

Authority of Spoken Word: Review: How One Ought to Behave in the Local Church; Paul's Assault on Idolatry, 1 Tim 3:15

THE AUTHORITY OF THE SPOKEN WORD: REVIEW:

1 Timothy 3:15 - but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

1. Paul wants the believers in Ephesus to “know how one ought to conduct himself.” Knowledge of how one is to behave is acquired from biblical principles that Paul is writing to Timothy.
2. Paul will communicate what is Timothy’s duty as pastor of the church at Ephesus and, by application, his congregation’s, and further, by application to all believers throughout the Church Age.
3. The purpose of his message is so that they will know how one ought to conduct himself. This word “ought” is the Greek verb **δεῖ**, *dei* which carries the concept of inevitability and is often associated with the divine decree and indicates the absolute nature of divine policy.
4. God determines how we ought to act and has decreed standards, revealed in Scripture that inform us of them and mandate that we comply with them.
5. What we are to know how to do is “conduct” ourselves, the present middle infinitive of the verb:
6. **ἀναστρέφω, *anastrephō***: “to conduct oneself”; “to behave.”

present:	Customary: denotes what habitually occurs, or may be reasonably expected to occur.
middle:	Direct: refers the results of the action directly to the agent, with reflexive force. This will be indicated in the translation by the pronoun “himself.”
infinitive:	Intended result: connotes the fulfillment of behavior decreed by divine revelation.

1 Timothy 3:15 - But if I am delayed, I write for the purpose that you may know how one ought to habitually conduct himself in the house of God ...

7. There is acceptable behavior in the house of God, which, in this context, refers to wherever believers congregate to study the Bible.
8. The local church is an organization comprised of believers and unbelievers, while the universal church is an organism comprised of believers only and includes everyone who has believed in Christ throughout the history of the Church Age.

9. Where two or three are gathered together to worship Christ (Matthew 18:20), a local church is established.
10. Paul classifies such an arrangement as **οἶκος Θεοῦ, oikōi Theou**: “the house of God.”
11. Whenever a group of believers gather together and submit to the authority of the pastor-teacher, then that place becomes a “house of God.”
12. Paul further defines “house of God” in the next phrase, “which is the church of the living God.”
13. This phrase is intended for Timothy. He teaches in a city where people enter into the Temple of Artemis and worship a bric-a-brac image of an ugly, hydra-breasted woman wearing a meteorite for a hat.
14. The mayor of the city proclaimed in the Great Theater that “the city of the Ephesians is the keeper of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image that fell down from heaven” (Acts 19:35).
15. The Ephesians are worshipping an object. It is inanimate. It has no intelligence. It has nothing to say. And it is made by the craftsmanship of fallen men who charge for its replicas.
16. That these things are true is expressed by Demetrius who, while rousing the rabble of the silversmiths union, said, “Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are no gods at all” (Acts 19:26).
17. Paul’s statement to Timothy about the church of the living God is a direct assault against the idolatry practiced in Ephesus. The Ephesians worship a nonexistent goddess of stone. Christians worship the living God: the Rock, Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 3:15 - But if I am delayed, I write for the purpose that you may know how one ought to habitually conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

1. The church of the living God is the local assembly of believers. Members of the universal church who have a similar geographic location and who wish to grow in grace under the ministry of a pastor-teacher are authorized by Scripture to form a local organization that is designated by the Greek noun **ἐκκλησία, ekklēsia**, which means assembly.
2. This local assembly is described by Paul in three ways: (1) it is the assembly of the “living God” who is Jesus Christ, (2) it is the “pillar” of truth, and (3) it is the “support” of truth.
3. The word that is translated “truth” is the noun **ἀλήθεια, alētheia** which is an abstract concept. It is not something you can see with the eyes but can only be understood by one’s mental faculties.
4. A person is not born knowing truth. It is something that must be identified and then believed to be true. The Invisible War is a conflict between those who identify truth from the revelation of the Word of God versus Luciferian deception that is designed to obscure truth with the lie.

