Presbyterianism 101

The Biblical and Apostolical Form of Polity: Part One

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I. A Taxonomy of Church Polities — What are our options today?

A. Episcopacy

i. The office of _____ is distinct from elder or priest, as a regional overseer.

ii. Local church officers are _____ & _____ by the regional bishop.

iii. There is a _____ of office in the local, regional, and worldwide church.

iv. Besides local priests & regional bishops, there is a large & complicated _____.

v. At the top of the hierarchy, as head of the church, is _____.

B. Congregationalism and Independency

i. The highest and most basic authority in the church is the _____.

ii. Unless they delegate authority, they vote on everything (including _____).

iii. The number and identity of _____ is not essential or uniform.

iv. Congregations are _____, without connection to the broader church.

v. Members have no right of _____, because there is no broader body to appeal to.

vi. _____ is the only head of the church.

C. Unofficial Modern Variations of Church Government

i. The Moses Model: The _____ acts like Moses to the congregation.

ii. The Corporate Structure: The senior pastor is overseen by a _____, which he chooses.

D. Presbyterianism

i. The _____ is the basic authority; every governing body is a council of elders.

ii. Elder is distinguished from deacon, but not from bishop; elders are _____.

iii. Elders and deacons are elected by the _____.

iv. There is a _____ of elders in local, regional, and denominational bodies.

v. Church members have the right of _____ to higher governing bodies.

vi. _____ is the only head of the church.

II. The Principles of Apostolic Church Polity.

A. The _____ elected its officers in the apostolic church.

i. Acts 1:23: "And *they put forward* two, Joseph… and Matthias."

1. The _____ office in the apostolic church was elected by the people.

ii. Acts 6:3: "*Pick out from among you* seven men of good repute…"

1. The _____ office in the apostolic church was chosen by the people.

iii. We can infer from this that in the apostolic church, all officers were elected by the people.

B. The offices of bishop and elder were _____ in the apostolic church.

i. Titus 1:5–7: "Appoint *elders* in every town… For an *overseer* (*episcopos*)…"

ii. Acts 20:17 & 28: "[Paul] called the *elders* of the church… he said to them… Pay careful attention… to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you *overseers* (*episcopoi*)."

iii. _____: "In [Acts 20:28] the 2 terms *presbyter* & *episcopoi* are identified."

C. There was always a _____ of elders in the apostolic church.

i. Acts 14:23: "[Paul & Barnabas] appointed *elders* for them in every church."

ii. Phil 1:1: "Paul & Timothy… to all the saints … at Philippi, w/ the *overseers* & deacons."