1 Timothy Lesson 6 Articles

The NT cannot be used to establish a divine church polity. It records all three developed forms: (1) episcopalian; (2) presbyterian; and (3) congregational (as Acts 15 demonstrates, James, elders, and congregations all express their views).

The PLURAL here and in Acts 20:17 and Titus 1:5 could possibly point toward house churches. The early church did not have separate buildings until the third century. No one home was large enough to accommodate all the believers; therefore, different Christian homes around the larger cities opened their doors for the regular meetings of the Christian community. This approach also protected the church from being arrested all at once.

Exactly how the leadership of a city with several house churches was organized is unclear. As the church grew, organization was needed. The form of that organization is not as crucial as the godliness of the leaders.[1]

5:23 "No longer drink water *exclusively*" Timothy was totally abstaining from wine. Paul mentions that wine taken in small amounts for medicinal purposes should not be a problem for a church leader. We must remember that the early Mediterranean world drank wine often. This could mean (1) add a little fermented wine to purify your water or (2) drink a little wine from time to time when your stomach acts up. Wine is not the problem; fallen mankind's misuse and abuse are the problems. The Bible rails against drunkenness (cf. Prov. 23:29–35; Isa. 5:11, 22; 28:1–8), but does not teach total abstinence (cf. 3:3, 8). In our day and society total abstinence must be related to the spiritual concepts found in Rom. 14:1–15:13; 1 Cor. 8 and 10:23–33). See Special Topic at 3:3.[2]

5:17-25 Apparently, Timothy was having trouble with some of his officers. Part of the problem may have stemmed from the fact that he had chosen and ordained some of them too quickly (v. 22). Another factor was that he had misjudged some of them (vv. 24–25) and made some hasty decisions. Pastors make mistakes, even if their hearts are right! But then, officers make mistakes too.

As Paul's personal representative in Ephesus, Timothy was to oversee the work of the various elders in the area. These men were paid by the church, since God's command is that those who teach the Word should live from the Word (1 Cor. 9:1–14). Elders who were faithful to do their work well should receive double pay (honor, referring to money, as in v. 3). Of course, double recognition would not be out of order, either! Paul supports this principle of Christians paying their ministers by quoting Deut. 25:4 and referring to what Christ said in Luke 10:7.

But what about church leaders who cause trouble? First of all, get the facts. If every church would practice 1 Tim. 5:19, we would have fewer church splits. Every accusation must be supported by at least two witnesses. The matter must be given honest appraisal, and there must not be any partiality shown (v. 21). How easy it is for us to judge other believers, or to draw conclusions from a few facts (or rumors)! Where the accusation is found to be true, and the witnesses and facts point to conviction, then the offending officer must be dealt with publicly. The suggestion here is that the offender confess his sins and ask the congregation for forgiveness. If an officer's sin is known by at least two people, you can be sure that others know it too; and public sins demand public confession and restitution.

Church officers and leaders are important, because they help the pastor to carry the load. But the pastor must always be the shepherd of the flock. The best thing a church officer can do is to make it possible for the pastor to exercise his spiritual gifts and ministries without hindrance or distraction. Then the church will prosper.[3]

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[1] [2] Utley, R. J. (2000). *Paul's Fourth Missionary Journey: I Timothy, Titus, II Timothy* (Vol. Volume 9, p. 71; 73). Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International.

[3] Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). *Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament* (pp. 633–634). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.