

Bible Basics 2023
Session 5

Order in the
House of God

Order in the House of God

In Scripture the assembly is looked at in a four-fold way:

- As the body – unity in diversity
(Eph. 4:4; 1 Cor. 12:13-14).
- As the bride – affection and faithfulness
(Rev. 22:17; 2 Cor. 11:2).
- **As the house – order (1 Cor. 14:33, 40).**
- As the city – administration (Rev. 21:2, 10).

‘These things I write to thee... in order that thou mayest know how one ought to conduct oneself in God’s house...’ (1 Tim. 3:14-15)

- The house of God is where God dwells.
- In this Christian era it is not a material building but ‘a spiritual house’ (1 Pet. 2:5).



Order in the House of God

- All Christian believers are 'living stones... built together for a habitation of God in [the] Spirit' (Eph. 2:22).
- This being so we are always in the house.
- **It follows that our behaviour should always be suitable to God's presence and reflect the order of His house.**



**‘Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness
becometh thy house, O Jehovah, for
ever’ (Psalm 93:5)**

The first quality that is to mark us is holiness.

- This is the abhorrence of what is evil, and delight in what is good and pure, and God having His own full place in our hearts.
- By God’s calling we are constituted saints (holy ones) but should also to be holy in practice (Rom. 1:6-7; 2 Tim. 1:9).
- This is essential if the Holy Spirit is to be free in His operations in God’s house.

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- **We are to pursue holiness:** ‘Pursue peace with all, and holiness, without which no one shall see the Lord’ (Heb. 12:14. To pursue energetically, see Phil. 3:12, 14).
- **We are to perfect holiness:** ‘... let us purify ourselves from every pollution of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear’ (2 Cor. 7:1. To accomplish perfectly).
- **We are to be holy practically:** ‘but as he that has called you is holy, be ye also holy in all [your] conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy’ (Lev. 11:44; 1 Peter 1:15-16).

‘... but exercise thyself unto piety; for bodily exercise is profitable for a little, but piety is profitable for everything’ (1 Tim. 4:7-8).

- Piety is that devout Godward attitude that does what is well pleasing to Him.
- Like holiness, we are to pursue it: ‘But thou, O man of God, flee these things, and pursue righteousness, piety, faith, love, endurance, meekness of spirit’ (1 Tim. 6:11) and
- Exercise ourselves unto it: ‘But profane and old wives’ fables avoid, but exercise thyself unto piety’ (1 Tim. 4:7).

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Christ the perfect pattern of piety (1 Tim. 3:16):

- ‘Who... having offered up both supplications and entreaties to him who was able to save him out of death’ was ‘heard **because of his piety;...**’ (Heb. 5:7).
- The underlying Greek word here translated ‘piety’ means literally ‘fearing.’

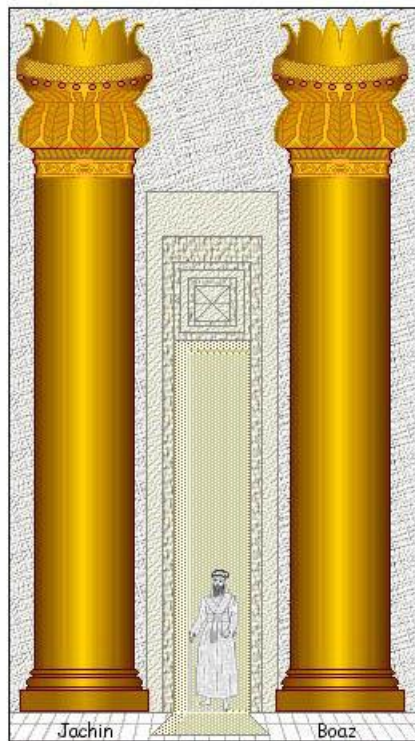


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- The same word is used in Hebrews 12:28: ‘Wherefore let us... serve God acceptably with reverence and fear.’
- This fear is ‘especially holy fear, that mingled fear and love which, combined, constitute the piety of man toward God’ (Vine).

‘... God’s house, which is [the] assembly of [the] living God, [the] pillar... of the truth’
(1 Tim. 3:14-15)



The bronze pillars before the porch of Solomon's Temple. On the right was Jachin; on the left Boaz – 1 Kings 7:21

- As pillar the assembly is witness to the truth.
- It witnesses to the truth by living it out: ‘Ye are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read of all men, being manifested to be Christ’s epistle...’ (2 Cor. 3:2-3).

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- ‘In every place your faith which [is] towards God has gone abroad, so that we have no need to say anything’ (1 Thess. 1:8-9).
- ‘bondmen... shewing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the teaching which [is] of our Saviour God in all things’ (Titus 2:9-10).
- We also bear witness to the truth by confessing it (1 Tim. 6:12).



**‘... God’s house, which is [the] assembly of
[the] living God, [the]... base of the truth’
(1 Tim. 3:14-15)**

- As the base of the truth the assembly supports the truth (Per Vine ‘a support, bulwark, stay’).
- We do this by receiving, obeying and loving the truth (the assembly doesn’t teach).
- At the heart of the truth is ‘the faith once delivered to the saints’ (Jude 1:3. The body of Christian truth, now revealed in the New Testament).
- This is to be defended: ‘Beloved... contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints’ (Jude 1:3).

**‘For my house shall be called a house of
prayer for all the peoples’
(Isa. 56:7. See also Matt. 21:13 etc)**

- Our witness to the truth is to be supported by constant prayer (1 Tim. 1:1; 2:3 etc).
- ‘I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings be made for all men; for kings and all that are in dignity...’
(1 Tim. 2:1-4).

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‘I will therefore that the men pray in every place, lifting up pious hands, without wrath or reasoning’ (1 Tim. 2:8).



‘The elders which [are] among you I exhort... shepherd the flock of God which [is] among you, exercising oversight...’ (1 Peter 5:1-2)

- There are those who are especially responsible for keeping order in God’s house.
- They are ‘elders’ being suitably ‘qualified’ older brothers (1 Tim 3:1-7, 11; Titus 1:1-9).



‘Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock, wherein the Holy Spirit has set you as overseers, to shepherd the assembly of God’ (Acts 20:28)

- Because they exercise oversight they are called overseers (translated ‘bishops’ in the King James translation).
- This describes their work. The underlying Greek word means literally to ‘watch over.’
- We don’t have the authority of Scripture to ‘appoint’ elders today but that doesn’t mean there aren’t those doing this ‘good work.’

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- They look after and care for believers in a spiritual way.
- This is a reflection of the Lord's care for us: 'For ye were going astray as sheep, but have now returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls' (1 Peter 2:25).

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The first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians sets out the pattern of God's house in its local expression.

- 'Do ye not know that ye are [the] temple of God, and [that] the Spirit of God dwells in you?' (1 Cor. 3:16).
- The saints in a particular locality are not 'the' temple of God as though they were the whole, but are part of and of the same character as the whole.
- This should be reflected in doctrine and practice.
- Local gatherings are not independent units (1 Cor. 1:2; 4:17; 7:17; 11:16; 14:37).

‘The things that I write to you... is [the] Lord’s commandment’ (1 Cor. 14:37)

We will look at three things in particular that Paul writes about in 1 Corinthians:

- The maintenance of Scriptural discipline (1 Cor. 5).
- God’s order in creation as it concerns men and women (1 Cor. 11:1-16).
- God’s order ‘in the assembly’ as it concerns sisters (1 Cor. 14:34-35).

**‘For the time of having the judgment begin
from the house of God [is come]’
(1 Peter 4:17)**

Discipline in God’s house is motivated by a number of factors:

- To guard the glory and honour of God’s Name.
- To maintain the unleavened character of the assembly.
- To help, correct and restore souls to fellowship with the Lord.
- As a warning to others.

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In 1 Corinthians chapter 5 we have a ‘worst case’ scenario where a brother was to be ‘put away’ from the Lord’s table.

- It was to be done in care for the man: ‘that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus’ (1 Cor. 5:5).
- The consciences of all were to be engaged in the matter (Matt. 18:18; Acts 15:12, 22; 1 Cor. 5:3-5).
- Scripture shows that there ought to be the deepest humility and soul-searching by all in connection with such an act (1 Cor. 5:2; Lev. 6:24-26).

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There are other kinds of discipline in Scripture:

- Restoring someone taken in a fault (Gal. 6:1).
- Admonishing the disorderly...' (1 Thess. 5:14).
- Withdrawing from every brother walking disorderly (2 Thess. 3:6).
- Convicting those that sin before all (1 Tim. 5:20).

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- Having done with an heretical man after a first and second admonition (Titus 3:10-11).
- Turning away from those who create divisions and occasions of falling (Rom. 16:17-18).
- Acting in the case of a personal trespass (Matt. 5:33-35; 18:15-35).

If these actions were taken things might not reach the point where putting away from the Lord's table is necessary.

‘But I wish you to know that the Christ is the head of every man, but woman's head [is] the man, and the Christ’s head God’ (1 Cor. 11:3)

- Headship reflects God’s order in creation.
- The head of the woman is the man; she was created for him.
- The head of the man is Christ. He is the ascended Man at God’s right hand.
- The head of Christ is God.
- This is the order of power or authority ascending to God who is supreme.

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- In putting a covering on her head the woman acknowledges that she is subject to the man, her head, the one who gives direction.
- By contrast the man is to have his head uncovered because he represents authority.
- This authority really goes back to the garden of Eden and God's plan for mankind.
- The man was to represent God on the earth, and although Adam failed, this has not changed the relative positions of the man and the woman.

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- If there is praying or prophesying a sister should have 'authority on her head.'
- This expresses outwardly her willing subjection to the authority of the man according to God's creatorial order.

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- No inferiority is implied or intended. Both have their part to play in nature and in the Christian testimony and they cannot do without one another!
- The principles of headship in 1 Corinthians 11 apply in meetings of the assembly as well as in the home or elsewhere.



‘When ye come together in assembly...’ (1 Cor. 11:18, 20)

- Before we look at God’s order concerning sisters specifically in assembly meetings we’ll consider what this expression ‘when come together in assembly’ means.
- It is a meeting for the whole assembly.
- The assembly gathers together unto the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, in dependence on Him.
- As led by the Lord our Head and constrained by the Holy Spirit any brother may participate audibly.
- Those who are going to speak are not decided in advance.

‘And they persevered in the teaching and fellowship of the apostles, in breaking of bread and prayers’ (Acts 2:42)

The same practice is reflected in these three assembly meetings in our day:

- That for edification (1 Cor. 14).
- The breaking of bread (11:17-34).
- And prayer (Matt. 18:19-20).

‘Let [your] women be silent in the assemblies, for it is not permitted to them to speak; but to be in subjection, as the law also says’ (1 Cor. 14:34)

- Although the requirements of this verse have so largely been set aside today Paul states clearly that what he writes to the Corinthians ‘is [the] Lord’s commandment’ (1 Cor. 14:37).
- The underlying Greek word translated ‘speak’ does not mean ‘to chatter’ but ‘focuses on the articulated, distinct sound of the formed word in human language’ (Vine).

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Here are three examples of the use of the same word elsewhere:

- ‘The words which I speak to you I do not speak from myself; but the Father who abides in me, he does the works’ (John 14:10).
- ‘... but as of sincerity, but as of God, before God, we speak in Christ’ (2 Cor. 2:17).
- ‘If any one speak—as oracles of God;’ (1 Peter 4:11).

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- The whole chapter 1 Corinthians 14 regulates 'speaking' in the assembly.
- The same word for speak/speaking is used again and again (about 21 times)!
- Brothers who are prophets are to speak two or three and sisters are not to speak but learn in silence.
- The brothers are regulated by the Word of God in their speaking and sisters must obey what is addressed to them about not speaking.

Order in the House of God

Order in the house of God: Summary

- Our behaviour is always suitable to His presence: holy, pious and God-fearing
- That we are living out the truth which we have received, love and defend
- Our dependence on the Lord and the desire for the blessing of others is expressed in constant prayer
- Elders/Overseers apply themselves to the 'good work' to which they have been called
- Scriptural discipline is maintained
- Sisters cover their heads when praying or prophesying
- Sisters keep silent in meetings when come together 'in assembly.'