature men should lead in decision making.
 - C. This leaves no place for a popular vote to make local church decision or women or immature Christians (male or female) participating on an equality with mature men in decision making in the local church.
 - D. To rebel against the God-ordained leadership of the local church is to rebel against God.