

Welcome to Hope Sabbath School--an in-depth interactive study of the Word of God. We are continuing an important series of studies on Oneness in Christ. Our topic today: Church Organization and Unity.

Introduction: If salvation is through Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone, why do we need a church?

1. Christ, the Head of the Church

- a) Colossians 1:15-18,
- b) Ephesians 1:22, 5:23-27
- c) How does awareness that Christ is the head of His church affect the way we view church leaders?
- d) Share a time when a church leader disappointed you and you had to choose to stay focused on Jesus.

2. Servant leaders under Christ, our Head

- a) Matthew 20:25-28 – counter-cultural leadership
- b) John 13:1-5 – the example of Jesus
- c) John 13:6-17 – the teaching of Jesus
- d) Where do you see servant leadership most clearly modeled in the Scriptures, apart from the life of Jesus?
- e) Share a time when you saw servant leadership in action.

3. The church leader's role in preserving church unity

- a) Titus 1:5-11 – Paul's counsel to Titus
- b) 2 Timothy 2:14-16, 22-26, 4:1-5 – Paul's counsel to Timothy

- c) According to Paul's counsel, what are some key ways a church leader can help to preserve church unity?
- d) Why is it important for church leaders to be deeply committed to the Word of God? 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- e) What can you do to help your church family experience oneness in Christ?

4. Church discipline

- a) Matthew 16:19
- b) Matthew 18:15-20
- c) What important counsel does the apostle Paul give to Christians when one of their fellowship falls in sin and may even for a time be separated from the church family? Galatians 6:1-2
- d) Share a time when God sent you to show His love to someone who had experienced church discipline. How did you overcome your fear of possible rejection? What was the outcome?

5. Organizing for mission

- a) What organization for mission is apparent even in the early Christian church?
 - i) Matthew 10:1, 5-8
 - ii) Luke 10:1
 - iii) Acts 13:1-3
- b) Matthew 28:18-20 What key lessons can we learn from the mission assignment given by Jesus?

