

# **Congregationalism** (*Polity: Understanding Church Structure, Part 3*)

---

## Various Texts

### **1.) Congregationalism- What it Means**

*Congregationalism- the last and final court of appeal in a matter of the life of a local church is the congregation itself*

#### **Four NT Examples of Congregationalism:**

A.) In Matters of Disputes (Matthew 18:15-17; Acts 6:2-5; 1 Corinthians 6:4)

*"Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' 17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. (Matthew 18:15-17)*

*"Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. 3 Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; 4 but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." 5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude..." (Acts 6:2-5)*

*"...do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge?: (1 Corinthians 6:4)*

B.) In Matters of Doctrine (Galatians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:3)

*But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1:8)*

*"will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers" (2 Timothy 4:3)*

C.) In Matters of Discipline (1 Corinthians 5)

D.) In Matters of Church Membership (2 Corinthians 2:6-8)

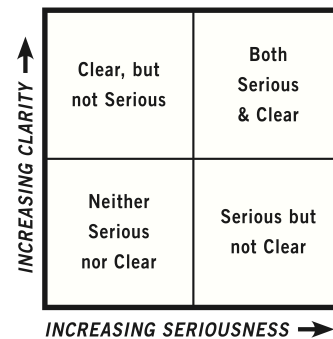
*"This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, 7 so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. 8 Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him." (2 Corinthians 2:6-8)*

## 2.) Congregationalism- What Does it Matter?

## 3.) Congregationalism- How Does it Work? (Hebrews 13:17)

*"Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you." (Hebrews 13:17)*

- A.) Not Serious, Very Clear- Generally Not Discussed
- B.) Not Serious, Not Clear- Opportunity For Discussion
- C.) Very Serious, Very Clear- Where the Congregation Shines
- D.) Very Serious, Not Clear- Where Elders Shine



*"My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment" (James 3:1)*

*"I know the vanity of your heart, and that you will feel mortified that your congregation is very small, in comparison with those of your brethren around you; but assure yourself on the word of an old man, that when you come to give an account of them to the Lord Christ, at his judgment-seat, you will think you have had enough." –John Brown*