



Why Do We...

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*Giving an answer
For the work and teachings
Of the New Testament church*

By David Phillips

Bible Basics
For New Christians and Old
Volume I

Why Do we...
Appoint elders?

- I. Elders are a part of God's organization for the church (Eph. 4:11).
- II. As an organization, the church is in need of leadership.
 - A. Christ is the head of the church (col. 1:8).
 - B. Leaders are still needed on earth to help the church to grow, and to protect Christians from those who teach false doctrine (Titus 1:5-9).
- III. Elders are older men, experience in the word of God, who watch, guide, protect, and feed the church from God's word, like a shepherd (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2).

Why Do we...
Appoint deacons?

- I. The definition of "deacon" is servant.
- II. Deacons are appointed in the church to serve the physical aspects of church leadership, so that the elders and focus on the spiritual aspects.
 - A. This kind of position was first established in Acts 6:3.
 - B. Though these men were not called deacons, they fulfilled the same purpose.
 - C. They were appointed to care for the physical needs, so that the elders and apostles could, "*give themselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word*" (Acts 6:4).
- III. Therefore, deacons are established in every congregation where there are elders so that the elders can focus on the spiritual needs of the congregation (1 Tim. 3:8-13).

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Why Do we...
Financially support Preachers?

- I. In 1 Cor. 9:14 it says, “Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.”
 - A. Just as people who provide secular services (plumbers, electricians, etc.) live from their jobs, preachers also live from the service they provide.
 - B. Gal. 6:6, “Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him teaches.”
- II. According to these principles, Paul was supported for preaching the gospel (2 Cor. 11:8-9; Phil. 4:15-16)

Why Do we...
Have business meetings?

- I. According to the New Testament, God intends for elders to lead the church (1 Pet. 5:2).
- II. It is sometimes the case that a local church does not have men qualified to be elders.
 - A. According to 1 Tim. 2:12, women are not to have authority over a man.
 - B. For that reason, when there are no elders, the responsibility of leadership in the church is placed on the shoulders of the men.
- III. An expediency often used by congregations with no elders is for the men to conduct the business of the church in business meetings.

Introduction

This booklet examines the Scriptural authority for the work and teachings taking place the New Testament church. Each question is accompanied with Scriptural answers to help the student know the reasons for why we do what we do as the Lord's church.

Syllabus

Why do we...

1. Seek to establish Bible authority?	1
2. Emphasize Bible teaching?	2
3. Maintain church autonomy?	3
4. Baptize for salvation?	4
5. Immerse for baptism?	5
6. Call ourselves the church of Christ?	6
7. Assemble every Sunday?	7
8. Eat the Lord's Supper?	8
9. Eat the Lord's Supper every Sunday?	8
10. Sing during our worship?	9
11. Pray during our worship?	9
12. Have preaching during our worship?	10
13. Give of our money every Sunday?	11
14. Have an invitation after each sermon?	11
15. Have Bible classes?	12
16. Evangelize our neighbors?	12
17. Rebuke sin?	13
18. Withdraw from wayward members?	14
19. Help the poor saints?	14
20. Financially support preachers?	15
21. Have business meetings?	15
22. Establish elders?	16
23. Appoint deacons?	16

Why Do we...
Seek to establish Bible authority?

- I. **Paul commanded, “*And whatever you do in work or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him*” (Col. 3:17).**
 - A. “In the name of” means by His authority.
 - B. In order for something to be in Jesus’ name, it must meet with His approval.
- II. **“*By what authority...From heaven or men?*” (Matt. 21:24).**
 - A. In His discussion with the chief priests and elders of the Jews, Jesus pointed out that there are only two sources of authority: Heaven and men.
 - B. He showed the importance of having the authority from heaven (God) for what we do.
 - C. Anything we do that God has not given us authority for is from men.
- III. **“*And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrine the commandments of men*” (Matt. 15:3-9).**
 - A. When we choose to do things that are from men and not from God, we serve God in vain—our service or worship is useless.
 - B. We may draw near to God with our lips (give Him praise), but by our actions (because we do not seek His authority) our hearts are far from Him.
- IV. **“*Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God*” (2 John 9).**
 - A. The “*doctrine of Christ*” is the teaching that He delivers to us through the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
 - B. Christ’s doctrine expresses His will for us.
 - C. If we want to have God in what we do, we must abide within the limitations of Christ’s doctrine; limit ourselves to His specific commands, avoiding those things that He has not commanded.
 - D. When we do things that He has not commanded, we are adding to His word, and therefore transgress His doctrine (Deut. 4:2).
 - E. Therefore, if we want to be pleasing to God, before we do anything we must make sure that God has authorized it in the Scriptures.

Why Do we...
Withdraw from wayward members?

- I. **Jesus purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28).**
- II. **Because members of the church die to sin, they are to no longer live in it (Rom. 6:2).**
 - A. Because Christians are forgiven, they are able to have fellowship with God (1 John 1:3, 7).
 - B. But if Christians choose not to put away their sins, they no longer have fellowship with God (1 John 1:6).
 - C. If they choose not to repent of their sins, Christ’s sacrifice no longer provides a means forgiveness for them (Heb. 10:26ff).
- III. **If sin is allowed to continue in the church, then one person’s sin will put all the members’ relationship with God in danger.**
- IV. **God commands that the church withdraw from wayward members to remove the sin from the congregation.**
 - A. 1 Cor. 5:1-7
 - B. 2 Thess. 3:6
 - C. Titus 3:10

Why Do we...
Help the poor saints?

- I. **God’s people are characterized by their love for one another (John 15:12; 1 Pet. 1:22).**
- II. **To show that love, they care for each other’s physical needs, and that there be equality among the saints (2 Cor. 8:13).**
- III. **To show such generosity toward one another is a joyful thing among those who have been given life through the generosity of Christ (2 Cor. 9:6-8).**

Why Do we...
Rebuke sin?

- I. Sin is the reason Jesus died on the cross; it is the reason He is going to judge the world.**
- A. 2 Cor. 10:6: "...ready to punish all disobedience."
 - B. Col. 3:6: "Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience."
 - C. "1 John 3:8: "For this reason the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."
- II. Before a person obeys the gospel, they must have repented of their sins (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3).**
- A. Repentance is a change in heart.
 - B. True repentance will result in a complete change. (Rom. 6:2)
 - C. When Christians continue to sin, they enter again into that which they repented of (Heb. 6:4-6).
- III. The church must be made up of people who are committed to fleeing from sin.**
- A. For sin to continue in the church is to poison the whole congregation (1 Cor. 5:4-7).
 - B. For a Christian to enter back into sin is to turn against God (James 4:4; 1 John 1:6).
- IV. We rebuke sin so that those who obey the gospel will not be lost when Christ judges the world.**
- A. Jude described them as being in the fire, and those who see that person in sin must pull them out of the fire (Jude 23).
 - B. Rebuke is offering out of love (Gal. 6:1; Eph. 4:15).
 - C. True godly rebuke is not a matter of opinion, but simply reminding a person that they are living contrary to the will of God. (Acts 8:18-23).
 - D. When one Christian rebukes another, he is simply repeating what God has already said in the Bible (2 Tim. 3:16; 4:2).

Why Do we...
Emphasize Bible teaching?

- I. In the Scriptures, God has given us "...all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us..." (2 Pet. 1:3).**
- A. The Bible contains "the knowledge of Him who called us", who is Christ.
 - B. Therefore, the teachings in the Bible provide all we need for life and godliness.
- II. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).**
- A. The Scriptures are from God.
 - B. They provide all the teaching we need to be complete as God's people.
 - C. Through the Scriptures we are able to learn about every good work that God wants His people to do.
- III. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hos. 4:6).**
- A. When we fail to learn from God's word, we fail to learn what He wants us to do.
 - B. When we have a lack of knowledge of God's word we are not able to remove our sins because of ignorance.
 - C. Many people take pleasure in sinful things thinking that they are right with God because they do not know what the Bible says.
 - D. If we want to truly know our God, if we want life (John 8:32), if we want the wisdom of God and the salvation that He offers, we must emphasize Bible teaching, for only there can we find the words of eternal life.
 - 1. "But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68)
 - 2. "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18)

Why Do we...
Maintain Church Autonomy?

- I. Church Autonomy is the principle of an individual congregation being self-functioning, independent of all others.**
 - A. Autonomy is opposite of denomination:
 - 1. Denomination is one government which is divided or denominated into smaller groups or congregations.
 - 2. Autonomy is self-governing, with no central earthly government. One congregation is not governed by another or by a central organization.
 - B. “Autonomy” is not a word that is used in the Bible, but it expresses the pattern that is revealed in the Bible.

- II. “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers” (1 Pet. 5:2).**
 - A. Christ is the head of the church (Col. 1:18). He is the highest authority to which we appeal.
 - B. On earth, Christ has given authority to the elders to “rule over” the church (1 Tim. 5:17). In fulfilling that role they are to...
 - 1. Be able to teach (1 Tim. 3:2).
 - 2. Equip the saints through teaching (Eph. 4:11-12).
 - 3. Convict those who contradict God’s word (Tit. 1:9).
 - 4. Be leaders and shepherds to God’s people on earth.
 - C. Aside from the apostles and prophets in the New Testament, the elders have the highest authority in the church on earth.
 - D. However, God limits the authority of elders to “*the flock of God which is among you,*” thus; their authority is limited to the local church of which they are members.
 - E. Elders do not have the authority to shepherd more than one congregation at a time. Therefore, there is no earthly government that has authority to connect several congregations to a greater extent than their common faith in Christ.

- III. Based on this Scriptural pattern, churches must remain autonomous.**
 - A. Local congregations were organized in the New Testament, not groups of congregations.
 - B. Therefore, one congregation or congregational leadership has no authority to dictate or determine the work of another.
 - C. In matters of authority and government, congregations are independently responsible for their own actions.

Why Do we...
Have bible classes?

- I. Edification is the Work of the Church.**
 - A. Eph. 4:11-12: Leaders in the church are for edification
 - B. To edify means to build up.

- II. Edification is done through preaching and teaching (Eph. 4:29).**
- III. It is done through encouraging and “provoking one another unto good works” (Heb. 10:24).**
- IV. To accomplish these things, God’s people often come together to study the Bible.**
 - A. To examine the Scriptures: Acts 17:11
 - B. To teach one another the way of God more accurately: Acts 18:26
 - C. To teach others who are interested in the truth: Acts 19:9

Why Do we...
Evangelize our neighbors?

- I. “Evangelism” means to “proclaim good tidings.”**
 - A. The word “Gospel” means “good news.”
 - B. Therefore, evangelism is the proclamation of the gospel—the good news of salvation.

- II. In the Great Commission, Jesus commanded His disciples to proclaim the gospel to all the world.**
 - A. Mark 16:15: “*Go into all the world and preach the gospel...*”
 - B. Matt. 28:19: “Disciples all nations, baptizing them...”

- III. It is the responsibility of all Christians to fulfill this goal.**
 - A. Just as we have received the good news, so we must give it to others.
 - B. Evangelists and preachers take the gospel into an area, but only those who first receive have the ability to fill the area with the truth: 1 Thess. 1:8.

Why Do we...

Give of our money every Sunday?

- I. God's Kingdom is Spiritual, but the church lives in a physical world.**
 - A. Because this is a physical world, there are physical needs that must be met in order for the church to fulfill her mission.
 - B. Eph. 4:12: That mission includes:
 - 1. Equipping the saints: This means the saints must come together, which requires physical space.
 - 2. Ministering: whether one ministers to physical or spiritual needs, certain resources are needed.
 - 3. Edifying the body: The work of edification also requires the use of physical resources.
 - C. How is the church to fill the physical needs of her mission?
 - D. Just as the work of the church requires the pooling of individual energy, it also requires the pooling of resources—like a body.
- II. 1 Cor. 16:1-2: We are commanded to lay by in store every first day of the week.**
 - A. This is the only means by which God has given for the church to support its work.
 - B. Though the world uses wealth to satisfy lusts and desires, throughout history, God's people what god has blessed them with to serve Him.
- III. Our Giving is a Show of Gratitude for what God Has Given Us**
 - A. Such giving is not force as with tithing (2 Cor. 8:8).
 - B. Those who "lay by in store" to so only after they first devote their hearts to the Lord (2 Cor. 8:5).
 - C. After they have devoted themselves to Him, to give back a portion of what He was blessed them with is a great joy (2 Cor. 9:6-7).

Why Do we...

Have an invitation after each sermon?

- I. This is a Human Tradition Based on Biblical Principles**
 - A. Matt. 11:28-30: Jesus invited all to come to Him
 - B. We extend that same invitation at every opportunity.
- II. The Invitation is a Means to show people how to respond should they desire to act on their faith in Christ.**

Why Do we...

Baptize for Salvation?

- I. Baptism was commanded by Jesus as being necessary for salvation.**
 - A. Mark 16:15-16: it is the necessary response of one who hears and believes the gospel.
 - B. Matt. 28:18-20: It is the only method Jesus gave by which men are made His disciples.
- II. Baptism was commanded and practiced by the apostles per Jesus' command (Matt. 28:19).**
 - A. Acts 2:38: By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Peter commanded the Jews to be baptized "*for the forgiveness of (their) sins.*"
 - B. Acts 8:12: Those who believed Philip's preaching were baptized in accordance with Mark 16:16.
 - C. Acts 8:35-39: The eunuch was baptized after Philip preached Jesus to him.
 - D. Acts 9:18; Acts 22:16: At Paul's conversion he was commanded to be baptized.
 - 1. Even though Paul had seen Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3ff), he still needed to be baptized.
 - 2. In Acts 22:16 Paul states that Ananias told him that in baptism his sins would be washed away.
 - E. Acts 10:44-48: Even after Cornelius' household had received the Holy Spirit, they still needed to be baptized.
 - 1. Peter commanded them to be baptized.
 - 2. In Acts 11:17, when Peter was describing the event, he concluded that by refusing baptism he would have been withstanding God.
 - F. Acts 16:15: Lydia and her household were baptized.
 - G. Acts 16:33-34: After the Philippian jailor was baptized, he rejoiced that he had believed in the gospel.
 - H. Acts 19:3-5: Even though the disciples of John had been baptized with John's baptism, Paul still commanded them to be baptized into Christ.
- III. Rom. 6:3-4: In baptized we are buried with Christ wherein we are raised to newness of life.**
- IV. Gal. 3:26-27: When we are baptized into Christ we are made sons of God through faith in Christ.**

Why Do we...
Immerse for baptism?

I. The word for Baptism means immersion.

- A. “Baptize” comes from the Greek word “*baptizo*”:
 - 1. Vine defines *baptizo* as “to dip”
 - 2. Strong defines it as “to immerse, to submerge, to make overwhelmed (i.e. fully wet).”
- B. Though these definitions are accurate, our faith concerning baptism must come from the Bible.

II. The Bible defines baptism as Immersion.

- A. Acts 8:38-39: The Ethiopian eunuch.
 - 1. When Philip baptized the eunuch, they both had to “*go down into the water.*”
 - 2. After Philip had baptized the eunuch, they both had to come up out of the water.
 - 3. Their actions describe an immersion. Sprinkling and pouring do not require one to “go down into” and “come up out of.”
- B. Rom. 6:3-4: Buried with Christ in Baptism.
 - 1. We are baptized into Christ’s death.
 - 2. At His death Jesus was completely buried in the tomb.
 - 3. In Baptism, we are buried with Him.
 - 4. Burial requires complete covering.
 - 5. Baptism accurately represents a burial, because it completely covers a person with water.

III. There is Only One Gospel

- A. When Philip preached Jesus, the eunuch understood that he needed to be baptized (Acts 8:35-36); therefore, baptism is part of the gospel (Mark 16:15-16).
- B. The Scriptures teach only one gospel (Gal. 1:6-9).
- C. If we do or teach anything that is not in that gospel, we do not have God (2 John 9).
- D. Paul said in Eph. 4:5 that there is only one baptism.
- E. Immersion in water was the means of that one baptism, and since there is only one gospel, we have no choice but to immerse for baptism if we want to have salvation through Jesus Christ.

Why Do we...
Have preaching during our worship?

I. Edification is part of the mission Jesus gave for His church.

- A. Matt. 28:20, “teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you...”
- B. Eph. 4:12: “for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ...”
- C. 1 Cor. 14:26: “Let all things be done for edification.”

II. Edification means “to build up.”

- A. The church is “built up” through the teaching and preaching of God’s word.
- B. God places great importance on every Christian’s need to be built up from His inspired word.
 - 1. 2 Pet. 3:18.
 - 2. 2 Tim. 3:16-17: Through God’s inspired word we are able to be made perfect, equipped for every good work.

III. In the New Testament, this edification was accomplished through preaching and teaching.

- A. Acts 20:7: “Paul...spoke to them and continues his message until midnight.”
- B. “Preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2).
- C. Col 1:28: “Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”
- D. To fulfill this need, we have preaching and/or teaching whenever the saints assemble for worship.

Why Do we...
Sing during our worship?

- I. Singing is commanded in Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16.**
 - A. Individuals can sing by themselves (James 5:13).
 - B. But Christians are also commanded to “*speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs...*”
 - C. In order to fulfill this command we must sing when we come together.
- II. After Jesus’ Death, His disciples sang together (Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26).**
- III. Throughout the Scriptures Singing is Represented As One of the Greatest Means of Expressing Joy and Praise.**
 - A. Ps. 33:3
 - B. Ps. 40:3
 - C. Ps. 100
 - D. Ps. 98:1
 - E. James 5:13

Why Do we...
Pray during our worship?

- I. Pray Is One of the Most Important Parts of Christian Life.**
 - A. Through prayer we are able to put into words our thoughts of joy, praise, and thanksgiving to the Lord (Col. 4:2).
 - B. Heb. 13:15 describes such praise part of our sacrifices to the Lord.
 - C. Individually, Christians should “*pray without ceasing*” (1 Thess. 5:17).
- II. Because of their Importance, Prayers Were Offered Whenever the Congregation Came Together.**
 - A. Acts 1:24
 - B. Acts 4:31
 - C. Acts 12:12
 - D. Acts 14:23
 - E. Acts 20:36
 - F. Acts 21:5

Why Do we...
Call ourselves the church of Christ?

- I. Many Descriptions are Given to the Church in the New Testament**
 - A. The church (Acts 2:47; Acts 5:11)
 - B. The church of God (Acts 20:28)
 - C. The church of Christ (Rom. 16:16)
 - D. The Way (Acts 9:2)
 - E. The house of God, the church of the living God (1 Tim. 3:15)
 - F. The household of faith (Gal. 6:10)
 - G. The body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27; Col. 1:18).
- II. No Official Name Was Ever Given**
 - A. The above names for the church are merely descriptions which illustrate its nature and relationship to God.
 - B. God never did give a definite name, except that it was most often called the church.
 - C. In the New Testament, there was only one church, so there was not need for an official name.
- III. “Church of Christ” is a description, not a name.**
 - A. Today, there are literally thousands of denominations.
 - B. Their names often express the emphasis of their faith or doctrine.
 - C. Those who are members of the church of Christ call themselves such, not because they seek a name for themselves, but because it is a biblical term that describes our relationship to our Savior.
- IV. We are the church that is of Christ—that belongs to Christ.**

Why Do we...
Assemble Every Sunday?

- I. We Must Worship God in Spirit and In Truth (John 4:24)**
 - A. To worship God in Truth means to do it according to His instructions.
 - B. In the Bible, Christians assembled on the first day of the week to worship God.

- II. The Lord's Supper and the Collection were only observed on the first day of the week.**
 - A. 1 Cor. 16:2: "*On the first day of the week let each of you lay something aside.*"
 - B. Acts 20:7: "*Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread.*"
 - C. No other days were given for these acts of worship to be conducted.
 - D. God did not specify any specific first day throughout the year; therefore we must necessarily conclude that we are to do it every first day of the week.

- III. Other Acts of Worship were Observed As Well**
 - A. In Acts 20:7, Paul preached and taught the disciples.
 - B. In 1 Cor. 24 teaching took place whenever the church was assembled (1 Cor. 14:26).
 - C. Acts 4:31, they prayed when they were together.
 - D. Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19, we are commanded to sing to one another.

- IV. Though Certain Acts of Worship Must Take Place on the First Day, N.T. Christians worked together on other days as well.**
 - A. Acts 5:42: Teaching was done on a daily basis.
 - B. Acts 17:11: Study was done on a daily basis.
 - C. Heb. 3:13: They were to exhort one another daily.

- V. Assembly of the Church was Important; We are Commanded Not to Forsake It (Heb. 10:24-25).**

Why Do we...
Eat the Lord's Supper?

- I. The Lord's Supper Is A Memorial**
 - A. When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, He commanded, "*Do this in remembrance of Me*" (Luke 22:19).
 - B. Paul restated that Commanded in 1 Cor. 11:24-25.
 - C. Therefore, we eat the Lord's Supper as a memorial, to help keep Christ's life, His death, and His resurrection fresh in our minds.

- II. The Lord's Supper Is Not A Sacrament.**
 - A. It is commonly thought that eating the Lord's Supper will give a person a blessing or give them forgiveness.
 - B. This idea is nowhere taught in the Scriptures.
 - C. The Lord's Supper is only described as a memorial for those who have already been forgiven of their sins.
 - D. To make it anything more than that is to add to the Scriptures.

Why Do we...
Eat the Lord's Supper every Sunday?

- I. In Acts 20:7 the church "came together on the first day of the week to break bread."**

- II. In 1 Cor. 16:1-2 the church did other things on the first day of the week as well (see, Why do we assemble every week?).**

- III. Since God did not specify which first day(s) we are to observe the Lord's Supper throughout the year, we must conclude that He expects us to do it every first day of the week.**