

## GOVERNMENT

**“And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues” (1 Cor. 12:28 KJV)**

Our English word “government” comes from the Greek word “kubernao” which means to “guide” or “steer”. It is used in Acts 27:11 of a man who was the “master” or “pilot” of a ship. God placed “governments” in the church for a reason. The pilot of a ship or plane does not have time to call a committee meeting every time a decision needs to be made. He, or she, must be trusted. While an airplane has two sets of controls, safety demands that there be only one pilot at a time. Since God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33), He has ordained that there be only one governmental authority at a time. This is true in the home, in society, and also in the church.

In the HOME God expects the father to steer the family. After Adam and Even sinned God declared that the woman’s desire would be to her husband and he would rule over her (Gen. 3:16). This began the Patriarchal Age which literally refers to the rule by fathers. As families increased in size and civil governments were formed, God still expects the father to “rule” his own household. Even in the Christian era the Scriptures are explicit. As the church is subject to Christ, so wives are to be subject to their own husbands in everything (Eph. 5:24).

In SOCIETY there can also be only one authority at a time. While the Israelites had elders, Moses was the man God chose to “steer” the nation. When Korah, Dathan, and Abiram rebelled against Moses God caused earth to open and swallow them alive (See Nu. 16). Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft (1 Sam. 15:23). In New Testament times we are told to be “subject to principalities and powers, and to obey magistrates” (Tit. 3:1). Further, we are commanded to pray for kings, and all that are in authority so that we can lead quiet and peaceful lives (1 Tim. 2:1, 1, 2). There is no doubt about it, civil government is ordained by God (Rom. 13:1 - 7).

In the CHURCH God has also ordained government. This time, however, the steering is often done by more than one leader. The Scriptures teach “obey them that have the rule over you” (Heb. 13:17). Originally, the Apostles steered the Jerusalem church. When there was murmuring among the Grecians, “the twelve” were guided by God to appoint “seven” Spirit filled men to solve the problem (Acts 6:1 - 6). When revival broke out in Samaria the “apostles” sent Peter and John to pray for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14, 15). Later, since the apostles couldn’t be everywhere, “elders” were appointed in every church (Acts 14:23; 1 Thess. 5:12, 13; 1 Tim. 5:17). The word “governments” in our text, however, is not limited only to apostles and elders. God has also gifted other dedicated men and women with the governmental gift. Philip the evangelist, for example, worked by himself (See Acts 8). Titus was left in Crete to ordain elders in every city (Titus. 1:5). Timothy was left at Ephesus to correct doctrinal problems in the church there (1 Tim. 1:5). He was told not to lay hands suddenly on any man (1 Tim. 5:22). The brethren in Rome were told to assist Phebe in whatever way she needed help (Rom. 16:1, 2).

Peter warns us of evil men who “despise government” (2 Pet. 2:10 KJV). While a different Greek word is used here, the idea is the same. “Self willed” people have no business leading the people of God. (Tit. 1:7). While not everyone agrees on what the word “head” means in 1 Cor. 11:3, it is still a fact that the wife is to submit to her husband, the husband is to submit to Christ, and Christ is to submit to God. There is nothing wrong with submission, but there is something wrong with being “self willed”. The very essence of sin is “I want, what I want, when I want it”. The very essence of godliness is portrayed by Jesus when He fell on His face in Gethsemane and prayed: “Not my will but thine be done”. Jesus submitted to the government of God, do you?