



Whose Church is it?

Introduction:

1. Is Jesus really central to what we as leaders are doing in His Church?
2. Are we building His kingdom or ours?
3. Where does our authority derive from?
4. When we gather together and think of Church, do we think of it as being our Church or His?
5. What are the marks or evidence of our thinking it is our Church versus understanding that it is His?
6. How will it impact the saints we care for if we are confused in this area, or worse yet, if we purposely usurp His authority?
7. These are some very critical concerns, and we will look at some Scriptures that reveal the seriousness of these concerns.

Key Scriptures: 1 Cor. 7:17-23; 1 Pet. 2:1-3; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 1 Cor. 5:4-5; Rom. 14:1-14; 1 Cor. 3:5-11; Heb. 3:1-14; 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Cor. 10:32; Acts 20:26-35; 1 Cor. 11:22; 1 Cor. 15:9; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:13; 1 Tim. 3:5, 15; Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; Heb. 12:23; Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 10:14-17; 1 Cor. 12:12-13, 27; Eph. 1:22,23; Eph. 4:4, 12, 15-16; Eph. 5:23, 30; Col 1:18-24; 2:19;

1. Jesus is the builder of His House.

Hebrews 3:1-14 (NKJV)

Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,² who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also *was faithful* in all His house.³ For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as **He who built the house has more honor than the house....**

If we would honor this verse then we would never intimidate our flock to build Church buildings, but would rather trust Jesus to do whatever building He wants done. It's not about our buildings - it "is" about Jesus.

...⁴ **For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God....**

We must never build independently of the Lord, nor using methods He wouldn't use.

...⁵ And Moses indeed *was faithful* in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken *afterward*,⁶ but **Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are** if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end....

Once again, "we" are the building He is interested in, under the New Covenant. Under the Old Covenant the natural Temple was the focus. Under the New Covenant the believer is the "only" Temple Jesus is interested in now.

...⁷ Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says:
"Today, if you will **hear His voice**,

8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,
In the day of trial in the wilderness,...

They continually forgot the lordship of Christ, and sought to establish their own authority and to do their own thing. God is quite jealous about this matter. Ultimately it comes down to a hardness of heart matter to fail here.

...9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me,
And saw My works forty years.
10 Therefore I was angry with that generation,
And said, '**They always go astray in their heart,
And they have not known My ways.**' ...

When men build their own kingdoms, emphasize their own authority, and rule the people of God as if they were their lord, then this represents “going astray” and “not knowing the ways of God.”

...11 So I swore in My wrath,
'They shall not enter My rest.' ...

Perhaps this accounts for why so many ministers burn out, destroy their marriages and their health, and fall morally. We can't do God's work man's way. It will kill us.

...12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you **an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;**...

Ultimately it comes down to this - unbelief. When I fail in these areas it is really nothing other than unbelief. My belief systems get off, stay off, and I burn out, while offending God's sheep and God Himself.

...13 but **exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end,**...

We must exhort one another about this because the inclination of the flesh to get off in these areas, to build our own kingdoms, to exert our own authority, and to usurp His authority is so great.

2. It is the “Church of God”, not the “Church of man.”

1 Corinthians 10:32(NKJV)
32 Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the **church of God**,

1 Corinthians 11:22 (NKJV)
22 What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the **church of God** and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise *you*.

1 Corinthians 15:9 (NKJV)
9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the **church of God**.

2 Corinthians 1:1 (NKJV)
Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother,
To the **church of God** which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia:

Galatians 1:13 (NKJV)
13 For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the **church of God** beyond

measure and *tried to* destroy it.

1 Timothy 3:5,15 (NKJV)

5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the **church of God?**);15 but if I am delayed, *I write* so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the **house of God, which is the church of the living God**, the pillar and ground of the truth.

3. Whenever the Church is not directly referred to as “the Church of God” it is referred to as being “the people’s Church.” It is never referred to as being a pastor or elder’s Church.

Colossians 4:16 (NKJV)

16 Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the **church of the Laodiceans**, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

1 Thessalonians 1:1 (NKJV)

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the **church of the Thessalonians** in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

2 Thessalonians 1:1 (NKJV)

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the **church of the Thessalonians** in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Hebrews 12:23 (NKJV)

23 to the **general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven**, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect,

Notice how Paul’s epistles are opened with the recipients of his epistles. Doesn’t it seem strange to you that he doesn’t write his letters to the Bishop, or the Pastor, or the Elder, of the congregation, and then instruct him to teach “his” flock the truths in the epistle?

Romans 1:1,7 (NKJV)

Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated to the gospel of God **7 To all who are in Rome**, beloved of God, called *to be* saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:1,2 (NKJV)

Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother,**2 To the church of God which is at Corinth**, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

2 Corinthians 1:1,2 (NKJV)

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother,

To the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia:**2** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Galatians 1:1,2 (NKJV)

Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead),**2** and all the brethren who are with me,

Ephesians 1:1 (NKJV)

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:

Philippians 1:1 (NKJV)

Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

This is interesting, because here he mentions the leadership, but they are almost referred to in a secondary manner, certainly they are not being accorded any special ecclesiastical deference.

Colossians 1:1,2 (NKJV)

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,² **To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ *who are in Colosse***:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 1:1 (NKJV)

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Thessalonians 1:1 (NKJV)

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

1 Timothy 1:1,2 (NKJV)

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope,² **To Timothy**, a true son in the faith:

Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

This is note worthy, because this is a personal letter to Timothy, about how to serve a Church, rather to Timothy as the pastor of a Church. Neither Timothy or Titus were Pastors or Elders. They were apostolic emissaries sent by Paul on temporary Church establishing assignment.

Philemon is written to a personal friend of Paul's. Hebrews isn't addressed to anyone in particular. James is written to the 12 scattered tribes. 1st Peter is written to dispersed tribes. Presumably 2nd Peter is written to the same people again. 1st John isn't directly addressed to anyone.

2 John 1 (NKJV)

THE ELDER,

To the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all those who have known the truth,

This will potentially throw your theology in a tailspin, as this epistle seems to be written to a female elder who oversees a House Church in her own home.

3rd John is written to his good friend Gaius. Interestingly, in this epistle John addresses a leader type, by the name of Diotrephes, and says some harsh things about him.

3 John 9 (NKJV)

I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us.

Finally, John writes to the Churches in the book of Revelation, and addresses the "angel" of each Church. Scholars have debated for years as to who these "angels" are. Some think Church leadership, other's believe John is addressing the angelic messengers who watch over the heirs of salvation in each city. Most just plain don't know who they are. In any case, the obscurity of who these are causes us to stop short of developing any doctrine from an obscure passage.

4. The Church is "His Body" not "my body", not a "pastor's body."

Romans 12:4-5 (NKJV)

For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function,⁵ so we, *being* many, are **one body in Christ**, and **individually members of one another**.

1 Corinthians 10:14-17 (NKJV)

Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.¹⁵ I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say.¹⁶

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of **the body of Christ**?¹⁷ For **we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.**

1 Corinthians 12:12-13,27 (NKJV)

12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, **so also is Christ**.¹³ For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.²⁷ Now **you are the body of Christ**, and **members individually**.

All of us, not just the sheep, but even the shepherds are ultimately just “members individually,” rather than members and office holders.

5. Jesus is the “Head”, not a pastor or an elder.

Ephesians 1:22,23 (NKJV)

22 And He put all *things* under His feet, and **gave Him to be head over all things to the church**,²³ **which is His body**, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 4:4,12,15-16 (NKJV)

4 **There is one body and one Spirit**, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of **the body of Christ**,¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into **Him who is the head—Christ**—¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what **every joint supplies**, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Ephesians 5:23,30 (NKJV)

23 For the husband is **head of the wife** (*home government*), as also **Christ is head of the church** (*Church government*); and He is the Savior of the body.³⁰ For **we are members of His body**, of His flesh and of His bones.

Colossians 1:18-24 (NKJV)

18 And **He is the head of the body, the church**, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.¹⁹ For it pleased *the Father* that in Him all the fullness should dwell,²⁰ and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.²¹ And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled²² **in the body of His flesh** through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—²³ if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.²⁴ I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of **His body, which is the church**,

Colossians 2:19 (NKJV)

19 and not holding fast to **the Head, from whom all the body**, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase *that is* from God.

6. Leaders only carry reflected authority.

Matthew 18:15-20 (NKJV)

15 “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.¹⁶ “But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’¹⁷ “And if he refuses to hear them, **tell it to the church**. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.¹⁸ “Assuredly, I say to you, **whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven**.¹⁹ “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.²⁰ “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

Two very interesting things surface here. One: the final authority is not the eldership or the

senior pastor, but “the Church.” No mention is made of the leadership of the Church being the ones to make this decision.

Secondly, both the words “bind” and “loosed” are in the perfect tense in the Greek. An even better translation, which draws out the true intent of this tense could look something like this:

“What you bind on earth is to have already been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth is to already have been loosed in heaven.” Thus, all decisions of this magnitude number one, goes to the entire congregation for a decision based on consensus, and that consensus is to be based on them having sought the mind of the Lord, coming to know what He has already decided from heaven, and then secondly, simply reflecting His authority into the Church matter. This is where true spiritual authority comes from in the New Testament. It never comes from position or title.

7. Church discipline is not a function of Church leadership. Church leadership merely reflects the authority of Christ.

1 Corinthians 5:4-5 (NKJV)

4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with **the power of our Lord Jesus Christ**,⁵ deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Paul is careful to say that he’s not the one initiating this action of discipline. If any discipline is accomplished it will be so because “the power of our Lord Jesus Christ” was present. We simply carry reflective authority, never independent authority, nor authority by virtue of position, title, or office.

8. Failure to acknowledge His ownership and lordship causes divisions, and divisions mean we don’t understand His Body, which results in discipline, perhaps even unto death.

1 Corinthians 11:17-32 (NKJV)

17 Now in giving these instructions I do not praise *you*, since **you come together not for the better but for the worse**.¹⁸ For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are **divisions among you**, and in part I believe it.¹⁹ For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.²⁰ Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat **the Lord’s Supper**.²¹ For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of *others*; and one is hungry and another is drunk.²² What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise **the church of God** and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise *you*.²³ For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread;²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, “Take, eat; **this is My body** which is broken for you; **do this in remembrance of Me**.”²⁵ In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in **My blood**. This do, as often as you drink *it*, **in remembrance of Me**.”²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes. ²⁷ Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.²⁸ But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.²⁹ **For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.**³⁰ **For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep.**³¹ **For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.**³² **But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.**

It is hard to imagine finding a clearer and more serious passage of Scripture on this theme of rightly understanding the Body of Christ, the Church of Jesus Christ. When we don’t we cause divisions, the body is torn to pieces, and then Jesus is shoved off to the side and forgotten. This will trigger discipline which can even lead to death. Could it be that one of the reasons divine healing seems to be so difficult to get working in our Churches is because we have defined

Church in ways that dishonors Him? If we are to operate in ultimate spiritual authority over physical realms, and bring forth miracles within them, then it seems to me He often restrains such spiritual authority until we are rightly identified and submissive to His authority. This being the case, it is high time His Church, and especially His leaders, come to the place of honoring His authority in the midst of both the Universal Church and in each and every small gathering, down to each single individual. When this increases...look out world, the power of Jesus will begin to manifest like it hasn't throughout the majority of Church history.

9. They are God's sheep, not my sheep.

Acts 20:26-35 (NKJV)

26 "Therefore I testify to you this day that I *am* innocent of the blood of all *men*.²⁷ "For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.²⁸ "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all **the flock, among which...**

"Among which" - notice the "in the midst of" concept, rather than the "over which".

...the Holy Spirit has made **you overseers**, ...

Overseer is a function, not an office. As we will see in other studies we will consider, this word denotes one who cares for and protects the body. He looks "over" the body to help, serve, protect, and encourage them. It is not a title of "authoritative control over". There are no such titles in the New Testament.

...to **shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood...**

Notice again who owns the Church.

...²⁹ "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.³⁰ "Also from among yourselves **men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves....**

Hmmm, I don't know about you, but I've done this before.

31 "Therefore watch, and remember that for three years **I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.**³² "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.³³ "I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel.³⁴ "Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me.³⁵ "I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, '**It is more blessed to give than to receive.**' "

The individual believer belongs to Christ.

1 Corinthians 7:17-23 (NKJV)

17 But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the churches.¹⁸ Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised.¹⁹ Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God *is what matters*.²⁰ Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called.²¹ Were you called *while* a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use *it*.²² For he who is called in the Lord *while* a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called *while* free is Christ's slave.²³ **You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.**

Right thinking about the Church requires us to continually, in all practices, philosophy, and

policy, think - “These are not my people, they are Jesus” and it follows that “This is not “my” Church. This is ‘Jesus’ Church.” As such I do not have the liberty to do with it what I choose, but only as He clearly directs.

The price - i.e. Jesus’ very life - is far too great for those of us who lead to fail to recognize and respect.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NKJV)

19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and **you are not your own**?²⁰ For **you were bought** at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, **which are God’s**.

If the leadership ever hope to draw the people towards Christ’s absolute lordship, then the leadership must example it by their not thinking of the Church as being their own, but purely belonging to Christ.

10. It is not just wrong to think of the believers and the Church as belonging to a leader, it is a “destructive heresy.”

2 Peter 2:1-3 (NKJV)

But there were also **false prophets** among the people, even as there will be **false teachers** among you, who will secretly bring in **destructive heresies**, even **denying the Lord who bought them**, and bring on themselves swift destruction.² And **many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed**.³ **By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words**; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.

Only false prophets and false teachers handle the Church as if it was theirs to manipulate.

When leaders fail to see this it looses “destructive ways” within the Church. Such ways lead to blasphemy. Blasphemy is biblically defined, according to Matthew 12:31,32, as that attitude or behavior that rejects the lordship of Jesus Christ as revealed by the Holy Spirit.

11. I’m not their master, boss, or CEO. Only Jesus has this role.

Romans 14:1-14 (NKJV)

Receive one who is weak in the faith, *but* not to disputes over doubtful things.² For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats *only* vegetables.³ Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him.⁴ Who are you to judge another’s servant? **To his own master he stands or falls.**

All my teaching as a shepherd in the body must reflect this mindset. The people are not accountable primarily to me, and I’m not “over” them, in some controlling way. They are accountable primarily to Him and only secondarily to me and the rest of the body. They are not more accountable to me than anyone else in the body. The exception to this, is an exception to anyone else in the body, and that is, when the Word of Christ comes to a people, no matter who it comes through, in that moment absolute authority has been expressed, and if we detect it to be Christ among us, then we best honor it quickly.

...Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.⁵ One person esteems *one* day above another; another esteems every day *alike*. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.⁶ He who observes the day, **observes it to the Lord**; and he who does not observe the day, **to the Lord he does not observe it**. He who eats, eats **to the Lord**, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, **to the Lord** he does not eat, and gives God thanks.⁷ **For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself**.⁸ **For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s** ⁹ For **to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the**

dead and the living...

He is the Lord of the Church, not man. He paid the price for this position and authority, we didn't because we couldn't.

...10 But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For **we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.**11 For it is written:
“As I live, says the LORD,
Every knee shall bow **to Me**, ...

When leaders imply their flock should bow down to them, submit to their authority “over them,” and give them special honor, they show they do not understand this passage.

...And every tongue shall confess **to God.**”
12 So then **each of us shall give account of himself to God...**

Accountability is first and foremost “to God,” not to man. We help others be more accountable to God, but we must never take the liberty of requiring them to be accountable directly to us. We are not their judges. We are their servants. There is a HUGE difference. The only accountability I ever want from anyone towards me, is an accountability to the Christ who speaks through me.

...13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather **resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.**14 I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that *there is* nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean.

There are many potential stumbling blocks - judging our brethren, lording it over them, exercising independent authority.

Matthew 20:20-28 (NKJV)

20 Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him.21 And He said to her, “What do you wish?” She said to Him, “Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom.”22 But Jesus answered and said, “You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” They said to Him, “We are able.”23 So He said to them, “You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father.”24 And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers.25 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know that **the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them**, and those who are great **exercise authority over them.**26 **“Yet it shall not be so among you;** but whoever desires to become great among you, **let him be your servant.**27 “And whoever desires to be first among you, let him **be your slave**—28 “just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Ministers = servants, not lords.

1 Corinthians 3:5-11 (NKJV)
5 **Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers ...**

We are “ministers” not lords.

...through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?6 I planted, Apollos watered, but **God gave the increase....**

If shepherds would recognize this point much of the stress of ministry would fall off of them, and much of their controls or manipulations would fall away too.

...7 So then **neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase....**

In terms of the salvation or sanctification process in people's lives we are "nothing." God is everything. If ministers would think this way it would make room for Jesus to be Lord over His Church instead of men.

...8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor....

When men understand their role then they become candidates for reward. When men usurp the role of Christ, then though they may be rewarded by people on earth (applause, accolades, big salaries, etc.), they lose their reward in heaven.

...9 For **we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building....**

The only building directly sanctioned by the New Testament is "us." We are the only building Jesus is interested in. All too often men become fixated on fancy buildings, monuments of their achievement and ambition, legacies to their carnality. The building God wants you and I to present to Jesus is the "edification structure of the souls of men."

...10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. **But let each one take heed how he builds on it.11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**

We who minister are to live with a constant mindset "everything about Church is Jesus," from the foundation upwards.