

# THE SPECIAL OFFICES IN THE CHURCH

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**ELDERS and DEACONS**

# **TOPICS:**

- **#1 – Desiring to be an Office-bearer**
- **#2 – Preparing to be an Office-bearer**
- **#3 – What the Special Offices are**
- **#4 – The Elder and his Work**
- **#5 – The Deacon and his Work**
- **#6 – How Office-bearers are Chosen**
- **#7 – Our Calling toward Office-bearers**

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## **#3: WHAT THE SPECIAL OFFICES ARE**

# (1) THE PRINCIPLE: CHRIST'S HEADSHIP IN THE CHURCH

*All ecclesiastical offices find their origin in Christ, the Church's only Head and Supreme Ruler. No officebearer in the Church has any authority in himself. All the authority which ecclesiastical officebearers possess is delegated authority, authority given to them by Christ and to be exercised by them for Christ.*

- **Christ is the Head of the church, and in the church.**
  - He is the chief officebearer. Really He is the only officebearer.
  - He has absolute authority. He rules, governs, decides, etc.
- **Two implications:**
  - No one else may claim to be or act as head of any church.
  - No member may subject himself to anyone except to Christ.

# THE CREEDS CONCERNING CHRIST'S HEADSHIP

- Lord's Day 12 of the Heidelberg Catechism
  - Christ is *“ordained of God the Father, and anointed with the Holy Ghost, to be our chief Prophet and Teacher, Who has fully revealed to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption; and to be our only High Priest, Who by the one sacrifice of His body, has redeemed us, and makes continual intercession with the Father for us; and also to be our eternal King, Who governs us by His word and Spirit, and Who defends and preserves us in (the enjoyment of) that salvation, He has purchased for us.”*
- Belgic Confession:
  - Art. 29 – summarizes the marks of the true church by stating she is one in which *“Jesus Christ is acknowledged as the only Head of the church.”*
  - Art. 31 – all ministers are *“ministers of Christ, the only universal bishop, and the only Head of the church.”*

# THE BIBLE CONCERNING CHRIST'S HEADSHIP

- **Matthew 28:18** – *“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”*
- **I Corinthians 15:27a** – *“For he hath put all things under his feet.”*
- **Ephesians 1:20-23** – *“Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”*
- **Colossians 1:18** – *“And he is the head of the body, the church: ...; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”*

## **(2) OFFICEBEARERS ARE CHRIST'S REPRESENTATIVES IN HIS CHURCH**

- **Because Christ, the Head of the church, is in heaven, He chooses men to represent Him in His church on earth.**
  - **Pastors represent Christ as Prophet.**
  - **Elders represent Christ as King.**
  - **Deacons represent Christ as Priest.**
- **Each lawfully called OB receives his authority from Christ:**
  - **Christ CALLS – He appoints/chooses the men who will represent Him. [Romans 10:15, Acts 1:24, Acts 13:2, Hebrews 5:4]**
  - **Christ QUALIFIES – He equips men, giving them the ability to do His work. [Acts 6:6, Acts 13:3, I Timothy 4:14, II Timothy 1:6]**

### **(3) OFFICEBEARERS ARE CHRIST'S SERVANTS IN HIS CHURCH**

- **Christ gives work to OBs – a special/unique work for each:**
  - **Pastors: authority to TEACH (cf. Art. 16 of Church Order)**
    - **Art. 30 of Belgic Confession: *“to preach the Word of God and to administer the sacraments.”***
  - **Elders: authority to RULE (cf. Art. 23 of Church Order)**
    - **Art. 30 of BC: *“true religion preserved”* and *“transgressors punished and restrained by spiritual means.”***
  - **Deacons: authority to SHOW MERCY (cf. Art. 25 of CO)**
    - **Art. 30 of Belgic Confession: *“that the poor and distressed may be relieved and comforted, according to their necessities.”***
- **OBs must give an account to Christ of their work (Heb. 13:17).**
- **OBs are also servants to God's people (Rom. 15:16, I Pet. 5:3).**



# Q. 1 - WHY THE THREE OFFICES OF PASTOR, ELDER, AND DEACON?

- 1. Bible gives different qualifications for each of these three offices:**
  - I Timothy 3:1-13
  - Titus 1:5-9
  - Acts 6:3
- 2. Bible gives different instruction/commands to each of these offices:**
  - II Timothy 4:1-5, Titus 2:1, Romans 10:14, I Corinthians 9:16
  - Acts 20:28, I Timothy 3:5, I Peter 5:1-4
  - Acts 6:1-6, Acts 4:35
- 3. These are the 3 aspects to the office of Christ.**
  - All three aspects of Christ's office must be present in Christ's church.
  - Only then is Christ fully represented and fully present in His church.

## **Q. 2 – WHY SHOULD ONLY MEN SERVE AS OFFICEBEARERS?**

- **Many today allow women to serve in the special offices. But women may not do so. Christ calls men (not women) to represent Him.**
- **Why men only?**
  - **Women in office is contrary to the biblical principle of male headship.**
  - **God gave men headship over women when He created mankind:**
    - **Genesis 2:7 – Adam was created first.**
    - **Genesis 2:16-17 – Adam was given the commands re the trees in Eden.**
    - **Genesis 2:18 – Eve was created as a “help” for Adam.**
    - **Genesis 2:21-23 – Eve was created from (or “out of”) Adam.**
  - **Women may not be in a position of authority over men: not in society, not in the home, and not in the church.**

# Q. 3 - ARE THERE OTHER PROOFS THAT ONLY MEN MAY BE OB'S?

- **Biblical Examples:**

- Men served as the prophets, priests and kings in the OT church.
- Christ chose men to be His disciples and apostles in the NT church.

- **Biblical Proofs:**

- I Cor. 14:34-35 – *“Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; ... for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.”*
- I Tim. 2:12 [cf. I Tim. 3:15] – *“But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.”*
- Acts 6:3 – *“Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men ... whom we may appoint over this business.”*
- I Timothy 3, Titus 1 – The qualifications obviously apply only to men.

# WHAT ARE OFFICEBEARERS?

## OFFICEBEARERS ARE:

- 1) Representatives of Christ
- 2) Servants of Jesus Christ
- 3) Servants to God's People