Presbyterianism 101

The Form of Presbyterian Government: Part Two

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I. Church officers

A. What is church office?

i. All Christians have a _____ office—we are all prophets, priests, and kings.

ii. The church also has _____ offices, with public authority to teach and govern.

B. What are the offices of the church?

i. Extraordinary & temporary offices: _____, Prophets, and Evangelists.

ii. Ordinary & perpetual offices: _____ and _____.

C. Elders: Teaching Elders (TE) and Ruling Elders (RE).

i. The _____ of elders: Ruling and Teaching Elders hold the same office of elder.

ii. All elders are responsible for the spiritual care & discipline of the church; TEs have the added responsibility to preach the Word & administer the Sacraments.

iii. REs _____ and TEs _____, but only TEs preach & administer sacraments.

D. Deacons

i. Deacons are _____, and they serve by collecting financial gifts & distributing them to those who are in need, & care for the needy in many other ways.

ii. Deacons also care for the church's property; deacons are overseen by the Session.

E. Who may hold office?

i. BCO 7-2: "In accord with Scripture, these offices are open to _____ only."

ii. What about a man who is single, divorced, or has unbelieving children?

II. Church courts

A. What is a church court? Why is it called a court?

i. Church Sessions, regional Presbyteries, and the denominational GA are all courts.

ii. We call them courts, first, because they are where _____are held.

1. Second, they _____ and apply laws written by God in his Holy Word.

2. And third, our church courts are the royal courts of King Jesus.

B. Session

i. The Session is the assembly of elders that oversees _____.

1. The members of Session are the REs & TEs (except for assistant pastors).

ii. BCO 11-4: "The Session exercises jurisdiction over a single church."

1. The Session must maintain the _____ of the church.

C. Presbytery

i. A Presbytery is the assembly of elders from all the churches in a region.

1. The TEs and the _____ in the region are members of Presbytery.

2. Each church Session can send at least 2 REs to represent them at Presbytery.

ii. BCO 11-4: "The Presbytery [exercises jurisdiction] over what is common to the ministers, Sessions, and churches within a prescribed district."

D. General Assembly

i. General Assembly is the assembly of elders from all the _____.

1. Like Presbytery, all TEs may attend, & each church may send at least 2 REs.

ii. BCO 11-4: "The General Assembly [exercises jurisdiction] over such matters as concern the whole Church."

III. Church Orders

A. What are church orders?

i. This refers to the special class of officers in the church, to their call and ordination.

ii. _____ call: Church members & court approve (election, examination, etc.).

iii. _____ call: If you want, are gifted, & providentially enabled to minister.

iv. _____: The induction into office by laying on of hands & prayer.

B. But ordination to Gospel Ministry as a Teaching Elder is more rigorous.

i. Why? Because of the _____ of the office (teaching God's Word, leading Session).

ii. What is the process? Under care, internship, _____, ordination.

iii. What's the point? This protects Christians from bad ministers, & as a result, bad teaching.

IV. Closing thoughts: Church offices, courts, and orders are really what make us Presbyterian.