

**Articles and Sermons :: Obey Your Leaders and Submit To Them (Heb. 13:17) by Zac Poonen**

**Obey Your Leaders and Submit To Them (Heb. 13:17) by Zac Poonen - posted by sermonindex, on: 2011/9/2 10:32**

Where you have confidence in your local church-elders, it is easy to submit to them in all matters. But perhaps you do not have confidence in your elders. Then, you must distinguish between church matters and personal matters, so that you know clearly where you have to submit to your elders and where you don't have to.

**Church matters:**

Church matters include the conduct of the meetings of the church, the spiritual direction the church is going, the emphasis is in the ministry of that church, the activities arranged by the church, etc., etc. In such matters, there must always be total submission to the directions given by the elders. This is not because you respect them as mature brothers, or because you have confidence in them, but just because they are the shepherds in the church in which God has placed you - provided you are sure that God has placed you there.

Jesus submitted to Joseph and Mary, even though they were imperfect and less mature than Him, because His Father had placed Him in their home. That was how He began opening the new and living way through His flesh - in Nazareth during His first 30 years.

We must never forget this fact that the first steps of the new and living way were opened by Jesus through submission to imperfect authorities at home. All the other steps came later.

You must never be the cause of strife in any church - for God hates those who sow discord among the brothers - however spiritual or zealous they may consider themselves to be (Prov.6:16-19). Rebellion against God-appointed leadership is always Satanic. It is the way of Korah (Jude 11; Numbers 16), and is always the result of pride and arrogance. If, however, you are not sure that God has placed you in a particular church, then you must consider before God whether you should leave that church and join another one. But you must never stay in a church and create confusion there, for God will never tolerate that.

Neither should you be like a visitor in a church, eating the 'food' there as you would in a restaurant, with no sense of responsibility. The church is not a restaurant, but a home. So you must commit yourself totally to some local church; otherwise, you will not grow spiritually. Remember, however, that you will never find an ideal church, for every church is imperfect. But, look for a church that is closest to the Word of God - as you understand it at present.

If you feel some time that you should bring in a new emphasis (that is lacking) into a church, then the proper way to do it is by first discussing the issue with the elder brothers, and then to do exactly as they direct. The improper way is to bring in your emphasis in the meetings by preaching the Word in contradiction to the direction set by the elders. If you disagree strongly with your elders in any matter, and feel that you cannot submit to their eldership, or if you feel that the elders are leading the church in a wrong direction, then remember that you are always free to leave such a church and start one of your own, with the emphasis that you feel is necessary and important.

If God is with you, He will bless you in your new step - as He blessed Martin Luther, John Wesley, William Booth, Watchman Nee and many others in many lands, through the centuries, who left their original churches and started new ones, under the direction of God. If, however, you are acting in your own stubbornness, and God is not with you, you will find yourself following in the footsteps of Theudas and Judas of Galilee (Acts 5:36,37) and many thousands of others in these twenty centuries of Christianity, who started new movements and ended up in confusion and frustration finally.

**Personal matters:**

Personal matters include matters such as what clothes you wear, how you spend your money, what sort of house you choose to live in, where or how you travel (by air or by train), what clothes you and your family members wear, what food you eat, what toys you buy for your children, whether your children play computer games or not, whether you allow your children to watch sporting events on a neighbour's television or not, what job you take, where you work, etc. In such matters, you have perfect freedom to do whatever you feel you should do. You don't have to obey or even consult your elders in such matters, if you don't have confidence in them. If you are in doubt about some such matter, you could even con

sult an older brother in another place, if you have more confidence in that brother than in your local elders. The final decision in such matters, however, is always yours. There is no rebellion in doing things differently in such matters, unless your elders feel that your conduct or your dress or your children are a stumbling-block to others in the church - in which case, you must be willing to listen to what they have to tell you about it.

The way of wisdom then is to distinguish between where you must submit to the elders in a church, and where you don't have to. A lack of confidence in your local elders does not mean that you are rebellious - for not all elder brothers are spiritually minded, and not all elder brothers necessarily inspire confidence. But if you end up submitting to no-one anywhere, then it is easy for you to become a law unto yourself, and thus become an easy target for Satan to knock off and destroy. May God help us all to walk in the way of wisdom at all times.

**Re: Obey Your Leaders and Submit To Them (Heb. 13:17) by Zac Poonen - posted by ThyKingCome (), on: 2011/9/2 10:4**

Greg, thank you so much for posting this.

I'm sure Luther, Wesley, Booth and Nee went through many internal struggles as they allowed the Holy Spirit to sift their motives, thoughts and actions.

This is a sober warning indeed.

"You must never be the cause of strife in any church - for God hates those who sow discord among the brothers - however spiritual or zealous they may consider themselves to be (Prov.6:16-19). Rebellion against God-appointed leadership is always Satanic. It is the way of Korah (Jude 11; Numbers 16), and is always the result of pride and arrogance."

**Re: Obey Your Leaders and Submit To Them (Heb. 13:17) by Zac Poonen - posted by just-in, on: 2011/9/2 15:44**

Quote:  
-----Where you have confidence in your local church-elders, it is easy to submit to them in all matters. But perhaps you do not have confidence in your elders.  
-----

Actually, I think you always are suppose to have confidence in God and test everything, like the Bereans, to see "if these things are so".

Like Mikey2 said, You submit to the Lord in someone. So I would say that you have confidence in the Holy Spirit. And you submit to them matter by matter, not "ALL MATTERS".

Quote:  
-----Church matters include the conduct of the meetings of the church, the spiritual direction the church is going, the emphasis in the ministry of that church, the activities arranged by the church, etc., etc. In such matters, there must always be total submission to the directions given by the elders. This is not because you respect them as mature brothers, or because you have confidence in them, but just because they are the shepherds in the church in which God has placed you - provided you are sure that God has placed you there.  
-----

This is a bit scary. "Total submission". First of all, Jesus Christ is in charge of where the church is going and even if you are an elder, we are all brothers and all brothers should be allowed to be in any meeting regarding the church and all brothers should be involved in any decision that could affect them and their family. Steven Kaung once said, that the church does not move forward in an area or decision that affects all brothers unless all the brothers have peace from the Lord about it.

Quote:  
-----Jesus submitted to Joseph and Mary, even though they were imperfect and less mature than Him, because His Father had placed Him in their home. That was how He began opening the new and living way through His flesh - in Nazareth during His first 30 years.

We must never forget this fact that the first steps of the new and living way were opened by Jesus through submission to imperfect authorities at home . All the other steps came later.  
-----

We are all imperfect. It is the Lord in each one of us that is perfect. This is not even relevant, as we are all imperfect. Joseph and Mary were his father and mother and Jesus submitted to them because it pleased His father. You are not supposed to use it as an example to persuade people to submit to other people by telling them that "Jesus submitted to imperfect people and so should you".

Again, this is missing the point of submission, why to do it and who to submit to.

Quote:  
----- You must never be the cause of strife in any church - for God hates those who sow discord among the brothers - however spiritual or zealous they may consider themselves to be (Prov.6:16-19). Rebellion against God-appointed leadership is always Satanic. It is the way of Korah (Judges 11; Numbers 16), and is always the result of pride and arrogance.

If, however, you are not sure that God has placed you in a particular church, then you must consider before God whether you should leave that church and join another one. But you must never stay in a church and create confusion there, for God will never tolerate that.  
-----

Totally agree with that. If you are going to place yourself in a religious organization, then please obey their rules. They did not ask you to join, you joined on your own, so that means that you went in wide-eyed, knew their rules (extra biblical in some cases), and still decided to join. If you cause strife and division, then you are doing the work of Satan.

Quote:  
-----Neither should you be like a visitor in a church, eating the 'food' there as you would in a restaurant, with no sense of responsibility. The church is not a restaurant, but a home. So you must commit yourself totally to some local church; otherwise, you will not grow spiritually. Remember, however, that you will never find an ideal church, for every church is imperfect. But, look for a church that is closest to the Word of God - as you understand it at present.  
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Actually, most churches are not homes, but organizations. In my home, I don't mind visitors that drop in once in awhile. It is always good to see them and we just pick up where we left off the last time we fellowshiped. They can eat my food and have my time and we always grow spiritually when we see each other. I actually prefer informal and non-scheduled fellowship. The Lord is quite spontaneous. That is the nature of "Life". In most organizations, the thing that is missing is LIFE, because everything is so regimented and choreographed just perfectly. It's a great show, that's for sure, but it is missing LIFE. So, drop in anytime and eat my food and fellowship with me.

Quote:  
-----If you feel some time that you should bring in a new emphasis (that is lacking) into a church, then the proper way to do it is by first discussing the issue with the elder brothers, and then to do exactly as they direct. The improper way is to bring in your emphasis in the meetings by preaching the Word in contradiction to the direction set by the elders. If you disagree strongly with your elders in any matter, and feel that you cannot submit to their eldership, or if you feel that the elders are leading the church in a wrong direction, then remember that you are always free to leave such a church and start one of your own, with the emphasis that you feel is necessary and important.  
-----

In my church, one can stand up and speak forth the Word of God and the elders don't mind. They don't see the church as being theirs, but belonging to God. I appreciate this freedom. We are all submitting to God, even the Elders. In fact, my elders don't see it this way at all that we need to be submitting everything we want to say or do in a meeting to them first. They are afraid of quenching the spirit and would rather that we speak forth what God has placed in our hearts. Everything is always done decently and in order and many get a chance to share what God has placed on their hearts.

This shows me that they also have to have confidence in God that He will lead every member of the Church correctly. When we make too many rules about interacting with each other, we quench life. Do you make all these rules in your family. No. Mostly, interactions and relationships are spontaneous and not surrounded by rules.

Jesus, took some of the dumbest questions from his disciples in front of everyone. He never told them to clear their questions with him first because it may cause someone to stumble and stop following him.

Quote:  
----- A lack of confidence in your local elders does not mean that you are rebellious - for not all elder brothers are spiritually minded, and not all elder brothers necessarily inspire confidence.  
-----

Thank you for saying that!

Quote:  
-----But if you end up submitting to no-one anywhere, then it is easy for you to become a law unto yourself, and thus become an easy target for Satan to knock off and destroy. May God help us all to walk in the way of wisdom at all times.  
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Remember, when there is no one to submit to (in prison for instance), you always should be submitting to the Holy Spirit.

It just amazes me how many teachings there are that try to keep people submitting to man as if something terrible is going to happen if we don't somehow keep the organizations humming along. I think the reason there is so much teaching on submission, is because there are so many false leaders and people leave these organizations. So, the only way to get them to stay, is to teach them that they should submit to imperfect men and in doing this they will please God.

How about this?

Php 3:3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Who do we have confidence in?

Heb 3:14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;

Heb 3:6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

Here Paul talks about commanding us, but this refers to him ministering the Word and building up the church. Look at the 1st and 3rd verse for context.

2Th 3:3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.

2Th 3:4 And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.

2Th 3:5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

Oh that the "church leaders" would see the members of the Body of Christ in a different light.

Rom 15:14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

**Re: - posted by appolus (), on: 2011/9/2 20:52**

A true man of God commands respect and has influence, he does not insist upon it.

Men of God who lead are men who are full of the Holy Spirit, whether Apostles or elders or deacons. If one has a certain view on what it means to be "Full of the Holy Spirit," one may come to the conclusion that the vast numbers of men who currently hold those positions, do so illegitimately. We owe allegiance to the Word of God, not the doctrines of men.....  
.brother Frank

Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety. (prov 11:14)

**Freedom in Christ is walking with Him..., on: 2011/9/3 3:03**

"A true man of God commands respect and has influence, he does not insist upon it."

"Men of God who lead are men who are full of the Holy Spirit, whether Apostles or elders or deacons. If one has a certain view on what it means to be "Full of the Holy Spirit," one may come to the conclusion that the vast numbers of men who currently hold those positions, do so illegitimately. We owe allegiance to the Word of God, not the doctrines of men....Appolus

Amen Frank...very good word.: Long ago, when men figured out that there was a lot of power, prestige and wealth to be gained by usurping God's place as rulers over His body...He confronted it. Where man rules, God doesn't, and it always brings death and destruction to God's people.

Jeremiah 5:30-31

30 "An appalling and horrible thing  
Has happened in the land:  
31 The prophets prophesy falsely,  
And the priests rule on their own authority;  
And My people love it so!  
But what will you do at the end of it? "...BT

This idea of lordship over God's heritage is controlling, and legalistic, and this Doctrine is designed to keep the head man, and his men, in power and influence...over the Lay. The deeds of this doctrine end up quenching out life. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is LIBERTY, or FREEDOM!"

The Lord confronts those who would establish themselves as kings, or lords over His....Revelation of John quoted below  
....

"Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.

6. "Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, .....which I also hate!"...Jesus

This idea is exactly that...Submit to me, and obey.  
and.....

"But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality.

15 !!!!!..."So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans."...

16 "Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth."  
...Jesus wars against these men.BT

Yes, we need Godly and Holy men that will lay their lives down for the church as Shepherds. These men are unpaid, non-hirelings, that essentially do three things.

They feed God's people, with the Word of Life..

They Protect God's people from the wolf, and the lie, and usurpers who dominate.

They manifest the Lordship of Jesus, wherever they go in the body, and without, for the blessing of the church. They establish the church, that they would walk by faith under Jesus as Head and Lord..."The head of every man is Christ."

"But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.

4. Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head."

This includes the hand of a controlling Pastor. Learn to walk with Jesus as your Lord, in the wonderful freedom of being loved by Him, and you will become a life-giver, as you grow up in Him.

**Re: Freedom in Christ is walking with Him... - posted by appolus (), on: 2011/9/3 6:36**

Brother Tom writes.....

"Where man rules, God doesn't, and it always brings death and destruction to God's people."

Amen brother. This particular teaching has been used to great effect down through the centuries. As a young Catholic boy, it was absolutely forbidden to ever question the priest. In the false prophet circles, they must never be questioned because you are not to "touch God's anointed." People want to be ruled by a Pastor. They want him to do their thinking and studying for them. In my experience, Godly men encourage people to listen to God, to press into Him and see what He would say to them, hirelings want people to listen to them. Now, of course, there will be exceptions, as there always is, but in general, down through the centuries, this controlling issue, where men set up the teaching that they must never be questioned, has never been a Godly one. The question may be, do you want a Saul or do you want a David? .....brother Frank

**Re: Obey Your Leaders and Submit To Them (Heb. 13:17) by Zac Poonen - posted by cryinthenite, on: 2011/9/3 11:24**

Run from a "Leader" that wants you to "Submit" to them !!!

John 17 says "that they may be one as we are one"

The Father Son and Spirit are not in a power play.

God is love.

**Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2011/9/3 15:51**

The Lord Himself has put elders in authority as part of the local body. Paul's instructions to Timothy are as such, and there is great insight in Timothy's letters as to the relation of elders to laymen. When Poonen speaks of submission, it is not the idea of a man or woman blindly falling down at the feet of a church leader, giving them all their money, and obsequiously agreeing to interpret the Bible exactly as they do. This is a strawman.

A true elder will never "lord" his authority over another man in the Body of Christ. But there is no denying the fact that the Lord has given him a measure of authority to govern a local body, and he should do this in the mind and authority of Christ. Unfortunately, there is much dissension in religious matters and arbitration is often needed by a man or men wiser and stronger in God than you. By submitting to the decision of an elder in a church, God will often bring immense blessing and growth into your own personal life. I myself have witnessed this dynamically in my own walk.

God's purpose in our submission to leaders is primarily to foster meekness in us by which we can grow. All things work together for good when you submit instead of rebel; when you humble yourself and show a meek and quiet spirit, God steps in and acts on your behalf - every time. Even when I disagree, I have learnt to be silent and respectful to all men (no matter how much I thought myself to be right), and God has as a result given me incredible grace. (Of course, in matters of

f heresy you cannot acquiesce) But in all non-salvific cases, either the leader or person is removed by God, you are removed by God, or you earn great respect in the eyes of the leadership on account of your meekness and the Holy Spirit begins using you for ministry. A person cannot be a leader or an anointed teacher until he himself can submit to authority and endure reproof; we see this principle elucidated all throughout scripture.

**Re: Obey Your Leaders and Submit To Them (Heb. 13:17) by Zac Poonen - posted by appolus (), on: 2011/9/3 17:35**

Hi Paul, Zac writes.....

"Church matters include the conduct of the meetings of the church, the spiritual direction the church is going, the emphasis in the ministry of that church, the activities arranged by the church, etc., etc. In such matters, there must always be total submission to the directions given by the elders."

Zac says that in every single issue concerning church matters, total submission must be given at all times. Now brother, that is hardly a strawman. There is no Scriptures to support such a view. What we do have is hundreds and thousands of examples of this teaching, down through the centuries, causing untold harm and destruction to the the Body of believers. Many brave souls stood up against this teaching, and paid the ultimate price.....brother Frank

**Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2011/9/3 18:14**

Brother Frank,

You are not required to remain in a church where you disagree strongly with the leadership. The Biblical pattern is a plurality of elders. If you are at odds with elders, and such odds are irreconcilable, it is advisable to leave the church rather than stay and sew discord among the congregation. I believe this is the essence of what Poonen was saying. Like you, brother, there are many things I disagree with in how some local churches are run. I can choose to either join those churches, or not. If I do decide to join one of them, I shouldn't make waves and sew strife within that local body. Ultimately, I am there by my own volition, and can leave anytime I want to.

**Re: - posted by appolus (), on: 2011/9/3 18:32**

Brother Paul,

The issue is not about staying at a local church and sowing discord. We could discuss that but it would be a separate issue. The issue is about "total submission," in "matters of the church." That is either right or it is not. It is either Scriptural or it is not. If it is not Scriptural, then, it is a man's doctrine. My question to you brother Paul would be then, do you believe what the article taught "total submission in regard to church matters." If you agree, then we simply disagree. God bless you brother, I do not require that you agree with me :) .....brother Frank

**Re: - posted by Christisking (), on: 2011/9/3 19:47**

Brother Frank,

It is Scriptural not at all doctrine of man. If you are a part of a local church your Scriptural responsibility regarding submission over church matters is

Heb 13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

The above Scripture would include total submission to church matters. Of course you would have the option to leave the church if you felt led by God to do so. The Scripture is pretty clear - you don't have to agree with God on this matter but He doesn't leave much "wiggle room" The question is really whether we are going to submit to God and obey Scripture or not. If God says "Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves" then to me the question is much more whether I am going to submit to God rather than am I am going to submit to man regarding church matters. Sometimes we just we to change the way we look at it.

**Re: - posted by brothergary, on: 2011/9/3 21:14**

it is plain and clear we are to submit to them if they are truly gods servants

that dose not mean we can not question things if we think they are wrong

but it is more then lkly we will be wrong ,and not the mature in christ ordained by the spirit to teach and preach his gospel

**Re: - posted by appolus (), on: 2011/9/3 21:51**

Hi Christisking,

I appreciate that Scripture that you quoted. Consider what Matthew Henry says of this Scripture.....

2. Having thus told us the duty Christians owe to their deceased ministers, which principally consists in following their faith and not departing from it, the apostle tells us what is the duty that people owe to their living ministers (Heb\_13:17) and the reasons of that duty: (1.) The duty - to obey them, and submit themselves to them. It is not an implicit obedience, or absolute submission, that is here required, but only so far as is agreeable to the mind and will of God revealed in his word; and yet it is truly obedience and submission, and that not only to God, but to the authority of the ministerial office, which is of God as certainly, in all things belonging to that office, as the authority of parents or of civil magistrates in the things within their sphere.

You will note that that brother Henry says that it is not an " implicit obedience, or absolute submission."

The reason this is important, and this is the point of my comments is that only tyrants and institutions of men would ever " require," absolute or total obedience, and no where does Scripture instruct anything of the sort. Brother Paul West's points are well taken, but that, I would argue, is another issue. This call for " total submission,' in regard to " church matters, ' is akin to the claim of Catholic Popes of infallibility in matters of " faith and morals." To question them on this issue is to be ex-communicated. Now, if the issue is a " church matter,' and one finds the leadership to be in error, I would reject the notion that one ex-communicate himself and move on down the road.

Also, in early church history, one could not " just move on down the road." There was not, when Scripture was written, a multitude of churches and denominations as we see today. There was one local church in each town or city with one set of elders. This compelled people to actually solve their problems as opposed to falling out over the color of the carpet and " moving on down the road," and forming a new church.

One last thing to consider. Follow the path of the pilgrim church from the first century for the next 1500 years. They constantly rejected the authority of the " leaders,' and were accused of being troublemakers and much worse of course. Whether it was non-conformists or puritans or Lutherans or Moravians or ana-baptists on any other group one would care to mention, they would all be guilty of not submitting themselves totally to the established leadership of their day in " matters of the church."

Perhaps I am straining out a gnat here, and forgive me if I am, but Godly leadership does not have to dictate to anyone that they must render " total obedience,' to them in " matters of the church.' I believe in Godly leadership, I believe in submission, I do not believe in " total or absolute obedience," to men. .... brother Frank

**Re: - posted by brothergary, on: 2011/9/3 23:47**

hi brother wher does the bible make a distintion between submission and absute submission

and is brother paul realy asking us to go passed what is writtern

i dont think he is

i thnik in the past when the puratin or lutherans ect did not submit ,it was because of fasle doctrine and luke warmness ,and it ws write that they didd not submit

i dont think that is a biblical example of what the scripturs are dealing with regarding this  
but scripture would imply that the submission be towards one who taught sound doctrine

**Re: - posted by PaulFaculin, on: 2011/9/4 0:58**

It is really hard to find a fellowship today that you could agree on everything. But I don't think that; it is the perfect will of the Lord for many Christians, who doesn't have local Church and elder to submit to, to stay that way. And I think sometimes those people who, are "like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.", Are under the judgment in the same way to Cain who had been judged to become a wanderer all his life. And I do really examine myself on that because I too is in that struggle as well.

May the Lord help us on this very important area of our Christian life!

**Re: - posted by just-in, on: 2011/9/4 7:03**

Today, if you are in a house church, you can't just move on down the road. I suppose if you're not in one you can go to the church across the street or down the block but then you face a whole new set of extra biblical "rules" (in most cases) that you will have to "submit" to.

Since we keep speaking in vagueries, will someone please make a list of general items that they have experienced that "elders" want people to submit to them about?

Let me start with a few I have run into.

1. If you are a member of their church and "eat their food", you must tithe.
2. You must get involved in some ministry and abide by their rules for how the ministry is carried out.
3. You must support the Pastor's vision for this particular church.
4. If you have any personal giftings or ministry from the Lord, you must submit your ministry to them, meaning that you should not perform your ministry without it being sanctioned by them. It must become a ministry of so and so church and by submitting your ministry to them, you will then be directed by your church as to how you can carry out your ministry under their direction. (What happened to being led by the Holy Spirit?).
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

Can anyone add to this list? What have you been confronted with regarding submission or "total submission", because I am trying to understand in concrete ways how brothers want other brothers to submit to them?

And please, "laymen" and "clergy" are two words that should not be part of any Christian's vocabulary. We are all servants of the Most High God.

With respect,  
Just-in

**Re: Owning the elder; The Pyramid effect., on: 2011/9/4 7:12**

One thing that needs to be addressed in this discussion is the author's , deeds, and de-facto doctrine about this issue. Zac Poonen is the head of his Christian organization, Church, and churches. All of the Pastors under this church, and group of churches, are directly under his rule. He owns and runs his ministry, and I would bet, upon his passing, it will be handed down to his son.

This is thus established downward, to be established within the upcoming leaders to do the same...Preach submission to the elders, who in turn press it upon the people...To keep the tithes and offerings rolling in, and the submitted elders functioning.

This in turn keeps the churches expanding, one must instill this doctrine of submission to the PASTOR. ; This all to keep the machine running smoothly. I see this as error...but not unusual, nor prohibiting the Lord to save, or act within these Churches, or organizations.

The one and only reference to a SINGULAR Pastor in the Bible is DIOTREPHES..who , according to John the Apostle...loved the Preeminence. He of course was soundly rebuked by the Apostle.

It is evident that even Paul the Apostle, the greatest of earthly shepherds, submitted to the very churches he founded. It is also evident that ALL churches had a body of Elders...equally submitted....and that those churches were independent, , Non-denominational..

This is standard fare in India, with multiple single leaders running many churches just like a large corporation...skimming resources for their agenda... Which usually involves quite opulent lifestyles for themselves , and their lieutenants... COMPARED to the INDIAN MASSES ...

This issue of "Reaping the benefits." as the heart-pride greed motivation ...AS A LEADER...has been addressed by the Lord Jesus Himself, in his rebuke to the Pharisee Pastors of Judaism. It is exactly the same spirit that we face today. Read what he said to those who practiced these things...and loved the preeminence because of the BENEFITS...and in the end, it was the reason they murdered Him....because they despised getting exposed as to what they really were, and they knew, that if He kept it up, they would lose their place, and..POWER, PRIVILEGE, & PRESTIGE.

Before the INCARNATION, He said; about leaders who love dominion;

"You who hate good and love evil,  
Who tear off their skin from them  
And their flesh from their bones,  
3. Who eat the flesh of my people,

Strip off their skin from them,  
Break their bones  
And chop them up as for the pot  
And as meat in a kettle."

4 Then they will cry out to the LORD,  
But He will not answer them.  
Instead, He will hide His face from them at that time  
Because they have practiced evil deeds. "..Micah 3.

In Revelation, Jesus also spoke, calling them Lords over my people...or NICOLAITAN..transliterated. He said that He hated their deeds. and teaching...which is directly about the singular Pastor who loves to benefit.

The Church is owned by Jesus. Without Godly, Holy, and Loving Pastors, Shepherds who love God and His more than themselves....The Church would perish...if it were possible.

"THE RULERS OF THE GENTILES ARE CALLED BENEFACTORS!....BUT IT SHALL NOT BE SO AMONG YOU!".....  
..Jesus to the apostles.

**Re: - posted by just-in, on: 2011/9/4 7:47**

BrotherTom,

I had forgotten about the fact that NT Churches were independent and not controlled centrally by a "mother" church.

You can grow quite a kingdom when you are in charge of all elders in 50 or more churches. What would that do to a man, spiritually and psychologically to be the "head cheese" as it were over all elders in all churches? I can't even imagine. As you said, there is no precedence whatsoever in the NT.

Just-in

**Re: Obey Your Leaders and Submit To Them (Heb. 13:17) by Zac Poonen - posted by Oracio (), on: 2011/9/4 13:47**

Wow, I wish I had more time to post more in this thread.

First, thank you brother Greg for posting the article from Poonen. Much balance and wisdom there regarding doing your part as a member of a local congregation.

What I see so far in this thread is a slight contention between those who favor traditional church settings and those who favor participatory house churches.

I see that both sides have valid points. But in all honesty it seems that those on the side of HC are missing the spirit of the article from Poonen. But I think at least one or more persons from the traditional church setting is also missing the main thrust of the article.

What Zac is basically communicating is that if you believe that God has called you to a particular church (specifically a traditional church), you should be careful not to cause discord there even if you know things that they don't and you see a lack.

Paul West's posts were very helpful also in this matter. In non-essentials there is no need to make a fuss about how things are done. Even if you feel strongly that they are going against the Word then just leave and try to find a place where you will be comfortable enough with their doctrine and practice.

Bottomline is we need to respect one another in the Body and respect what God is doing in our lives and churches.

Those of us in a traditional church setting need to respect our brothers who are not part of a traditional church. We need to be careful not to paint a "rebellious" brush over these brothers. Many of them just want to see the dynamic of the first century church and they are grieved over how the Spirit is often quenched in our churches. We should also be careful not to put down brothers who may not even attend a house church or any church at the moment. They may be going through a tough time in trying to find a sound enough church in their area. We should not be quick to judge them and their motives.

Those who are part of the house church movement should also be careful not to come against their brethren who are in a traditional church. Even though you don't agree with some of their traditions or church practices, that doesn't mean that they are in heresy because of that and that you should divide from them.

We need to stop this "we they" mentality regarding this issue of church settings.

Remember, in essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity.

**Re: - posted by El-Bethel, on: 2011/9/5 23:10**

Brother Tom wrote,

"One thing that needs to be addressed in this discussion is the author's , deeds, and de-facto doctrine about this issue. Zac Poonen is the head of his Christian organization, Church, and churches. All of the Pastors under this church, and group of churches, are directly under his rule. He owns and runs his ministry, and I would bet, upon his passing, it will be handed down to his son."

Brother, what if your presumption about the author Zac is wrong? Have you ever considered the possibility that perhaps

your judgement about him could be wrong? If he is like one of those preachers who scream for money or long for fame rather than the glory of God, you MAY BE justified in your saying. If it is not so, I really pity you. You may have to give an account for every word that you have written. You need not have to agree with what the author has written and everyone has the freedom to disagree. But to judge someone presumptuously, it is very dangerous brother. Jesus said in John 8:15 "You judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone. 16 "But even if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone in it, but I and the Father who sent Me. Can you tell like Jesus that you have the Father with you, when you wrote about Brother Zac? Did not Jesus tell us in John 7:24.

24 "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

The danger of judging like this is verse 17.

34 "You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come.

Jesus warned of the impending judgment on those who judge according to appearance. You will seek Me and will not find Me. What a terrible judgment. Even if such a person seeks God, with fasting, praying, reading the Bible and sacrificing much, Jesus said that such person will not find Him. Not only that, such a person cannot go to a place where Jesus is. Impossible to enter heaven. This judgment came upon the Pharisees who judged Jesus based on appearance.

**Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2011/9/6 7:07**

Rebellion to God-installed authority has been one of the oldest banes in the history of man and of the church. There's just something about our nature that refuses to submit when God grants a measure of authority to a leader or group of leaders. Total submission is nothing more than a respectful adherence to directions of the leadership in a given body. If you choose to be a part of a local church, you are in fact agreeing to honor the pastor or elders in regard to their decisions as just and godly. You might not agree with every one of their decisions, but you do not rebel. You do not cause schism. You leave before that happens, and let someone else be the cause of it.

As I see it, there is nothing unscriptural in this Zac Poonen article Greg posted; in fact, I find it full of sound wisdom as in all his messages.

I currently attend an Assembly of God church with my wife and kids. I do not agree with the AG on several of their Fundamental Truths and bylaws, but at one time I held credentials and was in "good standing" with them. As long as I dutifully paid tithes, taught a pretrib rapture, and assented that glossolalia was the uniform, initial evidence of Spirit Baptism, all was good. But I soon found myself getting light on these sacrosanct and non-negotiable positions and willing to unsubmit.

I talked to the pastor of the church I attended (and who initially endorsed me to the AG). He attempted to dissuade me on these tenets, and told me he thought I was in error. We opened the Bible and did some gentle parrying. In the end, I held my ground, respectfully, and told him I could no longer be a part of the fellowship as a credentialed minister. We hugged, prayed, and I told him I would not be leaving the church. We simply agreed to disagree. He told me I could still minister in the church as long as I didn't bring up the points on which I disagreed with the Assemblies of God (in other words, don't ask, don't tell), and I promised him I would never do such a thing, as it would be ungodly and contentious...and disrespectful to his authority as a leader.

To this day we have a great relationship, he is a dear friend, an esteemed brother, and he treats me as such. Even though we have theological differences, God has given grace to continue fellowshiping and praying for each other. If and when the Lord moves us on, we will leave the church and go elsewhere, but for now, I gladly submit to his leadership and his vision for the church 100%. Again, submission does not denote agreement; it simply means I do not defiantly rebel and cause others to rebel. The Lord has installed this man in the pastorate, and not me, and despite his shortcomings and imperfections, I know he does a much better job than I could do. I would probably crumble and become disenfranchised with a pastorate in six months!

Colossians 3:23

1 Tim. 5:2,3,17

1 Peter 5:5

**Re: Obey Your Leaders and Submit To Them (Heb. 13:17) by Zac Poonen - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2011/9/6 9:46**

Thanks for posting this article, excellent counsel on what can be a controversial topic as the replies on this thread have shown.

Submission to authority is clearly part of the counsel of God's word, it begins in the home;

Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. (Colossians 3:20)

It continues in the workplace;

Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: (Colossians 3:22)

If we are to submit in all things to authority in these relationships how much more should we be submitted to authority in the matter of church conduct in the fellowship where God has planted us?

Zac Poonen is simply teaching the counsel of God concerning submission to authority in this article, he is not seeking to establish or solidify his own empire. In other articles he takes up the topic of the sober responsibility of those whom God has made overseers to feed the flock and protect them. He teaches the full counsel of God.

In case you are wondering, I hold no office in my local church.

In Christ,

Ron

**Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiiss (), on: 2011/9/6 10:35**

Hi Paul,

I believe that this is a very good perspective.

I was raised in several different fellowships with distinct "We Believe" lists that are binding to their respective ministers and congregations. I have not always agreed entirely upon certain details of such lists at each respective fellowship.

Sometimes, the disagreement wasn't necessarily a difference in position -- but an unwillingness on my part to acknowledge a particular position as "truth" when I wasn't entirely convinced one way or the other. For instance, I strongly lean toward the notion of a gathering of the Bride by Christ before the time of God's wrath on Earth. However, I am unwilling to say that I am convinced in a "rapture" -- because I am well aware that it is a possibility. As a result, I cannot say with total confidence, "I believe..."

Unfortunately, such specific doctrinal position statements often have become the catalyst for full fellowship or as a primer for that fellowship's description of doctrinal maturity. Sure, we can fellowship there...but not as "full" members.

This is one reason that I think that it might not be beneficial to be so widely specific in certain non-essential doctrines. Like the relationship with the pastor that you mentioned, it is entirely acceptable for two believers to hold different inclinations regarding certain non-essential doctrines.

I attended a congregation during college that was very specific in the essentials -- but mostly silent on non-essentials. There weren't any laws or bylaws on subjects like tithing or the exact manner by which eschatology will play out. It was a non-denominational congregation that was pentecostal in nature -- but there was no discussion (or requirement to believe) in regard to "initial evidence" of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Even the ages-old debate over terms of salvation were never discussed, mandated or even listed. The pastor was often quick to present various perspectives on certain issues, but never required a mandate on non-essential matters. He said that the Holy Spirit was powerful enough to lead us and guide us into all truth -- so he didn't have to try and force every last thing upon us.

While some would look at this as "spineless" (as one brother once told me), I consider it a good way to extend the hand of full fellowship to brethren without dividing up over disagreements regarding non-essential matters. As such, I have

attended various congregations where I might not always agree on every matter.

Still, I would never take part in many of the little "Korah's rebellions" that take place in many congregations today. A handful of people literally see (or create) a schism and then create subtle insurrections when the powers that be do not embrace their specific ideas, ways or beliefs. They had attended the church...and even agreed upon the list of "We Believes" (sometimes, to the point of taking "oaths" by way of Church membership) -- but then create a stink when they rethink one of those beliefs (or get upset about some other matter that people ignore).

Often, I notice that many such people become "wanderers" -- and even pride themselves in such an idea -- because they feel "rejected" by other believers. Moreover, they often think that their condition has to do with their desire to follow God in an undiluted way...which causes others to reject them. Ironically, many are actually the ones who are rejecting others...based upon differences of opinions or the fact that many might not have embraced their ideas or goals (that they sincerely believe came from God).

I know of an Assembly of God congregation where a small segment of members quit over a specific doctrinal dispute. They went and formed their own congregation (non-denominational) that was nearly identical in beliefs to the A/G they just left, but with the one notable difference in regard to the point of contention. Things went well and the congregation grew...but it wasn't long before that congregation also split over a different matter. The new faction created their own congregation...before it split over yet another doctrinal matter. Ultimately, the original A/G congregation remained strong, but the various split factions each had a small handful of members who were unwilling to fellowship with one another over often petty differences that somehow became "essential" enough to break fellowship with one another.

Anyway, I do think that I understand what Brother Zac Poonen is saying. I don't think that he is suggesting a requirement of absolute obedience or compliance to anything taught by a minister or authority in a local congregation. I have heard him speak in person and have noticed that his words are often seasoned with grace when it comes to non-essential issues (often teaching different perspectives of the same topic). And, of course, he has often mentioned the fallibility of pastors -- urging Church leaders to step down if they aren't right with God or cannot oversee their own families properly.

I think that Brother Zac sums it up nicely in the final paragraph of his message:

Quote:  
-----  
The way of wisdom then is to distinguish between where you must submit to the elders in a church, and where you don't have to. A lack of confidence in your local elders does not mean that you are rebellious - for not all elder brothers are spiritually minded, and not all elder brothers necessarily inspire confidence. But if you end up submitting to no-one anywhere, then it is easy for you to become a law unto yourself, and thus become an easy target for Satan to knock off and destroy. May God help us all to walk in the way of wisdom at all times.  
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Thanks for your post. I have gleaned quite a bit from it and from what others have said in this thread.

**Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2011/9/6 10:43**

Brother Tom wrote the following assumption about brother Zac Poonen:

"One thing that needs to be addressed in this discussion is the author's , deeds, and de-facto doctrine about this issue. Zac Poonen is the head of his Christian organization, Church, and churches. All of the Pastors under this church, and group of churches, are directly under his rule. He owns and runs his ministry, and I would bet, upon his passing, it will be handed down to his son.

This is thus established downward, to be established within the upcoming leaders to do the same...Preach submission to the elders, who in turn press it upon the people...To keep the tithes and offerings rolling in, and the submitted elders functioning.

What Tom assumed is simply not true.

I received the blessing of sitting through a conference with the elders of all the churches that comprise what is titled CFC churches, (those churches affiliated with brother Zac). I am so grateful to say that the entire meeting was directed at teaching the elders to be examples to and humble servants of their flocks. The strongest warnings were directed at the dan

ger of being a dictator rather than a loving shepherd. Much exhortation was given to allow and encourage young believers to exercise and develop their own gifts. Everyone there was full of joy and abounding in their faith.

I can say that what bother Tom presumed was not only totally absent from the elders meeting I attended, but in all of my many personal encounters with brother Zac, I have never seen one instance of what Tom intimated.

I would encourage everyone near brother Tom to visit the fellowship he regularly assembles with. This is the real evidence that he has an understanding of what true spiritual fellowship looks like. There is a real difference in having a theory of genuine spiritual fellowship and actually enjoying it weekly and daily.

makrothumia

**Re: - posted by mikey2, on: 2011/9/6 15:18**

Hmmm, reading through all of this and having experience in both ICs and House Churches, it cannot be denied that there is much more to submit to in the Institutional Church and you should be prepared to do this if this is what you choose.

There are many extra-biblical rules as Paul West attested to (things he did not agree with) and you need to be aware of what you are "agreeing" to.

It does not make any sense at all to go into any fellowship, whether it is an Institutional or House church type setting and stir up strife.

Like Paul West, if you don't like what you are being asked to submit to and don't think it is of God, have a dialogue with the elders and see where it goes from there.

Always walk in peace, even if it becomes clear to you that it would be best for you to leave.

If things are being done that go against your convictions, then don't sin against your own conscience. Let people do their thing and move on. You may not understand why people are so happy and content with the way things are, but I promise you there are many groups that are quite happy with their extra rules.

Life is short, move on...in peace.

Mike

**Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2011/9/6 19:39**

Brothers, I think we can miss what this issue really comes down to, and that is different beliefs regarding forms of church government. It seems that most protestant churches have a form that is hierarchical with the senior/lead pastor having the most authority and every decision having to pass through him. Other churches believe in a plurality of elders with equal authority. Still other traditional churches make decisions by congregational consensus or voting. And you can probably think of other types of church government being practiced in traditional churches.

What most if not all traditional churches seem to have in common is the way they conduct their weekly meetings. For the regular members, typically you go in, grab a bulletin, sing songs unto the Lord, listen to the preaching of God's Word, sing some more, stay and mingle afterward if you want, and then leave(not saying I have a huge problem with all of that, though I used to;).

Many in the house church movement favor consensual decision making, with no one person or group of persons exercising absolute authority over the members. And for many, their weekly meetings differ radically from traditional churches. There is more spontaneity and freedom for others to participate in the meetings.

I'm sure for most of you all I wrote above is redundant. But I think it's important for us to step back and see the big picture and see what this is really all about. We need to consider whether or not it's worth dividing over this "non-salvific" matter of types of church government.

So when it comes to traditional church versus house church, to me it's not so much a matter of rebellion toward authority

verses submission to God-ordained authority, or on the other hand compromising the Word versus freedom under the leadership of Christ(though sometimes that is the case). But rather it is more a matter over different views of church government and how meetings are conducted.

Like many have pointed out already, If you agree to be part of a traditional church, you know what you are getting into for the most part. You know that the services are going to be conducted a certain way and there will likely be no change in that. You can either agree to be part of that type of church or not.

Even though I don't agree with many of the traditions in most churches, by God's grace I've learned not to divide over those things. If I do divide over those non-essentials I will be without any fellowship for a long long time. Thankfully in my case it is not necessary for me to be out of fellowship because there are a few sound enough traditional churches in my area that I can attend and be part of.

But I understand that for some Christians it may be necessary to be out of fellowship because there may not be any healthy enough traditional or house churches in their area. So I've learned not to judge a Christian's character based on whether or not he/she attends a church. Anyway that's all I gotta say for now.

**Re: - posted by sarahsdream, on: 2011/9/6 20:20**

I believe that what it comes down to is one thing: our heart.

The Lord puts us in many environments as we travel this sod and is always watching our hearts.

David and his mighty men decided to leave Saul, but there were some men of God that stayed.

In both cases, the heart is what's important.

1Sa 10:26 And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched.

Men went with David, whose hearts God and touched and men stayed with Saul, whose hearts God had touched.

I hope you get a bigger picture of God, now.

So, wherever you find yourself, if you truly believe God wants you there, even if the leaders have a heart of Saul, God can still work in your heart if you let him. Pray, pray, pray and watch God move.

In Christ,  
Sarah

**Re: - posted by appolus (), on: 2011/9/6 21:20**

A lot of interesting replies and much to ponder, especially in the days in which we live. Many times the Lord has called me to places where I was not in theological agreement with the leaders. I attended a Southern Baptist church for over a year one time at the Lord's leading, and as most would probably guess, I am not a Baptist :) I ended up best friends with the Pastor and we would have the longest lunches having some great discussions, definitely iron sharpening iron. And even though he knew I was "of the tongue speaking persuasion," he and I ministered together in old folks homes and so on. At the end of the year he said a remarkable thing, that I was the only one that he could have true fellowship with in the church and who wanted to speak about Jesus.

I attended a four point Calvinist Baptist seminary, and of course I am not a Calvinist nor a Baptist. One of the great times of my life and I learned so much about the Word of God in those times. The dean of the college would pass me and tell me "we are praying for you Frank," with a smile, because he knew I was a "Pentecostal." At the end of my "premillennial dispensational," class of which I was of the total opposite view, the Prof thanked me for my participation and honesty in the class and I ended up with a 93:) Just last year I spent a year at IHOP, and quite a bit of it disturbed me, yet again, the Lord had led me there. I had no agenda at any of these places. I came in quietly and left quietly at what I believe to be the

e Lords leading in my life. Boy, that was quite a mouthful, but sometimes people make suppositions that are simply and totally wrong. So, finally to my point, and some may disagree but I would love to hear an opinion based on the actual point. Total surrender or absolute obedience to men is no-where taught in the New Testament. This is a narrow point, but its the only point I personally have been trying to make. Perhaps some opinions from Scripture on this narrow ( but broad implications) point? .....brother Frank

**Re: , on: 2011/9/6 21:51**

Quote:

-----Appolus wrote:  
Total surrender or absolute obedience to men is no-where taught in the New Testament.  
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Amen!

Many men behind pulpits have taken actual Courses on how to get their people onto buses - when the time comes - to be round up and taken to stadiums, etc - preaching Romans 13 on submission to Governments - but in these last days - we know where that will lead, as well as what you've mentioned of false doctrines and so forth.

The Spirit of Truth is our Guide, completely, and we'll stand before GOD accountable to how we've individually followed HIS Voice in the end and His only.

GOD Bless you!

**Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2011/9/6 22:25**

appls wrote,  
"So, finally to my point, and some may disagree but I would love to hear an opinion based on the actual point. Total surrender or absolute obedience to men is no-where taught in the New Testament. This is a narrow point, but its the only point I personally have been trying to make. Perhaps some opinions from Scripture on this narrow ( but broad implications) point? .....brother Frank"

brother Frank, with all due respect that is where it seems you missed the spirit of what brother Zac wrote. It is obvious from the article that he did not mean absolute surrender in all matters of faith, as you seem to think. In the opening paragraph and throughout the article, when he mentions church matters, he makes it clear that he means matters that are non-essential Christian doctrines or practices. And he stated clearly that in some matters you are free to do as you feel led to do.

Though you may not have realized it, from your last post you described "absolute surrender" in your own personal experiences in those different places you attended. You did not choose to divide over those issues while you were there. You walked in humility and submission to their preferences in what they were teaching though you did not agree. That is what Zac is basically encouraging. Not that you compromise in any important Christian doctrines, or that you go against your conscience in important doctrines, but simply that you respect what their vision is for the church.

You and I can't come into any church situation and think we can just start changing the way things are done or taught. If we do start telling them they need to change this or that we will sow discord there.

Please humor me with this quick example. Let's say you decide to attend a traditional church somewhere. And let's say you don't believe that there should be only one person doing all the teaching in a church every Sunday but that's the way things are done there. At that point you can either, "absolutely surrender" to their preference of having one person teach/preach or, begin to say within yourself, "I will confront the leadership here and share with them and the church members my views on this matter." I'm sure you would agree that the first choice would be the wiser of the two, no?

As to a Scripture, the one that mainly came to mind is Proverbs 6:16-19,

"16 These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: 17 A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, 18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, 19 A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren."(NKJV)

**Re: , on: 2011/9/6 22:36**

Frank said: "I came in quietly and left quietly at what I believe to be the Lords leading in my life."

I didn't detect anything remotely like Prov 6 in Frank's words at all.

We also were taught, that if you don't agree with a Church, if GOD so leads, you speak to the Pastor first and the elders if possible and if no agreement can be reached, you quietly leave - doing no harm to any there - for GOD will hold that group of "leaders" responsible.

I think Frank's points were valid and not against Zac's, per say - but I also feel it's important to factor in "Total surrender or absolute obedience to men is no-where taught in the New Testament" because as a babe in Christ, this question often comes up and many have been snared in the past by shepherding movements and taken captive by false leaders by their twisting scriptures - ie. cults, Jim Jones, etc. etc. that will increase as the days go on, Jesus said.

Bless you Too Brother Oracio.

**Re: Obey Your Leaders and Submit To Them (Heb. 13:17) by Zac Poonen, on: 2011/9/7 0:28**

Speaking for myself - my experiences in Church and house church hopping, out of necessity only because I've had to move so much and followed many TV ministries and all since the mid 70's -- I do feel a word of caution is needed still, because many-many had to learn the very hard way, that a man can fall and take droves with them when they do. They can and will fall morally and/or doctrinally.

Paul praised the Bereans for searching the Scriptures to be sure that what they were hearing was Biblical.

Many good points are coming out of this thread - and none should be disregarded but until The LORD comes - we don't know what men will fall in either area.

I cannot count how many ministries I've seen fall in 35 yrs and how it affected those who followed them.

We need to know His Word and as His Sheep, Know His Voice.

We need to be very sensitive to His Spirit and Word in order to know when to stay and when to move on.

The young in Christ, need to be protected and led to The Shepherd of The Sheep... nothing else is more important than this. To lead them to John 16:13,14 and John 10.

Many desire to be led solely by another human being - but we have to keep in mind that until Jesus Returns - these leaders remain "human beings" and the possibility of them to suddenly shift gears in doctrine or moral purity is an ever present threat - and one that for the less mature, can 'shipwreck' their faith - as we've seen through these throughout these last 2000 yrs.

Paul includes sound doctrine and moral purity in his description of the ministerial callings -

Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Eph 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Eph 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

Eph 4:16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

When any man in ministry falls - we need to be there to help those who have had their faith injured or led astray, by pointing them back to The Head of The Church and re-produce another bunch of Bereans.

His Shalom to all.

**Re: - posted by mguldner (), on: 2011/9/7 1:20**

Wait? What's the deal?

I skimmed the responses to this, God's word doesn't set up ANY Authority for His Church other than Christ Jesus. Romans 6 is not addressing "Church Authority" Paul is addressing the Government or Civil Authority of the Land.

Now what Authority is over the Church? Ah Christ our head and what does the Word say we are to do? Submit to Him and there is another we should submit? Who? One another! Historically and biblically there is no such animal as an Authoritative power other than Christ Jesus operating in His Church. What we have today is a twist of doctrine regarding the "Church Authority" Now something else to consider is the structure God did set up is of Elders or Mature believers, all of whom know the Lord greatly enough to be humbled and submitted to Christ Jesus. We see historically Multiple Elders were in place for one church group, city, or region, this protected against one of them being an Authority but ensured all were submitted to one another in Humility and to Christ Jesus. :)

Also a good elder will be humble enough to never assume or make claim to the title themselves but will let others see them as an Elder by their actions and wisdom. What actions? Servanthood within the Body and community.

**Re: - posted by appolus (), on: 2011/9/7 6:01**

Brother Oracio writes.....

"brother Frank, with all due respect that is where it seems you missed the spirit of what brother Zac wrote. It is obvious from the article that he did not mean absolute surrender in all matters of faith, as you seem to think. In the opening paragraph and throughout the article, when he mentions church matters, he makes it clear that he means matters that are non-essential Christian doctrines or practices. And he stated clearly that in some matters you are free to do as you feel led to do.

Brother Zac writes.....

"Church matters include the conduct of the meetings of the church, the spiritual direction the church is going, the emphasis in the ministry of that church, the activities arranged by the church, etc., etc. In such matters, there must always be total submission to the directions given by the elders"

Brother Oracio, my point has nothing to do with brother Zac, and in this I think you misunderstand me. "Playing the ball and not the man," in this case the point is not about brother Zac or me or anyone in particular, my point is total surrender to men, in any sphere of life. If one is going to have a teaching as the one put forward, one must have solid Biblical authority in which to do so. I am saying that there is zero Scriptural authority for "total surrender," to men. The only man that I am totally surrendered to is the man Christ Jesus, my Lord and my Saviour, and I could only wish that I was indeed "totally surrendered" to Him, it's my life's work. Key to me in all of this is the voice of God and Scripture. If, for instance, the Lord speaks to my heart and asks me to say something, then that is what I must do, despite the teachings and the doctrines of men. Let me give you an example. I was once given a word and the Lord asked me to give it to the elders of the church that I was attending (nine years) It was one of the largest non-denominational churches in North America at the time. The word was simply this "You fear men rather than fearing God." I did that trembling. One of the elders/pastors jumped up out of his chair and was shouting "you cannot possibly know my/our hearts." It turns out the Pastor of that church was cheating, he ran off with the secretary and a large amount of money, and many of the elders had ignored warnings from others about this from others who knew what was going on. Yet, the general teaching was "you must not touch God's anointed." This had been so drummed into them, that they were afraid to confront the Pastor.

So, if you're in a church and the Lord gives you a word, then you would be advised to act on that rather than respecting a man-made doctrine. Would this be rare? Yes I believe that it would. Total surrender belongs to God and God alone and that indeed is Scriptural.....brother Frank

**Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2011/9/7 6:43**

Brother Frank your point is well taken. I'm thinking maybe Zac should not have used the phrase "total submission" but something else like "much respect" or "much caution" etc., for that is what I see he meant. I can see how "total submission" can be misunderstood and misleading to some. You are right in saying ultimately total surrender belongs to Christ and Christ alone for He shares His glory with no other.

**Re: - posted by just-in, on: 2011/9/7 7:35**

I agree, Oracio.

In today's world, it is a good idea to use a different phrase than "total submission", which is not even in the Bible.

Also, it is obvious that many here know Zac Poonen but others do not, so those that know him, are willing to give him a pass because they have a relationship with him and "know" what he is NOT saying. While others, who do not know him, just see his phrase of "total submission". I don't know him, but if I did, I might mention to him, brother to brother, that there may be better phrases to use, like the ones you mentioned.

Definitely not a good choice of words in a very public forum.

Just-in

**Re: total submission - posted by Sree, on: 2011/9/7 8:32**

I don't understand what point you are making here brother. I personally know brother Zac and I respect him a lot and I know his spiritual maturity. There is no way he will use an improper word in an article.

The total submission referred here is only in church matters and in Church matters only Elders should take decision. If you have a suggestion call him personally and talk to him about it. If you feel the Church is led in a wrong direction then move away from the church and go to a church where you can submit totally in Church matters. It is simple as it is and there is no need to argue at all.

What Bro Zac tries to avoid here is people sitting in a Church thinking their elders are taking the Church in a wrong direction. I personally was tempted to think such ways when few cultural issues were raised in my Church. But I did not fall to those temptations and then submitted to the elders and followed their cultural standards when I am in Church but in my personal life I did what God told me is right. This is exactly what brother Zac writes here.

Regarding his message on people who come to Church without being a regular part of it. He is writing it from our perspective and not from Church perspective. A Church should always welcome people who are walking. But from a personal point of view, it is good for you to submit to one church as a part of its body instead of living alone without any Church. In our Church which is based on Zac's spiritual leadership we encourage people walking in anytime. We consider them as a part of our body only when we find a commitment in them.

**Re: Obey Your Leaders and Submit To Them (Heb. 13:17) by Zac Poonen - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2011/9/7 8:36**

"Church matters include the conduct of the meetings of the church, the spiritual direction the church is going, the emphasis in the ministry of that church, the activities arranged by the church, etc., etc. In such matters, there must always be total submission to the directions given by the elders." Zac Poonen

In a further attempt to bring light upon confusion: Only in "such matters" does Poonen maintain that we are to be in total submission (i.e. no rebellion at any point):

1. "The conduct of the meetings of the church." This is more than adequately overseen by the leadership, and unless the meetings are in violation of I Cor. 14, there really is no reason for you not to submit. If the meetings are not charismatic enough, or too charismatic, you can always seek out a church that conforms more to your liking.
2. "The spiritual direction the church is going." The Holy Spirit should be behind this, and the leadership should be attuned to His direction. If you detect the direction to be ill-fated scripturally, you should find another church that is healthy. But never should you remain in unsubmission and create schism within that body.

3. "The emphasis of the ministry of the church." If the church is pronouncedly evangelistic, you must respect it as such and not try to change the ministerial objective. Totally submit to this vision, or find another church that fulfills the purpose you're looking for and are more comfortable with.

4. "The activities arranged by the church, etc., etc." Activities are non-essential to salvation, and if you should choose to be a part of them, your efforts should be dedicated to the Lord instead of men (Col. 3:23; I Cor. 10:31). An example of an "et cetera" could be the choice of music. Music is a huge issue by which many people fall out of fellowship! Although contemporary Christian music is not my forte, I can still find room enough in it to lift my thoughts and affections to God for 30 minutes. By exercising forbearance and meekness in the areas above where we are prone to rebel and murmur against authority, God often teaches us profound spiritual lessons.

Zac Poonen is not advocating blind allegiance and total submission to men-leaders in all areas of our walk, for he includes this:

"The way of wisdom then is to distinguish between where you must submit to the elders in a church, and where you don't have to." Zac Poonen

On a sidenote, I know Zac Poonen on a semi-personal level, have been to several of his meetings in Austin, spent time talking with him, and can tell you without any hesitation that this brother is a most humble and mature servant of God, with a wealth of wisdom to share. I have also met many wonderful brothers and sisters from CFC over the years. CFC began decades ago as a house meeting and has endeavored to remain as close as possible to the New Testament standard in terms of the plurality of authority, conduct of meetings, principles of giving, integrity of preaching, etc. I thank God for introducing me to them.

**Re: - posted by just-in, on: 2011/9/7 9:06**

Hi Sree,

We are not arguing, but rather striving for truth and clarity in this matter.

Usually, someone will allow you to speak into their life if you have relationship with them. I do not have any relationship with Zac and no one is trying to correct him. He put out a public message and we are only "publicly" commenting on it and how it may be interpreted by others. As you can see, it is interpreted different ways.

You make an interesting comment here:

Quote:

-----We consider them as a part of our body only when we find a commitment in them.  
-----

I guess the keyword that you mention is "our body".

So, when a certain commitment that you are looking for is manifested, then you consider them a part of YOUR body as opposed to the Body of Christ.

Just curious, what does this commitment look like?

Also, you may mean this with all your heart, but we all make mistakes.

Quote:

-----There is no way he will use an improper word in an article.  
-----

Thank you,  
Just-in

**Re: - posted by Sree, on: 2011/9/7 9:42**

Every Church is an individual body of Christ. So when I referred as our body it means the body of Christ that we are constructing.

By commitment what I meant is whether they are coming to our Church regularly and then whether they agree with our belief. I am not an elder and I have been part of a CFC based Church only for 2 years. From what I understand in our Church the elders meet new comers whom they find coming regularly to Church and discuss their faith and commitment before involving them in holy communion. This means they become part of our body and share our burden.

Based on what God spoke to me when I read 1st Corinthians 12. The Gifts are given only to people who are part of a body and if you are not part of a body of Christ and if you do not share the burden of other members like how every part in a human body does then you cannot expect any spiritual gifts. So it is important for everyone to be a part of a body of Christ instead of living alone without submitting to a Church.

**Re: - posted by just-in, on: 2011/9/7 11:42**

Thank you for your answer, Sree.

We don't have any test for commitment to US in our fellowship. Some people cannot come regularly and we are just happy to see them when they can come. Their giftings still work and are acknowledged as long as they are dwelling in peace with their brethren.

Just-in

**Re: - posted by Sree, on: 2011/9/7 11:58**

Yes God will never take away the gifts he gives to people. These gifts were intended for people to build the body of Christ but when they move out of the body or do not show the commitment that they once showed to receive the gifts then God will not take it back. Again this is my personal understanding of 1 Corinthians 12.

So God always intended us to be in fellowship with one another. The importance of being part of a local Church cannot be taken away.

If your fellowship elders decide to take decisions in discussing with every member then it is good and it is their personal understanding and belief. If they want to take it alone and then announce it to Church then it is also fine. In all cases as a member of the fellowship one should submit to the authority of their elders. What your elders are following cannot be set as a standard because it depends on the maturity of the Church fellow members. If the members are infants in Christ then it is better for the mature elders to take the decision.

**Re: , on: 2011/9/7 12:50**

Harold Camping comes to mind - for just one of thousands who claim to be "called to leadership". How about the 'prophecies' of the NAR group? We could go on and on about who are the 'truly called' and what does that entail.

What are the signs that one is truly called to leadership of any kind?

In these days of Television, radio, internet, mass-mailings, ANYONE can call themselves "called to lead".

It's a dangerous world out there and the call for caution is always Biblical.

Anybody under the sun can start a ministry in these days and demand obedience to themselves - but only The Spirit of GOD and His Word can discern 'who' called them. As human nature would have it - many desire leadership but few servanthood. Many 'covet' positions of controlling others - but GOD calls those who normally fight against any such calling, feeling unworthy to lead - whether they be a pastor, teacher, prophet or a 'leader' of any sort.

I was just reminded - What did Jesus mean here? ...

If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than He that sent him.

John 13:14-16

Found some good commentaries on this section in e-sword.

"Go and do likewise"

**Re: - posted by mikey2, on: 2011/9/7 13:14**

Even if you are "truly called", you are a servant and the last time I checked, no one submits to servants. We always submit to God. This word of submission is a word regarding mutual agreement and unity and peace. Not a word that cannot be a servant to a king. See what Jesus says, below.

Mar 10:42 But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

Mar 10:43 But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:

Mar 10:44 And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

Mar 10:45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Psa 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! (This does not say, how good and how pleasant it is for all the brethren to give total submission to our "great one".

Jesus used "great one", and that is why I used it.

Mike

**Re: - posted by cryinthenite, on: 2011/9/7 18:57**

Christ alone is head.

I submit to the Lord in any brother.

If I am strong in the Lord I can submit to the weak to give them strength in the Lord.

Who knows I might be the weak one the very next day and need that brother the way he needed me.

Real leadership is the CROSS OF JESUS never man's ideas for your life.

**Re: - posted by appolus (), on: 2011/9/7 21:59**

And so, the question remains, and to a great degree, remains unanswered by the replies so far, is "total submission," to men a Scriptural truth? If it is Scriptural, should we not, in our replies, give the Scriptures and why we believe that it teaches "total submission." Let's take the men out of the replies, and how we know them and like them. I know and like many men with whom I totally disagree with. I trust them as men and they have integrity, but what has that to do with the very narrow question of "total submission to men," in whatever capacity it is, essential or non-essential. But I am sure that we all agree that teaching is based solely upon the Word of God and how that speaks to any issue, no matter who is teaching it.

In that vein, the Scripture that was quoted to me in an earlier post was Heb 13:17. I gave a quote by Matthew Henry who clearly stated that this Scripture in no way implied "total submission." Let me just give you an opinion from another.....

Ray C. Stedman wrote the following in his commentary on Hebrews:

Several things should be noted about Hebrews 13:17 and 1Thess 5:12. The word "obey" comes from the Greek *peitho*, "to persuade." The present imperative middle form, used here, means "permit oneself to be persuaded," "yield to persuasion." It definitely does not mean to blindly follow orders. The phrase those who are over you in the Lord should simply be "your leaders in the Lord." There is no thought of being "over" anyone, or others being "under" a leader. The authority of a Christian leader is not command authority but servant leadership. A servant has authority, as Jesus said he had, because he awakens by his loving service a desire to comply. Or he is persuasive because of his logic or knowledge.

When you consider the meaning of the word obey in the context of this Scripture, is it not a beautiful thing. To "per

mit oneself to be persuaded," or "yield to persuasion." These are phrases of the Spirit, this comes under the shadow of "mutual submission." A man who is full of the Holy Spirit will always be open to being questioned and considering what one has to say. Consider Peter when he was confronted by Paul. Did he get upset and make accusations toward Paul? No, he called a council. And why did he call a council? Because.....

Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety. (prov 11:14)

This used to be known as a "teachable spirit." If we have a man or a group of men who cannot, ever, be questioned or challenged and the only solution is to "move on down the road," what does that say about a "teachable spirit." If the leaders in a church do not have such a spirit, then how can we suppose that it is taught to others? To be open to persuasion is a beautiful humble thing.

There are multiple occurrences of the word "obey," in the NT. The most common word, is "hupakouo," meaning to be subordinate, to conform to command and authority. Here is where you will find it.....

Mat 8:27 ...Winds and seas "obey," Jesus  
Mark 1:27... Unclean spirits "obey," Jesus  
Mark 4:41 winds and sea obey Jesus  
Luke 8:25..Winds and sea obey Jesus  
Luke 17:6.. a tree plucked up and tossed into the sea  
Rom 6:12 ... Must not be under the command or authority of sin  
Rom 6:16... Same as above  
Eph 6:1.....Children must obey parents  
Col 3:20...same as above  
Col 3:22....servants must obey masters  
2Thes 1:8...Must obey the Gospel  
2Thes 3:14..The Word of God  
Heb 5:9.....God

Brothers and sisters, the same word could have been used by the Holy Spirit in Heb 13:17 but it was not.....brother Frank

#### Owning the elder: "The Pyramid effect"..Who is lord?, on: 2011/9/8 1:09

"Brother Tom said in "Owning the elder:The Pyramid effect":

"One thing that needs to be addressed in this discussion is the author's , deeds, and de-facto doctrine about this issue. Zac Poonen is the head of his Christian organization, Church, and churches. All of the Pastors under this church, and group of churches, are directly under his rule. He owns and runs his ministry, and I would bet, upon his passing, it will be handed down to his son."

"This is thus established downward, to be established within the upcoming leaders to do the same...Preach submission to the elders, who in turn press it upon the people...To keep the tithes and offerings rolling in, and the submitted elders functioning.of our

This in turn keeps the churches expanding, one must instill this doctrine of submission to the PASTOR. ; This all to keep the machine running smoothly. I see this as error...but not unusual, nor prohibiting the Lord to save, or act within these Churches, or organizations.

The one and only reference to a SINGULAR Pastor in the Bible is DIOTREPHES..who , according to John the Apostle...I loved the Preeminence. He of course was soundly rebuked by the Apostle.".....Brother Tom

Zac Poonen said;"Church matters include the conduct of the meetings of the church, the spiritual direction the church is going, the emphasis in the ministry of that church, the activities arranged by the church, etc., etc. In such matters, there must always be total submission to the directions given by the elders."..Zac Poonen

El Bethel said:" What if your presumption about the author Zac is wrong? Have you ever considered the possibility that perhaps your judgement about him could be wrong? If he is like one of those preachers who scream for money or longs for fame rather than the glory of God, you MAY BE justified in your saying. If it is not so, I really pity you.".. El Bethel

Evidently I am not wrong..except I do not know if his son will inherit the ministry..and to that I said "I bet". I am not judging the man, but the fruit of his deeds, and his words.I also noted that the Lord could save, or act in these situations...and He can.

Appolus said; quite eloquently; "Zac says that in every single issue concerning church matters, total submission must be given at all times. Now brother, that is hardly a strawman. There is no Scriptures to support such a view.

" What we do have is hundreds and thousands of examples of this teaching, down through the centuries, causing untold harm and destruction to the the Body of believers. Many brave souls stood up against this teaching, and paid the ultimate price.".....brother Frank

In my opinion, this system is classic Nicolaitanism..where men become the rulers over God's heritage rather than God. Church matters are Faith matters, which is at the core of our being, as we are designed as the human.

Then, the meetings become all about the man, the teaching, the pews, and free body life vanishes. Of course, the blessing is touted among the community as to "our holy and right orthodoxy"...but in the end, as I have witnessed, the Holy part morphs into legalism, and more often than not, the One Man Show.

It is the trickle downward, and condemned by the lord. It brings division, and does much hurt, especially, as Frank bravel stated, to those who will not be in total submission to the elders. They usually are assassinated in character, or, as Frank said, martyred.

**- posted by Oracio (), on: 2011/9/8 13:12**

Brothers, let's remember that Zac Poonen is a man who makes mistakes like all of us. So he may not have used the best wording to communicate his message. But how about giving him a break. From his life and ministry he seems to be a great brother in the Lord whom God has gifted in the Word to bless the Body. I understand we should not put him in too high a pedestal, but we should appreciate how the Lord uses him to bless the Body with sound teaching.

In all honesty I don't fully agree with pastors/elders exercising such "absolute authority" in all important decisions regarding "church matters", without willingness or eagerness to hear out other members who are not pastors/elders. In the book of Acts we see that "all" the church was involved in the decision-making process even regarding non-essential or non-doctrinal matters(example: Acts 6:5). But I understand that the vast majority of churches do not operate that way. And I'm not gonna let that disagreement on church government keep me from fellowshiping in a healthy body of believers in my area. Again, I thought the article was very helpful in giving guidance to believers like me who disagree with certain church policies in the churches we may attend. I know chances are I'm never going to find any church where I can fully agree on everything taught or practiced.

The saying goes, "if you ever find a perfect church make sure you don't join it because you will ruin it", or something like that:)

**Re: - posted by just-in, on: 2011/9/8 13:52**

My, my, my, I did not think this thread was still going.

I thought Appolus' latest reply was very good. Ray Stedman is right. And even if I don't know greek, the Holy Spirit communicates to me that it is persuasion and not submission. The Bereans did not submit to Paul, otherwise they would not have questioned him. They respected him and searched the scriptures so they could be persuaded.

The Bereans received the Word with gladness and I am sure they "wanted" to be persuaded, since afterall, it was Paul the Apostle that was teaching them. Yes, they very much wanted to be persuaded, but first, they had to check the Lord's Word.

I also want to be persuaded by brethren in Christ and that is what this website is all about. Persuade me brethren!!

Regarding this subject, I am persuaded that we do not exercise lordship over each other. I am persuaded that we all are to be totally submitted to the Lord Jesus Christ. I am persuaded that we should all contend for the faith together. I am persuaded that we do not follow any man's vision or support any man's vision. I am persuaded that we follow and support the Lord's vision and He implants this in men's hearts. I am persuaded that if we were all to look to the Lord, we would recognize those that are mature and to be respected as the Bereans respected Paul, yet not so much that they gave him total submission. That was reserved for the Lord and the Bereans are a wonderful example that God placed in the Word for us. I am persuaded as we look to the Lord we will recognize the traditions and teachings of man that nullify the Word of God. And I am persuaded by much more, but this will do for now. I am persuaded that Godly, mature brothers can offer Godly, mature counsel. I have one Father and that is God, I call no man teacher or rabbi (pastor) according to the Lord's command. He was telling us to call no man by a religious title. I call no man by a religious title. I call my brothers by their name or by brother. That is what they are. They are my brothers. We are all brothers. The most mature brothers will only want to be called a brother.

A brother that thinks he has special status will want to be called something else than brother or than by his name.

The Lord is tired of the Nicolaitan spirit because it puts men between him and his children.

Men's kingdoms are all coming down to a crashing halt.

This should not be about Zac. Zac's article was only the grist for conversation about total submission, or any kind of submission to man. This conversation should not be about Zac.

Just-in

**Re: - posted by appolus (), on: 2011/9/8 14:10**

" This conversation should not be about Zac."

Praise the Lord, I have been saying that in almost all of my posts. Some people seem to want to make it about brother Zac, but to me that is simply a way of avoiding the question I continued to ask. Its a good question, its a very relevant question and I believe that its relevance will only increase as we move ever closer to the Lord returning. One of the moderators once said, and I liked it since I am a Scotsman who grew up on soccer, " play the ball and not the man," meaning, keep your eye on the ball, the question at hand and the relevance of it. ....brother Frank

**Re: - posted by just-in, on: 2011/9/8 14:58**

It is an excellent question that we should not be afraid to confront.

It is only a fearful question to confront if you stand to lose something.

**Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2011/9/8 15:14**

Okay house church brethren, let me see if I understand correctly where you are coming from. Are you saying that if there is a hierarchy in a church as to their church government(where one pastor is the "senior" pastor), that is sufficient ground for you not to attend or fellowship in that church? Even if they have good things going for them in other areas, such as a sound doctrine(in essentials), a heart and passion to reach the lost with the biblical gospel, a heart to see biblical revival, a heart and passion to clothe and feed the poor, etc.?

In other words, if there are no house churches that believe as you do in your area(since they are so scarce), you would not consider attending a healthy traditional church at all if it was nearby?

I ask that because that is the impression I am getting from some of the replies here. It seems that many house church minded believers make this issue of church government a matter of division. I used to be that way myself. At the same time it seems that many traditional church minded believers also see this as a matter of division from HC brethren.

I think it is okay for us to discuss views on church government in a respectful manner, like with any other non-salvific issue

ue(like Calvinism/Arminianism, Pre-trib/Post-trib,etc.). But when discussing these things we can feel so strongly as to start using certain demeaning phrases that offend those we disagree with. That causes division. Both sides are guilty of that.

**Re: - posted by PQ (), on: 2011/9/8 15:31**

Brother Zac Poonen preached a message entitled: Are you a soulish or a spiritual Christian?

The message can be seen on the sermonindex youtube page.

I consider myself a babe in Christ, and after reading all the responds, my question to the mature ones is: are you soulish or spiritual? as the writings of the Apostles were inspired by the Holy Spirit, are your writings inspired by the same Holy Spirit?

In Love...

**Re: - posted by mikey2, on: 2011/9/8 16:09**

Simple answer, Oracio.

The Lord leads me away from spiritually abusive and unhealthy relationships.

You can't go wrong with the leading of the Spirit and He will never contradict His Word.

It is God's will for us to have healthy spiritual relationships and to foster and grow the same.

Mike

**Re: - posted by appolus (), on: 2011/9/8 17:29**

Hi Oracio,

Not sure who you are addressing, but as I am not a house-churcher I cannot speak for those brothers( although I was part of a house church for a year one time)

I for one do not like the 'them and us.' I consider God's church to be found across the spectrum. My opinion is that if one is full of the Holy Spirit, then it does not matter what kind of church government that you have. If Jesus has the pre-eminence, and the elders and deacons are full of the Holy Spirit, then there will be humility.

If I was the janitor at a church and the Lord gave me a corrective word for the pastor, then the pastor should have the humility to receive that word. Now of course he must test it and bring it before the Lord, but he must have the humility to listen to it. If there is a pride issue, you can rest assured the Lord will choose the vessel to deliver the message, and it won't be one of the recipient's choosing( I have been the recipient, I speak from experience:) If a church has a system in place that bars this kind of activity, it is simply asking for trouble. It may take years or decades to come, but come it surely will. In the example I gave in a previous post, that pastor had built up four local churches with over 8000 members, over 30 pastors and supported well over 50 missionary families.

The Word of God brings security to His children, all of His children. Finally brothers and sisters, what if you are a member or part of a church and the Lord gives you a word. Should you follow the Lord? Or, should you follow the advice of men? Its a rhetorical question, I know, but worth considering.....brother Frank

**Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2011/9/8 17:32**

mikey2, thanks for the attempt in replying. However, I still do not know if you would refuse to be part of a church where there is a senior pastor, based on that reason alone. There are multitudes of churches that operate in that way, from many different denominations. But it's okay, you don't have to feel pressured to answer.

**Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2011/9/8 17:39**

Frank, appreciate your reply. The question was not for you personally. But I guess I was under the impression you favored house churches and might be totally against traditional churches. My apologies for the misunderstanding. My question still stands for brothers who favor house churches. If you do not feel comfortable answering it's okay, no need to feel pressured brothers. God bless....Oracio

**Re: - posted by appolus (), on: 2011/9/8 18:51**

No pressure brother :) I love and appreciate you as a friend and brother in Christ, may the Lord pour out His love upon you and your family.....brother Frank

**Re: - posted by cryinthenite, on: 2011/9/8 20:15**

Hi Oracio

If the Lord led me to a "traditional" church I would go.

I don't see the body of Christ cut up the way men cut it up.

I don't care how a church is set up if the Lord has sent me there.

I don't care what title one is called by I seek to love them in truth and grace only found in Jesus.

Not by might not by power (not by really old tradition) but by His spirit.

**Re: - posted by mikey2, on: 2011/9/8 20:30**

Hi Oracio,

I don't feel the any pressure from you and I can answer honestly that the Lord has not led me in that way but if He did, then He would have a good reason for doing that and I would find out why.

Other than that, I agree totally with cryinthenite and appolus.

Mike

**Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2011/9/8 20:42**

Amen brothers, may the Lord lead us all by His mighty Spirit, whether in a "traditional" setting or a newer "house" setting or in a park, a prison, a cave or whatever. He is sovereign and will work mightily in the lives of His people when they seek Him with a whole heart.

**Re: - posted by appolus (), on: 2011/9/8 21:29**

Oracio writes.....

"Amen brothers, may the Lord lead us all by His mighty Spirit, whether in a "traditional" setting or a newer "house" setting or in a park, a prison, a cave or whatever. He is sovereign and will work mightily in the lives of His people when they seek Him with a whole heart."

Brothers, I see the gracious work of the Holy Spirit enacted in this thread. When all is done in love and truth then there is a beautiful unity.

" He is sovereign and will work mightily in the lives of His people when they seek Him with a whole heart."

Ah brothers, perhaps the key to the whole problem , " when we seek Him with our whole hearts." And so, with the high praises of God in our mouths, may this thread have done a good work. Those who love Truth, and who seek God with their whole hearts and who seek to raise Him up, and Him alone, find that they are in perfect unity, despite a myriad of backgrounds and traditions.....brother Frank

Psa 133:1-3

- (1) A Song of degrees of David. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!
- (2) It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;
- (3) As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

**Re: - posted by brothergary, on: 2011/9/9 1:56**

amen ilove to see a disusion end like this

**Re: Obey Your Leaders and Submit To Them (Heb. 13:17) by Zac Poonen - posted by Vibrant, on: 2011/11/22 10:58**

Regarding this: " So you must commit yourself totally to some local church; otherwise, you will not grow spiritually", this is very well-meaning but not correct. Most of my own walk with God in the Lord Jesus Christ has been alone, with and in Him. I am very satisfied with the spiritual growth He has produced in me, and the fruit, and in the fellowshiping that He has provided with other brothers and sisters in Christ while being "committed" to the Church of Jesus Christ. I have grown without being "part of a local church", most of the time. While being part of a local church on occasions, my growth in God was far less than when not part of a "local church". Growth comes far more from doing this: to believe in the One He (God) has sent (John 6:29), and maturity is best described in this one verse: "Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the (mature) sons of God". (Romans 8:14)...so the Godly order set forth here is that mature sonship has a lot to do with being led by the Holy Spirit. ...We have been grafted into His vine, by His grace, through His enormous love...are we to slow down then by pushing good or well-meaning ideas, or to be led by the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit by whom Jesus was raised from the dead? Go where the Holy Spirit tells you, into the lives of those He leads you to, and freely give. And there will be divine order, and flourishing growth.