

The Covenantal Life: Being the Church
Week 7 - The Office of Church Membership
Colossians 3:9-17, 1 Peter 2:9-10

- Every church member is an office holder, even if not one of the ordained offices
 - All Christians stand before God individually through Christ, and are all prophets, priests and kings under Christ
- Every believer is a prophet - Num. 11:26-29, Joel 2:28-29, Acts 2:14-16
 - Because everyone in the New Covenant is filled with the Spirit, knows the incarnate Word, and has access to the written word, all can proclaim that word with authority
 - When the word of God is accurately proclaimed it has authority, no matter who is proclaiming it
 - Does not mean all are or should be teachers, but all are equipped to proclaim the gospel to one degree or another
- Every believer is a priest - 1 Pet. 2:9, Matt. 27:51
 - All Christians are set apart as holy for service
 - All make intercession (1 Tim. 2:1-2)
 - All are sanctified and all are to make whatever they do in this world holy (1 Tim. 4:4-5)
- Every believer is a king - 2 Cor. 2:14-17, 5:20-21
 - All are called to exercise righteous self-discipline and to hold others accountable to God's righteous standard (Col. 3:16)
 - All are to justly apply God's law in whatever sphere they have authority
- We are renewed in knowledge (prophet), holiness (priest), and righteousness (king)
 - Adam failed in these offices; Christ fulfilled them, and we are restored to them under Him
- We exercise these offices within the covenant body of the local church, and our covenantal union is the foundation for us exercising these responsibilities
 - We are one body (1 Cor. 12:27), members of one another (Rom. 12:4-5), and so **required** to serve one another
- Eph. 4:11-16 - leaders are given to the local church to equip the members for ministry
 - Nobody in the church may be idle; responsibilities are not limited to elders and deacons
 - When members faithfully serve, unity is strengthened, maturity is developed, and the body is built up
 - Ministry among the members of the church is not optional
- As prophets, members "teach and admonish; instruct" (Col. 3:16, Rom. 15:14)
 - Must be students of the word, aspire to be a person who someone would feel comfortable coming to with doctrinal questions

- Responsibility to gently correct other members who are off in their doctrinal understanding
- Encourage one another in the promises of God and the gospel
- Evangelize outsiders with authority, proclaiming the message of repentance and salvation
- As priests, members must “pray without ceasing; continue steadfastly in prayer; for all the saints” (1 Thess. 5:17, Col. 4:2, Eph. 6:18)
 - We imitate Jesus’s intercession demonstrated in His high priestly prayer (John 17)
 - Prayer for each other should not be an extreme measure but a routine habit
 - Gal. 6:1-10, 1 Tim. 6:18 - priests also are obligated to minister to the physical needs of others
- As kings, members most promote and protect righteousness by confronting sin
 - Members do not exercise formal discipline, but are called to “admonish” - confront sin when we see it and cannot ignore it
 - When we become aware of sin that needs to be confronted, we must do this personally, privately, and gently
 - Complaining to others about the sins of fellow members or going straight to the elders is a neglect of our covenantal obligations
 - All members are to “maintain the unity of the Spirit” (Eph. 4:3) - this is done by biblically dealing with sin
 - We must protect the body from pervasive sin and the sinner from his own rebellion
- All these are to be carried out in keeping with our spiritual gifts
 - Not everyone can do everything, and God equipped the body with different members to perform different functions (Rom. 12:6-8)
 - We must give thanks to God for our gifts and those of others (1 Cor. 12:4-6)
 - We may not covet, envy, or begrudge the gifts of others (1 Cor. 12:14-26)
 - We may not seek our own glory or advancement in the use of our gifts - we are obligated to spend what we have been given for the sake of the body and the advance of the kingdom