

Review from Sunday's Message for Personal Meditation – January 19, 2014:

- i. The local church is under authority.
 - a. Jesus is the “*chief Shepherd*.” 1 Pet. 5:4 Jesus is the *head* of the church. Eph. 4:15-16
 - b. Through faith in Jesus we all have access to God directly. Heb. 4:14-16; 10:19-23
 - c. The Scripture is our source of truth and our standard for what we believe and how we behave. 1 Tim. 3:14-17; 2 Pet 1:19-21

- ii. The local church is an authority.
 - a. The local church recognizes, affirms, and submits to the leaders it chooses. Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tim 3
 - b. The local church disciplines its members. Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5.
 - c. The local church disciplines its leaders – holding her leaders accountable to Jesus and the Word of God. 1 Tim 5:17-22
 - d. The church is the pillar and foundation of truth. 1 Tim 3:15
It has the authority to proclaim the gospel (which is the power of God unto salvation) and make disciples of all nations. Rom 1:16-17; Matt 28:18-20

- iii. The local church is under the authority of her elders.
 - a. Elders (overseers) are under-shepherds who humbly provide oversight to the church. 1 Pet 5:1-5
 - b. Elders are morally upright men who are faithful husbands and fathers. They know the Scripture and are able to teach and defend it. They are men of spiritual maturity and godly reputation. 1 Tim 3:1-7
They are respected by the congregation they serve.
 - c. Elders have a ministry of preaching/teaching the Word of God and directing the affairs of the local church. 1 Tim 5:17; Heb 13:7

- iv. Message points for meditation and application:
 - a. Those who lead the church, and those who hold those leaders accountable (the church membership), are together under the authority of Jesus and the Word of God. Acts 20:28, 32.

 - b. The elders of the local church have the authority that Jesus, the Word of God and the fellowship of the saints allow.

 - c. The local church members are to be an authority toward those whose authority they are under. The local church exercises authority in the context of equality, unity and mutual submission where Jesus is head.

Questions for Reflection, Application and Fellowship:

- i. How has the above message / Bible study influenced your thoughts and attitude toward church authority?

How has the message / Bible study influenced your thoughts and attitude toward church membership and leadership (the church's authority and responsibility toward God and herself)?

How should the balance of power and authority in the church be reflective of God in the world?

[The way God has organized the local church demonstrates both God's sovereignty and human responsibility. God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the Scripture is the ultimate authority. Redeemed saints have the responsibility to exercise authority under God's supremacy. As the church believes and obeys God in carrying out His mission in the world, she demonstrates faith in Him and glorifies Him before angels and men.]

- ii. God is beautifying His church. (Eph 5:26; Tit 3:4-8) Is the local church you are a part of becoming more beautiful? What responsibility do you have toward its beautification? (Philippians 2:12-18)