



Welcome!

WEST VALLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST

October 3, 2021

The Role of Submission in a Men's Business Meeting

Over the last couple of weeks, we've established 1) that in the absence of elders, congregations ought to be led by the other appointed leaders in the church, namely, Christian men and 2) that Christian men ought to be make decisions in meetings through consensus. How can Christians achieve proper consensus, not just within men's business meetings but within all aspects of a congregation's work and life?

The night before Jesus was crucified, He "rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself... and began to wash the disciples' feet" (John 13:4-5). His action was one typically reserved for women and servants; His aim was to give an example (13:15). Yet what example was He setting? He asked His disciples after washing them, "Do you know what I have done to you?" (13:12). What He did would be obvious if all He meant to do was wash their feet. Instead, as "Lord and Teacher" (13:13-14), He had served them by submitting to their needs.

Submission is a key principle in Christian life. Rather than describing the position an inferior person takes, Christian submission describes a choice made by an equal or, as in the case of Jesus, a superior. All people in Jesus are on equal standing before Him and God (Galatians 3:28). They are called to submit "to one another in the fear of God" (Ephesians 5:21). No one is exempted: "all of you be submissive to one another" (1 Peter 5:5). Christian men must submit themselves first to the needs of the congregation and second to each other, "in honor giving preference to one another" (Romans 12:10).

Further principles help to define and refine submission. First, Christians must all submit themselves to God while resisting the devil (James 4:7). As a course of action is considered, Christians ask: 1) Does it bring us closer to God and further from the devil? 2) Does it honor God's desires as expressed in His Word and bring Him glory? Some things are never even considered in men's business meetings or elsewhere in Christian life because they fail to show God the respect He is due.

Married couples have probably experienced the "What do you want to eat? / I don't know, what do you want to eat?" conversation. It illustrates that someone must eventually show leadership and decide, even when people are trying to show consideration and practice submission. Three calls to submission, two explicit and one implicit, help Christians to know whose voices should be given first consideration before action:

1. Christians should submit to those who are older (1 Peter 5:5) – Placing Peter's call for the younger to submit to the older into a Biblical context, one realizes that consideration should be given both to physical age and maturity in Christ.
2. Christians should submit to those who are active (1 Corinthians 16:15-16). The household of Stephanus had devoted themselves to ministry; on this basis, Paul told Corinth, a church that does not seem to have had elders, to "submit to such" as them. Proven servants of the Lord ought to be given a louder voice than armchair quarterbacks.
3. Christians should submit to the gifted (Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4; 1 Peter 4). Christians should honor the different roles people hold within the body of Christ and allow those gifted in certain aspects of church work to exercise leadership in those aspects.

Consensus achieved through Biblical submission and its surrounding principles brings great glory to God. We'll explore further aspects of submission next week.