

# Government & Ministry

by Gareth Evans

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding church government, recognizing spiritual gifts, and releasing leaders to serve, as well as the need for accountability, unity, and correct stewardship of resources.*

**Scripture:** Galatians 6:2

**Topics:** "Church Government", "Ministry Leadership"

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## Description

Gareth Evans delves into the practical application of teachings on church government, ministries, finances, and goals, tracing the historical development of the church from its early days to the Reformation. He emphasizes the importance of recognizing and releasing leaders within the church to equip the saints for ministry, with a focus on serving and uplifting others. The church is depicted as a place of refreshment, social concern, and unity, where each member carries burdens and ministers in their unique gifts for the kingdom. Evans highlights the need for accountability, authority, and unity within the church body, with a call to fulfill the promise of blessing through correct tithing and support of those in full-time ministry.

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## Transcript

We are now at the last of this brief, simple teaching on 'the church'. My question today is 'how do we apply these teachings to our own assembly?' ie; how does this work out 'in practice'?

This requires understanding of church government, ministries, finances, goals, etc.

Historically, the early church developed into a political institution, due to the ignorance of its later leaders, persecution, lack of communication, strong individuals with little spirituality, etc. After three centuries of persecution under the Romans, Christianity became acceptable at the conversion of Caesar Augustine in AD 312. Christendom was born.

However Christianity had lost its evangelical zeal and purity, and soon became institutionalized. The eastern Orthodox church and the western church, based in Rome could not agree, and soon was born the distinctive Roman Catholic Church. The history of this church is not a commendable one with many intrigues, murders, and corruption - men entered the 'dark ages'.

It was not until early in the sixteenth century when Martin Luther nailed his thesis to the door of the church at Wittenberg that we see light again in the church. The Reformation brought us back to the truths of the

Word, at that time forbidden to the ordinary man, when only ordained priests had the right to read, teach or interpret the Bible

The Reformation however, still accepted the pyramidal structure of the church evolved through the years of Roman politicking.

Instead of a pope we had Martin Luther - and Zwingli and Calvin.

And today ? Most churches still have a hierarchal structure with a (paid) pastor sitting on "top of the pyramid", making most decisions, aided to differing degrees by his co-leaders. Some churches (eg; Baptists) have a democratic government, where some decisions are voted on by the whole membership. What is the Biblical position?

Government: Recognising that the Jesus gives gifts to his church and that these include apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers; also administrators, helps, we need to seek to recognize who these are and then release them to perform that ministry. These leaders are called to be servants to the church and their work is to "equip the saints for the work of ministry". The 'ministers of the church are to be its 'lay people'. How do they minister? In all they do! Leaders are to be at the 'bottom of the pyramid' lifting up others and releasing them into all that the Lord would have them do.

The church is meant to be the canteen, arms depot, sanctuary, strategy centre, etc. for the warfare we all face each day in our workplace, home, recreation times, etc. and the church should be the place where we are refreshed for that battle. It should be a secure place where the 'wounded' can be nursed back to health.

Ministries: There are certain ministries demanded of all. We are to be "hospitable to the stranger, caring for widows and fatherless". In today's society that surely means all who are in need. That is our mandate to have a social concern. We cannot close our eyes to the needs of our community.

How can we demonstrate that concern?

We are called to be witnesses of the Gospel, by our unity, our words and our deeds. We should always have an evangelical vision. There should always be a welcome for the sinner!

We have all been given gifts by the Holy Spirit to enable us to carry the burden each one is to be given. We are to be 'yoked together' with the Lord in carrying that burden. Surely, we must seek to know what burden the Lord has placed upon each one of us and then to assist one another in carrying that burden.

Why should the Lord put His anointing on any program or person in the church when it, or he, is not doing what the Lord planned in building "His church"? He wants to put His anointing on each one of us but we will only experience that when we are functioning in the ministry he has called us to and equipped us for.

All our ministries should be "kingdom centred". We should develop a vision for our city, all those around us, the needy and the lost, and should do all we can to support those who are actively involved in being light within that community.

Within the gathering, we are called to "wash one another's feet" - to refresh one another. After coming together for fellowship, each one should be able to leave, encouraged and refreshed by the experience. We are commanded to "love one another" - no options given! This indicates concern, safety, true

fellowship, etc. We are also told to "obey my word". These three 'commandments' were those given to the disciples by our Lord the night he was taken to the cross. I suggest that they are therefore his priorities for us.

Of course, we also come together to meet the Lord! Therefore, we must spend time in seeking to hear from him. He wants to speak to his sheep but we have become so hardened in our busyness, that we seldom hear his voice and, when he does speak, we do not listen! We learn to hear his voice during times of worship, so this must give us opportunity to meditate and listen - not drive us from song to song. He also speaks through the preached (anointed) word, so we spend time in the preached or taught Scriptures.

Thus it is our simple aim to meet each time we do, with these three core objectives: a time of worship and praise to develop intimacy with the Lord who is worthy of our worship and delights in it; a time of listening to his voice through the word; a time of ministering to one another in his name, (washing feet).

Accountability: To enable one to perform that ministry the Lord has called, and equipped him for, it is necessary to give a certain measure of authority, appropriate for that responsibility. However, there can be no authority without accountability. Anyone who seeks, or is given a responsibility within the church must recognize their accountability to the rest of the body (usually through the chosen leadership) before they can exercise authority. Note that even Paul went to the apostles to seek their release before he went on his missionary journeys.

The church is to operate in unity not as individuals 'doing their own thing'.

Today we still tithe but few ever seem to fulfill the promise of blessing God gave to Israel in Malachi 3:10. Is it possible that we, like them, have failed to use the tithe correctly? Who are the 'ministering Levites' in today's world? Surely they are more than just the resident pastors in a church. Everyone who is in some form of 'full-time' ministry should be supported by the tithes of the people and not rely on the goodwill and private support of a few individuals. Each one of us is responsible for a correct 'offering' of our tithe before the Lord. See my teachin

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