

01-18-15

Series: The Anatomy of a Church

The Anatomy of a Church (45)

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[Acts 20:28](#)

(Continuation from 01/11/15)

The Skeletal Structure

Theme: Anatomy is the study of how they fit and function together.

The church is a body, and we should look closely at its anatomy. Everybody has certain features: a **skeleton**, **internal systems**, **muscles**, and **flesh**. A church needs to have the **proper framework** (a skeleton), **internal systems** (certain attitudes), **muscles** (different functions), and **flesh** (the form of the programs). Remove any one of those key features, and the body cannot survive. **Anatomy is the study of how they fit and function together.**

Let's look at the anatomy of a church.

The Anatomy of a Church

1. The Skeletal Structure

2. The Internal Systems

3. The Muscles

4. The Head

1. The Skeletal Structure

1. A High View of God

2. The Absolute Authority of Scripture

3. Sound Doctrine

4. Personal Holiness

5. Spiritual Authority

The **proper framework** (a skeleton),
The internal systems (certain attitudes),
The muscles (different functions), and
The flesh (the form of the programs).

The question that needs to be answered is the following: **What is the Church?**

SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY

Ephesians 1:15-23 (NASB)

¹⁵ For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which *exists* among you and your love for all the saints,

¹⁶ do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention *of you* in my prayers;

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01-18-15

Series: [The Anatomy of a Church](#)

- ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.
- ¹⁸ *I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,
- ¹⁹ and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might
- ²⁰ which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*,
- ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.
- ²² And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,
- ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

One final component of the skeletal structure of a church is spiritual authority.

A church must understand that Christ is the Head of the church ([Ephesians 1:22](#); [Ephesians 4:15](#))

[Ephesians 1:22 \(NASB\)](#)

²² “And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,”

[Ephesians 4:15 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁵ “but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,”

and that He mediates His rule in the church through godly elders ([1 Thessalonians 5:13-14](#); [Hebrews 13:7, 17](#)).

[1 Thessalonians 5:13-14 \(NASB\)](#)

¹³ “and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.

¹⁴ We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.”

[Hebrews 13:7 \(NASB\)](#)

⁷ “Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.”

[Hebrews 13:17 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁷ “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.”

[Hebrews 13](#) says to submit to those over you in the Lord, for they watch over your souls. Follow their example.

01-18-15

Series: The Anatomy of a Church

First Thessalonians 5 says to “know them who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake” (**vv. 12–13**).

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 (NASB)

¹² “But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction,

¹³ and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work.
Live in peace with one another.”

Listen to what John MacArthur has to say about this subject: “We have many leaders at Grace Church; I’m just one of them. I happen to be the one whom God has chosen to preach.” Jesus had twelve apostles. Every time the biblical writers list them, Peter’s name is first (**Matthew 10:2–4; Mark 3:16–19; Luke 6:14–16; Acts 1:13**).

Matthew 10:2-4 (NASB)

² Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

³ Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;

⁴ Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him.

Mark 3:16-19 (NASB)

¹⁶ And He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom He gave the name Peter),

¹⁷ and James, the *son* of Zebedee, and John the brother of James (to them He gave the name Boanerges, which means, “Sons of Thunder”);

¹⁸ and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot;

¹⁹ and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him.

Luke 6:14-16 (NASB)

¹⁴ Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James and John; and Philip and Bartholomew;

¹⁵ and Matthew and Thomas; James *the son* of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot;

¹⁶ Judas *the son* of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

Acts 1:13 (NASB)

¹³ When they had entered *the city*, they went up to the upper room where they were staying; that is, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James *the son* of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas *the son* of James.

01-18-15

Series: The Anatomy of a Church

He was always the spokesman. That doesn't mean he was better than the others. He simply had the gift of speaking, whereas the others were gifted in other ways. Peter and John always traveled together. Because of that, you would think that John didn't say much. But he wrote the [Gospel of John](#); [1](#), [2](#), and [3 John](#); and [Revelation](#).

There is no doubt that with the intimate friendship he had with Christ, he could have related even more great things to us. But every time he was with Peter in the first twelve **chapters of Acts**, he was silent. Why? Because Peter had the gift of speaking.

Barnabas was a great teacher—probably the leading one in the early church. But when Barnabas and Paul traveled together, even unbelievers realized that Paul was the chief speaker.

So there are variations in the giftedness of spiritual leaders.

But in totality, there is still an equality of spiritual authority given to those the Bible calls elders or overseers.

Let's sum up what we've learned. For the church to be effective as the Body of Christ, **it has to have the right framework. It has to have a high view of God.** The pursuit of a church should be to know God. In seeking to know God, the authority of Scripture must be recognized, for it is through the Bible that we can know God. A church should have a high view of Scripture and a commitment to teaching sound doctrine. The people of a church should also seek personal holiness and submit their souls to the care of those the Lord has placed over them as spiritual authorities.