

Question: "Do churches of Christ have a clergy?"

The word "clergy" is defined as "a group – ordained to perform pastoral or sacerdotal (priestly, bj) functions in a Christian church" (Webster); or "The group or body of ordained persons in a religion, as distinguished from the laity" (Random House).

The New Testament scriptures do in fact distinguish certain types of servants in the church from the other members. For instance, Paul instructed Timothy ("an evangelist" - 1Ti 4:5) to "charge some that they teach no other doctrine" (1Ti 1:3). Paul went on to say that Timothy would be "a good minister of Jesus Christ" if he would "instruct the brethren" by preaching the word of God to them (1Ti 4:6; 2Ti 4:1-5).

{The idea that a "true evangelist" primarily preaches to the unsaved is simply not true. }

The scriptures also distinguish, in another way, certain servants in the church from the other members. For example, evangelists (i.e., preachers), teachers, and elders can be financially supported by their fellow Christians (1Co 9:6-14; Ga 6:6; 1Ti 5:17-18). However, in New Testament times, ministers of the word did not set themselves apart as a superior class.

Actually, the word "clergy," in the sense that it is used today, is not in the Scripture and thus not in the vocabulary of the Holy Spirit (Jn 16:13). We derive our English word "clergy" from a Greek word used by the apostle Peter to designate *all* Christians. The Greek word is *kleros*, and it is translated "God's heritage" (i.e., God's people) in the King James Version (1Pe 5:3).

Jesus often condemned the attitude or spirit in religion that glorifies man. He was constantly at odds with the "clergy" of His day. Many of these religious leaders loved the prominent seats at social gatherings. They especially enjoyed their religious titles, which set them apart from the ordinary Jews or the "laity" (Mt 23:6-9). Jesus rightly accused these leaders of being an obstacle, both to themselves and to others, preventing their entrance into the kingdom of heaven (vs.13). Because they directed everyone's attention to themselves and away from God and His Son.

Churches of Christ, historically, have guarded against the "clergy/laity" distinction. This is not to say that the spirit of such a distinction is not alive and well today. Even in New Testament times, certain men in the church longed for the preeminence over other members, including the apostles (3Jn 9). Nevertheless, churches of Christ have no "clergy," citing New Testament teaching as our reason for rejecting such fruitless distinctions.

GOSPEL MEETING

November 14th – 19th

Sunday Morning Bible Study – 9:30 a.m.

Sunday Morning Worship – 10:00 a.m.

Sunday Evening Worship – 6:00 p.m.

Monday through Friday – 7:30 p.m.

The Christians who regularly meet at 301 S. Robison Street would like to invite our readers to an upcoming gospel meeting. Mr. David Weeks of West Columbia, Texas will be our guest speaker. Come and join us! It will be well worth your time and effort. We'll see you there!