

What Is A Biblical Church?

International Bible Lessons

1 Timothy 2:1-6; 3:14-16

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“I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these instructions to you so that, if I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:14-15—NRSV).

“I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:14-15—NASB-U).

“These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:14-15—KJV).

When the Apostle Paul wrote Timothy, he probably had no idea that God would use his letter to guide Christian churches and leaders for almost 2000 years, perhaps longer. In this life, none of us learns how many people God will bless through our gifts and labors, often given to help one person or church.

From Paul’s letter, we can focus on three important facts for churches around the world. First, church members are part of the family of the living God, whom Jesus taught us to call, “Our Father” (Matthew 6:9). Jesus the Messiah can become our elder Brother, for Jesus declared, “Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother” (Mark 3:35). Believers should experience their church as a faithful, loving, and true family. Second, the church is a “firm upright support” for the truth. When believers live truthfully according to the Bible’s teachings, they demonstrate the value of truth and truthfulness for all to see. The Bible points us to Jesus, who declared, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life;” therefore, the church supports the work and words of Jesus when faithfully following Him (John 14:6). Third, the church is a “solid wall of defense” for the truth. God expects His people to defend His truth and His word against all attacks from every source. A bulwark is for defense, so the church must stand against falsehood, error, and lawlessness. — © Copyright 2011 L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

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Thinking Further

1. What does Paul say we should include in our prayers? Compare his list with what we normally include or omit in our prayers. How might we need to improve our prayer life? Can you add to Paul’s list (think of the Lord’s Prayer).
2. What reason does Paul give for praying for leaders? Can you think of additional reasons to pray for them? Pray for the leaders where you live and others around the world who need our prayers.
3. In what ways might a Christian leader govern differently from a non-Christian leader, or differently from a “Christian” leader who does not govern according to the revealed will and spirit of God in the Bible (who does not seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, though he or she says they are Christian)?
4. Why is truth important? How you and your church can become a better “pillar and bulwark of the truth”?
5. Read 1 Timothy 3:16 again. What does Paul include in his list that surprises you? What truths about Jesus from the Bible would you add to Paul’s list? Give a reason for your answers.

Read the verse by verse commentary on this lesson at the BibleLessonForum.com. See the recommended study and worship resources at SmallChurchResources.com.