

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

They are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye mistakes can be found. So he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabile.org.

Date: July 12, 2009

Title: **The Purpose of the Local Church in Identifying, Equipping, Sending, and Supporting the next generation of church planters for the Mission of God - Part II.**

Text: Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 13:1-1-4; 18:3; Gal. 6:6-10; 2 Tim. 2:2.

Theme: God works in and through the context of the local church for the identifying, equipping, sending, and supporting of the next generation of Elders and Deacons for the purpose of strengthening existing churches and establishing new ones in the fulfillment of His mission.

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Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.

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Introduction:

This study has certain limitations. I will note two. First, I am not exploring the place of the home as it relates to all of this. Second, I am not exploring the place of the para-church ministry as it relates to all of this. **Our study is only on the role of the local church in the mission of God.** The church does not replace the home nor does the home replace the church. The home or family makes up the various parts of the larger family of families. Neither does the para-church replace the local church nor does the local church have the specialized gifting that the para-church brings to the global mission of God. Again, without being overly redundant, "**Our study is only on the role of the local church in the mission of God.**"

It is the desire of the Elders to identify and appoint those whose hearts and passions have been moved by God to love Christ and His church. The positions of Elder and Deacon are a serious and demanding responsibility for which those appointed shall be held answerable by God through the existing Elder team in the context of meaningful relationships.

According to the Word of God, the Holy Spirit working through established Elders appoint Elders to be ministers of the Word, Prayer, Shepherding and Oversight over the flock of God. Elders determine who are already, according to gifting, carrying out this three-fold function within the community of faith. Men that are already functioning as Elders are invited by the sitting Elders to start a process that can end in their public appointment as Elders of the fellowship.

As it relates to Deacons, they must already be serving the congregation and enabling the Elders to carry out their responsibilities over the flock before they are approached and appointed to occupy the office of Deacon.

The question that I desire to consider and answer is **why** do geographically defined assemblies with a biblical structure and mission carry this responsibility and **how** do we go about identifying, equipping, sending, and supporting our Elders and Deacons both locally, nationally, and globally.

THE BIG PICTURE:

- The Birth of the Church in the Story of God
- The Centrality of the Church in the Mission of God

- The Structure of the Church for the Mission of God
- The Purpose of the Church in identifying, equipping, sending, and supporting

The Storyline:

In the story of God, He has called together His people to assemble in geographically definable gatherings that seek and maintain a biblical structure of Elders and Deacons in order to carry out His mission of making and maturing disciples who will strengthen existing churches and establish new ones.

The Problem:

Our current American culture pulls apart community and celebrates the autonomy of the individual to the detriment of families and churches. The strength of any church is its families, and the strength of families is directly tied into communities of faith.

Questions:

1. What about those who are not reproducing after their kind? Is the instruction we provide for the congregation, as a whole, different than that provided for those who might be Elders and Deacons?
2. How will I know if you are gentle or pugnacious, content or greedy of sordid gain?
3. Consider the following thoughts as they relate to instruction. How might these ideas be sharpened as it relates to the congregation as a whole and to those who would be Elders and Deacons? How are we going to go about doing this?
 - First, it should encompass all generations and should be age appropriate (contextual and cultural)
 - Second, it should emphasis, explore, and expand on character, gifting, and doctrinal instruction (i.e., the family within families [i.e., finances, parenting, work, marriage], the family of families [i.e., my place within the community of faith], and ministry expression within the community, the nation, and the world [i.e., churches planting churches])
 - Third, it should therefore be progressive (“lecture and dialogue”)
 - Fourth, it should be intentional (identifiable)
 - Fifth, it should be historical (i.e., creedal and confessional)
 - Sixth, it should be inclusively evangelical (i.e., ecumenical)
 - Seventh, it should have as its outcome fully equipped Elders and Deacons and congregants who can strengthen their existing community of faith and establish new ones.
4. Do you believe that the local church has the responsibility to identify, equip, send, and support church planters?
5. How do you think this identifying process takes place?
6. How do you think this equipping process takes place?
7. What part do you have in either one? How might you engage in the process?
8. What are your thoughts as to how we might go about intentionally equipping all those who attend WBC?

9. What might this look like for our children and youth? How can we empower our families to enable and advance this mission?
10. Are you enabling us through your involvement and financial gifting to advance the mission of God in and through this community of faith?
11. Although you do not need to be a member to serve or give, we would encourage you to throw your proverbial hat into the ring called WBC through membership. Regardless as to whether you are or are not a member, we love you and thank God for you.

The Holy Spirit is calling to us from this passage to consider three ideas.

To Know: The Holy Spirit desires for us to know who we are and what we are to be doing as a local assembly.

To Choose: The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose to be a real and vital part of God's mission to the world through the church.

To Feel: The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel the joy of serving Him by serving in and through His church.

Outline:

- I. The local church identifies those on whom the call rests (2 Tim. 2:2).
 - A. The pattern generically (Matt. 28:18-20).

At the ascension of Jesus Christ, He clearly gave His global church the distinct pattern for world conquest. This pattern is further expanded on in the Book of Acts. The pattern is for us to make and mature disciples for the strengthening of existing churches and the establishing of new ones. These definable kingdom outposts are geographically defined with a biblical structure and mission. Let us not forget and let us be reminded that what God spoke in Matthew 28 is being fulfilled in the Book of Acts. We are living in the promise fulfilled. This global conquest continues to this day. It will not be over until God says it is over.

- B. The pattern specifically (2 Tim. 2:2)

In 2 Timothy the Apostle Paul gives this charge to His disciple Timothy.

¹ "You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ² The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. ³ Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2:1-3).

Timothy was charged with the responsibility of identifying those men and women who would occupy the offices of Elders and Deacons both locally, nationally, and globally.

1. The idea of community ("in the presence of many witnesses")

This is not something we do in isolation, but something we do in community. We are all involved in the process patterned for us. Either directly or indirectly, we must realize this is our purpose.

Last week I flew down to Virginia Beach, Virginia for the ordination of an individual who I had as a student and whose church is identified as having been set apart for church planting. I believe I came by invitation of the local church. I came as an Elder of this church to affirm and confirm a local church's responsibility in identifying and equipping this young man for church planting. This is what we do. If and when we identify and equip people for church planting, I will ask that other Elders from other churches come to affirm and confirm our choice.

2. The idea of commit ("entrust")

This speaks to depositing or transferring of what we possess into the hands of the next generation. There must be an intentional approach to transferring the faith subjectively and the faith objectively into the hearts and hands of the next generation.

3. The idea of capable ("who will be able to teach others also. Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier")

"This is the way to pass on the torch of the light of the knowledge of God in Christ. Paul taught Timothy who will teach others who will teach still others, an endless chain of teacher-training and gospel propaganda." (A.T. Robertson's *Word Pictures* on 2 Timothy 2:2).

a. The power to reproduce ("able to teach others")

What about those who are not reproducing after their kind? I believe we teach everyone, but there are those who need to be the objects of our most ardent attention in the promotion and propagation of this process.

b. The power to persevere ("suffer hardship with me")

Throughout our study, we have seen the idea of Elders and Deacons first being tested. Testing proves endurance.

"These men must also **first be tested**" (1 Tim. 3:10).

We must be able to endure the blows before we occupy the office.

C. The pattern pictured of what this looks like (Acts 6:6; 13:3; 14:23; 1 Tim. 4:14; 5:22; 2 Tim. 1:6).

Please notice with me the progression and development of this thought.

“And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, **they laid their hands on them**” (Acts 6:6).

“Then, **when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them**, they sent them away” (Acts 13:3).

“When **they had appointed Elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting**, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed” (Acts 14:23).

“Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with **the laying on of hands by the presbytery**” (1 Tim. 4:14).

“Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin” (1 Tim. 5:22).

“For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through **the laying on of my hands**” (2 Tim. 1:6).

Paul appointed Elders in every church. This pattern indicates that the appointment of Elders is normative. It was for this reason, Titus was left in Crete.

“For this reason I left you in Crete, that **you would set in order what remains and appoint Elders in every city as I directed you**” (Titus 1:5).

I do not believe in Elder succession, but I do believe Elders appoint other Elders. Paul and Titus’ appointment of Elders was the means used by the Holy Spirit to identify and set these men apart. It is for this reason, as Elders we believe the call to be an Elder and Deacon is not only subjective (1 Tim. 3:1), but strongly objective. For a person to identify themselves as an Elder or a Deacon who has not been commissioned by Elders of a local church would be presumptuous and potentially dangerous.

II. The local church equips those identified (2 Tim. 2:2; Eph. 4:11-16).

Second Timothy 2 and Ephesians 4 both speak to some idea of equipping through instruction. It does not tell us how this is to be done, but it does tell us that it is to be done. I can only offer you my thoughts. I am speaking to the idea of Elders and Deacons, but I do not believe this instruction is any less true for the non-elder or Deacon.

Let us remember that there are two prominent aspects to the office. First, is the aspect of character and secondly, that of gifting. I do not believe either area can be taught, but both can be nurtured and encouraged.

A. The aspect of character

If you are a believer, then you already possess all of the character traits described in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. All of these qualities are no more or less than the fruit of the Spirit. Because of the abiding Holy Spirit all of these qualities lie latent in all believers. But not all believers show every one of these qualities at the same time. The only way for anyone to know if these qualities are manifested is in the context of relationships. How will I know if you are gentle or pugnacious, content or greedy of sordid gain? I will know this in relationship. Part of the equipping process as it relates to character is placing oneself in the context of relationships. You must involve yourself in the opportunities made available as a part of this community of faith.

B. The aspect of gifting

Every believer has a gift and every believer needs to exercise their gift in the context of a local church. It can be more than this, but it is at least this.

“As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Pet. 4:10).

⁴ “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. ⁶ There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. ⁷ **But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good**” (1 Cor. 12:4-7).

All of us have a gift from God that is to be exercised for the common good, but not all of us share the same gift. Those who have the gifting to be an Elder should be identified and pursued. Those who have the gifting to be a Deacon should likewise be identified and pursued. Whether or not we have the gifting to be an Elder or a Deacon does not make us any less or more important inside the community of faith. Each part or member is crucial to the overall function of the body. Paul’s thoughts on this are clear in 1 Corinthians 12.

¹⁴ “For the body is not one member, but many. ¹⁵ If the foot says, “Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body,” it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body” (1 Cor. 12:14, 15).

Before leaving these two areas, let me say that although character and gifting cannot be taught, they are still definable and identifiable ideas. You might be blind to your shortcomings and inabilities, but those around you are not. That is why character and gifting are manifested in community and in the context of relationships. Although these two ideas are somewhat subjective, the aspect of instruction is strongly objective.

C. The aspect of instruction

Acts 2:42 speaks of the “apostles’ doctrine.”

“They were continually **devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching** and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42).

This makes it clear that there is a definable and identifiable body of truth that came from Jesus to and through the apostles. Second Timothy 2:2 implies that there is a body of doctrine that is to be passed on from generation to generation.

As much as character and gifting are somewhat subjective, the “doctrine” is strongly objective. In 1 Corinthians 11:2 Paul speaks of something that is both identifiable and transferable.

“Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and **hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you**” (1 Cor. 11:2).

This same idea is brought out in 2 Thessalonians 2:15.

“So then, brethren, **stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us**” (2 Thess. 2:15).

As it relates to Elders and Deacons both groups need to have a firm grasp of the Bible, of the apostles’ doctrine.

“But **holding to the mystery of the faith** with a clear conscience [DEACONS]” (1 Tim. 3:9).

“**holding fast the faithful word** which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict [ELDERS]” (Titus 1:9).

It is this transfer and instruction that enable the congregant to stand fast and stay the course in doctrinal purity (Eph. 4:14).

“As a result, we are no longer to be children, **tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine**, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming” (Eph. 4:14).

How are we going to go about doing this? Let me suggest for you some basic ideas.

- First, it should encompass all generations and should be age appropriate (contextual and cultural)
- Second, it should emphasis, explore, and expand on character, gifting, and doctrinal instruction (i.e., the family within families [i.e., finances, parenting, work, marriage], the family of families [i.e., my place within the community of faith], and ministry expression within the community, the nation, and the world [i.e., churches planting churches])
- Third, it should therefore be progressive (“lecture and dialogue”)

- Fourth, it should be intentional (identifiable)
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- Seventh, it should have as its outcome fully equipped Elders and Deacons and congregants who can strengthen their existing community of faith and establish new ones.

I have realized this from the start, but the providence of God has not yet enabled or allowed us to fully pursue this idea. I believe we are moving closer to the realization of this idea.

III. The local church sends those equipped (Acts 13:1-4).

¹ “Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ² While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, **the Holy Spirit said**, ‘Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ ³ Then, **when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away**. ⁴ So, **being sent out by the Holy Spirit**, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus” (Acts 13:1-4).

What we see in Acts 13 has already been noted in Acts 6:6; 14:23; 1 Timothy 4:14; 5:22; 2 Timothy 1:6 and Titus 1:5. It is also the genius of 2 Timothy 2:2.

Again, I believe we have a responsibility in all of this. It does not mean we cannot do it in community with other local churches or work with and through Christian agencies, but it does mean that we have a primary responsibility to identify, equip, and send those whom God raises up in our midst.

There are certain things we cannot do that other Christian ministries can do, but this does not mean we do not have the responsibility to do what we can do. There is something the local church context brings to the identifying and equipping process that cannot be duplicated by ministries that function outside the local church context. Just like there are certain things that happen in the context of your family that cannot be reproduced anywhere else.

The authority to send out church planters comes to and through the local church. There is nothing mystical or surprising about this. This is simply what it is. That fact that we would struggle with the idea shows just how far we have been removed from the biblical idea.

IV. The local church supports those who are sent (Gal. 6:6-10).

This support implies three primary ideas.

- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Financial
 - Mutual Accountability
 - Mutual Responsibility

All of this is in the context of **community** and the shepherd/sheep **relationship**. My intent here is only on the financial aspect of their support. The final thought is that we must financially support those who we send or are sent.

I personally believe this is the idea in Galatians 6:6-10.

⁶ “The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him. ⁷ Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. ⁸ For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. ⁹ Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. ¹⁰ So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith” (Gal. 6:6-10).

When the church gathered they gave to a common budget and from the budget the support of others took place (1 Cor. 16:1-3).

¹ “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. ² On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come. ³ When I arrive, whomever you may approve, I will send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem” (1 Cor. 16:1-3).

In Galatians, the false teachers were siphoning off monies that should have been going to those whom the church supported to teach. The false teachers brought a message of death and damnation. When we support biblical teachers we are investing in a message of life and light.

I do not believe we need to give exclusively or only to and through the local church, but I do believe our primary gifting should come to and through the local church. For various reasons, many of you financial support other Christian ministries and individuals within those ministries. We believe this is between you and God and it is not our desire to tamper with that relationship. Our emphasis however is on this local church and what God wants us to do. It is only as you give regularly, proportionate to God’s financial blessings and primarily to the local church that we are enabled to send and support more church planters.

In addition to this, I believe where and when possible those who plant churches should initially be involved in tent making until such a time that the local church can support

them fully. I personally believe that local church ministry should be lay led by non-vocational servants until such a time that the ministry demands more than any one person can give it. There comes a breaking point for ministry whereby those who are fully engaged can no longer do it without the monetary support of those to whom they minister. Paul, as an example of this is not normative. I believe Paul's ability to tent make exclusively was primarily due to his single status. Elsewhere Paul says that those who are married must care for the things of this world in order that they might please their spouse (1 Cor. 7:33). This is not evil, it is simply necessary.

³³ "but **one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife,** ³⁴ **and his interests are divided**" (1 Cor. 7:33, 34).

So where does all this leave us?

Shepherding the Sheep (What's the NEXT STEP?)

1. Do you believe that the local church has the responsibility to identify, equip, send, and support church planters?
2. How do you think this identifying process takes place?
3. How do you think this equipping process takes place?
4. What part do you have in either one? How might you engage in the process?
5. What are your thoughts as to how we might go about intentionally equipping all those who attend WBC?
6. What might this look like for our children and youth? How can we empower our families to enable and advance this mission?
7. Are you enabling us through your involvement and financial gifting to advance the mission of God in and through this community of faith?
8. Although you do not need to be a member to serve or give, we would encourage you to throw your proverbial hat into the ring called WBC through membership. Regardless as to whether you are or are not a member, we love you and thank God for you.