

LESSON 7

ORGANIZING THE CHURCH FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

1. Congregational Responsibility for
Christian Education

In Part 4 of Lesson 2, as well as in other places in preceding chapters, the responsibility that the congregation has for its entire program, including the program of Christian education, is indicated. This chapter will seek to define that responsibility and suggest means by which it can be carried out.

Defining congregational responsibility for Christian education¹

As a church considers its total task it becomes involved in many decisions. These decisions have to do with such matters as:

Governing the life and work of the church under the Lordship of Christ,

Determining the church's programs, program services, and administrative services,

Establishing the organization, if necessary, to conduct and/or coordinate programs and services of the church,

Determining the church's cooperative work with other churches,

Establishing and maintaining appropriate and external relationships,

Selecting the pastor, staff, and volunteer leaders and assigning them their responsibilities,

Providing and allocating resources for the total work of the church.

Within this decision-making process involving the total church program is specific responsibility with regard to the program of Christian education.

¹Howse and Thomason, A Dynamic Church, p. 25.

Decisions which a church must make as it considers its total task involve--

1. *Governing the life and work of the church under the L _____ of Christ;*
2. *Determining the church's p _____ and s _____;*
3. *Establishing the organization to c _____ programs and services;*
4. *Determining the church's r _____ to other churches;*
5. *Selecting the p _____ and other leaders and assigning responsibilities.*

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Within its total program the church has the specific responsibility of providing and promoting Christian _____.

(education)

Providing the form and personnel for Christian education organizations

Organization is important in the work of the church, but it is important only as it is useful in carrying out basic assignments and accomplishing desired ends. The organization of the church for its Christian education program should—

- reflect the theology of the church.
- keep congregational authority clear.
- group similar tasks together.
- lead toward achievement of accepted goals.
- be as simple as possible.
- be flexible.
- match responsibility with authority.
- pinpoint responsibility.
- establish clear guidelines.

Organization is never more important than people. It should be dignified and should be effective; however, the congregation needs to remember that organization in itself does not provide motivation. Motivation comes from the work of the Holy Spirit through the leaders that form a part of the organization.

Normally, a first step in providing and electing personnel for the Christian education program is to name a nominating committee which will also be responsible for recommending to the church personnel for all of its program. Reference has already been made to the approach to be used by the nominating committee as it seeks out church leaders. In its enlistment work, this committee will naturally keep its standards high but not out of reach. No one is perfect. God uses people to do His work, and they are the key to the success or failure of any church program. Some qualities that the nominating committee will seek in the people it considers will be that they be Christians and church members, have an outgoing personality, be active in the church life, and give evidence of commitment in Christian growth. They can reasonably be expected to be good stewards, loyal to the church, cooperative, and active witnesses. They should demonstrate a love for people, a disposition to learn, and a willingness to visit.

One concern of the nominating committee will be that of involving the entire church membership in the church task, and one step to this end is to involve the congregation in prayer for workers. The nominating committee will study the church roll, seeking possible workers. Normally, it will select the leaders first and involve them in the search for workers, being careful to give each person individual attention and adequate orientation. Election by the church and public installation, where possible, are necessary steps in this process.²

²Washburn and Cook, Administering the Bible Teaching Program, pp. 65-66.

A church's educational program should--

- reflect the _____ of the church
- keep congregational _____ clear.
- lead towards _____ of accepted goals.
- pinpoint _____.
- establish clear _____.

(theology, authority, achievement, responsibility, guidelines)

Which is more important--organization or people? _____

From where does motivation in organization come? _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Normal procedure in selection of personnel for the educational program is naming of a _____ which will recommend qualified persons to the church for _____.

(nominating committee, election)

Qualities which a church leader should have are:

1. C _____
2. church m _____
3. a _____ in church life
4. good s _____
5. active w _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

2. The Church Council

Many churches make use of a church council in the discharge of much of their responsibility for overseeing the program of Christian education. This council, a representative body, serves the church in planning, coordinating, and evaluating the Christian education program.

Reasons for having a church council

The Christian education program of the church has so many aspects that it requires coordination. Most churches have now accepted as a church task or function the responsibility of discovering unconverted persons, winning them for Christ, enlisting them, preparing them for membership, teaching them the Bible, and giving them instruction in evangelism, missions, and stewardship. Without coordination of all of these tasks, confusion results. Duplication of effort and lack of understanding will normally result. Groups with separate tasks fail to recognize the relationship of their tasks to those of other groups and to the overall program of the church. The deacons' group of the church is normally not equipped to carry out the coordinating task that is necessary here. Thus, a council or coordinating committee usually turns out to be the best way of achieving this.

Such a council has definite values. It will create a spirit of cooperation between the directors of the different activities and organizations. It will help to develop an appreciation for each phase of the Christian education program of the church and a better understanding of its purpose in relation to the overall program. The council will make easier the task of defining purposes and goals for each aspect of the work and will serve to balance the program, focusing everything on the church itself and, through the church, on Jesus Christ. Furthermore, a church council is the best channel for evaluation of results and activities and for unifying the efforts of the church.

Establishing the church council

The congregation may by its own decision resolve to elect a church council and use it for the purposes indicated above. Usually, membership on the council comes by virtue of a position already occupied in the program of the church. For instance, in many churches regular members of the council are: the pastor, the minister of education, the superintendent or director of the Bible teaching program, the superintendent or director of the church membership training program, the directors of the missions program, the director of the church music program, and the chairman of deacons. *Ex officio* members of the church council, who would

The representative body composed of church leaders who serve the church in planning, coordinating, and evaluating the Christian education program is the _____

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Most churches accept the responsibility of:

1. Discovering and winning the L _____
2. E _____ them
3. Preparing them for m _____
4. T _____ them the Bible
5. Instructing them in e _____,
m _____, and s _____.

(1. Lost; 2. Enlisting; 3. membership; 4. Teaching; 5. evangelism, missions, stewardship)

What usually determines membership on the church council? _____

Therefore, who usually are members of the council? _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

not necessarily attend all sessions but would have voice and vote when they did attend, could be the church librarian, the chairmen of the various church committees, the congregation moderator, the clerk or secretary of the congregation, and the church treasurer. Thus, the leadership of these church programs would be involved in a council responsible to the church for the carrying out of the tasks assigned to each program.³

Normally, the pastor will act as chairman of the council. The secretary of the church or another person designated by the council will take note of the recommendations to the church and decisions on matters on which the council is authorized to act.

Each church will define the duties of the council. Some probable duties might be:

1. Study the needs and problems related to the Christian education program of the church.
2. Prepare an adequate program of Christian education for approval of the church and oversee its being carried out by those responsible for each aspect of this program and by the standing committees of the church.
3. Define clearly the purposes and duties of each organization and committee of the church for approval by the congregation.
4. Form goals for the Christian education program of the church.
5. Study the best methods of Christian education for achieving those goals.
6. Recommend to the church plans and projects for improving and coordinating all its programs.
7. Define the responsibilities for carrying out church programs.
8. Prepare recommendations to the finance committee of the church with regard to the financial needs of the program of Christian education.
9. Formulate the calendar of activities for the year and present it to the church.

³Charles A. Tidwell, Working Together Through the Church Council (Nashville: Convention Press, 1968), pp. 8-9.

Who usually acts as chairman of the church council? _____

(pastor)

READ THE LIST OF PROBABLE DUTIES OF A COUNCIL IN THE TEXT.

Now list the five which you think should have priority.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

The church council should probably meet monthly, or at least quarterly, preferably at a set date and hour; however, the pastor or the chairman of the council could cite special meetings when necessary. It is important to have all the members present for valid decisions.

One important thing to remember is that the council is not a decision-making body. It advises and recommends but does not execute its decisions, nor is it an administrative group. Once programs and projects have been approved by the congregation, the director or leader of the congregation, committee, or activity involved is responsible for carrying these out. The council is a body in which the church leaders coordinate their activities and harmonize their work.

The church council maintains several relationships. It relates to the congregation as it advises, recommends, and informs. The church council relates to the pastor and his staff, assisting them in giving leadership to the total program of the church. It relates to the program organizations, helping them to find their appropriate roles in the church life, suggesting and recommending to the congregation actions to be taken by the program organizations. Each congregation will decide whether it wishes to receive reports directly from program organizations or through the church council. The church council relates to various church officers in that most of them are in the council, able to take advantage of it as a channel of information and evaluation of their work.⁴

The church council coordinating the program of Christian education

One of the early steps in the task of the church council is to lead the congregation to state its long-range purposes and objectives and its immediate goals. With these in hand the council is in a position to assign to individual program organizations the achievement of these goals and objectives. Thus, planning begins at the level of each program organization with this information in hand.

The best kind of planning involves the participation of those who must implement the plans. It calls for an open climate in which free expression of ideas and personal identification with the church goals become possible. Thus, support for the plans which are the outcome of this consultation comes more readily, and communication with regard to the plans being made is more effective. These organizations will seek to base their plans on church objectives and goals. Plans will include the details of organization, activities, and curriculum content. They will allow for flexibility. Each

⁴Ibid., pp. 10, 14.

How often should the church council meet?

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Is the church council a decision-making body? _____

(no)

MATCH THE FOLLOWING RELATIONSHIPS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL:

- ___ 1. Congregation
- ___ 2. Pastor
- ___ 3. Program organizations

- a. suggests and recommends actions to be taken after approval by the congregation.
- b. advises, recommends, and informs.
- c. assists in the total program of the church.

(b-1, c-2, a-3)

One of the first steps a church council should take is to lead the congregation to state its _____ - _____ purposes and objectives and its _____ goals.

(long-range, immediate)

Organizational plans will include _____ and _____ content.

(activities, curriculum)

organization will write its plans which will include a description of the physical, financial, and personnel resources for carrying them out.⁵

With the individual plans of each program organization in hand, the church council is able to form a master plan. It is able to determine whether or not the total objectives and goals of the congregation are likely to be met in the carrying out of these plans. It is able to work out the inevitable conflicts in scheduling and personnel, and it in turn presents in writing to the congregation the total plan in a form of a calendar of activities, budget, and statement of personnel needs.⁶

Coordinating work of the church council

Charles A. Tidwell in his book Working Together Through the Church Council has this comment on cooperation:

The cooperation of organizations to produce one harmonious program of work requires coordination. One is not safe in assuming that coordination will develop without the concentrated efforts of those who lead organizations whose work is to be unified. The church council and the organizations should give the needed attention to coordination.⁷

We have already seen how this process of coordination is applied to the planning stages of the work, but it must continue as a process in the performance and carrying out of approved plans. Problems will continually arise. Unanticipated developments will be constantly occurring. The church council must deal with these matters and find a solution in consultation with organizational leaders. Occasionally, recommendations to the congregation will be necessary.

The evaluation work of the church council⁸

Each organization working in the Christian education task of the church will conduct its own program of evaluation. Beyond that, the church council will also engage itself in the evaluation of the total Christian education task.

⁵Ibid., pp. 41-47.

⁶Ibid., pp. 7-8.

⁷Ibid., p. 55.

⁸Harris and Staff, Administering Church Training, p. 77; Tidwell, Working Together Through the Church Council, pp. 64-73.

An organization should write its plans and include a description of the _____, _____, and _____ resources for carrying them out.

(Compare your answer with the text.)

UNDERLINE THE CORRECT WORD OR WORDS.

Coordination by the church council (continues, does not continue) through the performance and carrying out of approved organizational plans.

(continues)

As a part of the plans which it presents to the church, the church council plans for evaluation. This encourages individuals and organizations to live up to the expectations of the church.

Evaluation conducted by the church council will consider the process of Christian education in each organization and the product. The council will evaluate qualitatively and objectively through a study of statistics. It will also evaluate qualitatively and subjectively through a study of the quality of the work done. In its communication of the evaluation findings to the congregation and to the organizations, it will accentuate the positive results as well as make suggestions for improvement. Evaluation reports should be timed in order to allow time for modification of actions and improvement of results. All of this calls for a most exemplary demonstration of Christ-like love and patience on the part of all.

3. The Organization and Schedule
for Christian Education

The church as a fellowship is more an organism than an organization. It has no organization. All members are equal. Even the pastor is first among other equals. However, when the church prepares itself for work and service, it does assume an organizational pattern with lines of authority. Individuals occupy places of equality within the fellowship of the church. They also occupy places of responsibility and authority within the organizational pattern.

Organizational design or pattern

The organization approved by the church should be adequate to assist the church to accomplish its work but simple enough to be feasible for the small situation. It should not make unnecessary demands for leadership and maintenance. The adjacent organizational chart, which is only a suggestion, may be helpful in understanding this process:

⁹"Program and Organization for Churches of 100 Members or Less," (Unpublished, Nashville: Education Division, Baptist Sunday School Board, 1971), pp. 5-7.

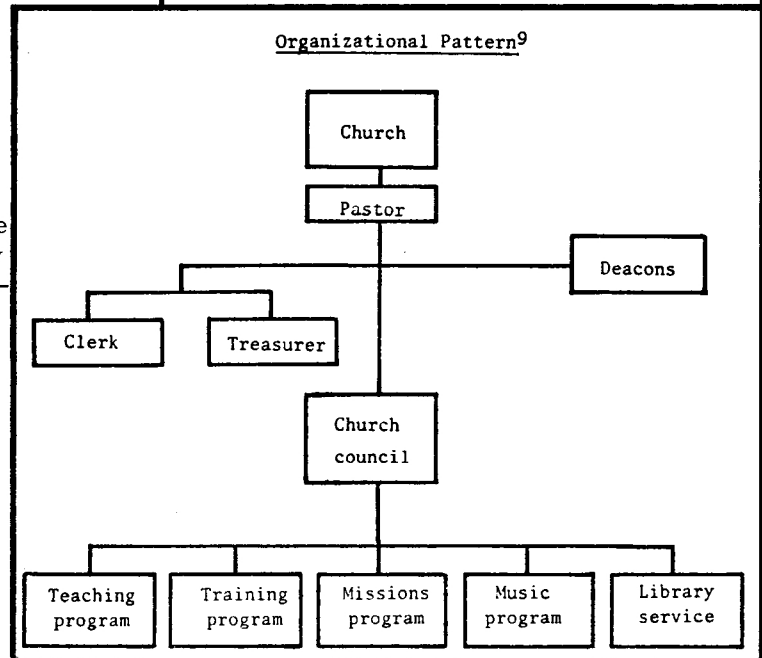
Evaluation by the church council of Christian education in each organization is done through--

1. *an objective study of _____*
2. *a subjective study of the _____ of work done*

(statistics, quality)

STUDY THE DRAWING BELOW. THEN LIST FIVE MAJOR PROGRAMS OF THE CHURCH WHICH THE CHURCH COUNCIL COORDINATES.

(Compare your answers with the drawing.)



Each church will develop its own pattern of organization. Its pattern will be subject to internal expansion and designed to stimulate growth. Notice that the pastor is responsible to the congregation for planning and coordinating the total church program. He may work on a person-to-person basis with each leader, he may call meetings of leaders to plan and coordinate their work, or he may work through the church council.

Scheduling the Christian education program

The formation of a calendar of activities is one of the more important responsibilities of the church council. It constitutes the hub of the church program and everything that evolves around it, and it serves as a guide for each activity and organization and committee. In order for the church calendar of activities to be effective all leaders should participate in its preparation.

The church calendar of activities has definite values. It presents a definite program to follow. It helps to avoid half-made plans and half-done work. It contributes the important activities of the church to the most advantageous dates and helps all of the church to work in peace and order with advanced knowledge of all plans. A well-done calendar of activities avoids conflict, duplication, and tensions and assures a balanced program. It provides the church members with a panoramic view of the general program of the church and offers a means of promotion for all church activities.

The calendar of activities involves on the one hand the regularly scheduled week-by-week activities which have a well-known place in the program, and on the other hand it includes the special activities for which dates must be coordinated. An example of the week-by-week activities is given on the following chart. Note that this schedule attempts to place most activities on Sunday and on one night during the week, that night to be selected by the congregation—many choose Wednesday. This has been done because of the belief that these are the times that Baptists are the most likely to be enlisted in church activities. This schedule tries to provide in some way for basic areas of program activities such as Bible teaching, training, development in missions, worship, and music.

Who is ultimately responsible to the congregation for planning and coordinating the total church program? _____

(the pastor)

Some values of a church calendar are:

1. It presents a definite _____ to follow.
2. It helps avoid conflicts of _____.
3. It helps to avoid half-made _____ and half-done _____.

(1. program; 2. dates; 3. plans, work)

It is believed that Baptists are most likely to be enlisted in major church activities on _____ and one _____ during the week.

(Sunday, night)

Weekly Calendar of Activities¹⁰

<u>Week</u>	<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Weekday</u>
First	a. m. Bible study <u>Worship</u> p. m. Membership training Worship	Missions education and/or monthly business meeting Prayer meeting Choir practice
Second	Same as first Sunday	Mission education Prayer meeting Choir practice
Third	Same as first Sunday	Mission education and/or planning meeting Prayer meeting Choir practice
Fourth	Same as first Sunday	Missions education Prayer meeting Choir practice
Fifth	Same as first Sunday	Missions education Prayer meeting Choir practice

Some observations are necessary for full understanding of this suggested schedule. The Bible study activities assigned to Sunday morning may include assignments with reference to outreach or ministry. Notice the training suggested for Sunday afternoon. Training may include any combination of member training, leadership training, and new member orientation which meets the church needs and can be fitted in with the schedules of those who lead and participate. Observe the suggested time for choir practice. Some churches may prefer to have choir practice on another night of the week in order to give more time to it. With regard to the business meeting, each congregation finds the best hour for this very important activity. The hour suggested for it in this schedule is only one of several possibilities. Some may wish to have it on Sunday afternoon in relation to the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Council meetings, recreational activities, deacon's meetings, and other such activities involving less than the total membership may be scheduled at times which meet the convenience of most of the persons involved.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 8-10.

Is this statement true or false?

It is important to remember that each congregation should make its calendar of activities to meet the particular needs of its membership.

(true)

Would it be wise to schedule activities that do not involve the total membership at times convenient to most of the persons involved?

(yes)

Before the council works on the total year's calendar of activities, its secretary should duplicate (mimeograph) large monthly calendars, one for each month of the year. Each member will receive a complete set for his own use in planning sessions. To begin with, the members will note on the blank calendars regular meetings and activities of the church including meetings of different church groups, leadership meetings, coordinating committee meetings, and visitation days. Denominational activities will be noted. Occasionally, the association or convention (union) will suggest church development activities such as evangelism campaigns, enlargement campaigns, camps, special youth activities, and Christian home week. Those responsible for preparing the calendar will have to decide about each of these.

Time should be left for planned activities designed to develop and carry forward different aspects of the local church program. Conflicts in dates will occur and the council will seek means of solving them. Activities should be planned and timed in such a way that each will contribute to the success of the other, and all together will move toward achieving church goals.

Upon the completion of its preparation by the coordinating committee, the calendar of activities should be duplicated so that each church member can have a copy to study during its presentation to the church for approval. The committee may not be able to include every one of the association - or denomination-recommended activities. To fill the calendar up to the point of over-crowding it penalizes the total program. Thus, the committee would choose those activities which can be carried out with success and which would be of major benefit to the church. Once the calendar has been approved by the church, every member should receive a copy, and the pastor and other church leaders will address themselves to the task of carrying out its activities in the best possible manner.¹¹

4. The Small Church

Most of the churches to which individuals studying this material will be ministering may be small churches, with one hundred members or less. Consideration needs to be given to the particular needs of these small churches.

While these churches have fewer members than many, the needs of each individual member are the

¹¹Campbell, El Ministerio Educativo de la Iglesia, pp. 23-24.

Besides the regular weekly meetings of the church, some activities which should be included in the church calendar are:

1. V _____ days
2. D _____ activities
3. E _____ campaigns
4. C _____ and retreats
5. Special y _____ activities
6. Christian h _____ week

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Upon completion of the church calendar by the council, it should be approved by the _____.

(church)

same as those of members of larger churches. These needs must be met through program activities similar to those of large churches but carried out by organizations developed along simplified lines. Although the number of leaders available is smaller in proportion, they should be adequate for the leadership needs of the small church. In isolated situations, these leaders may have less formal training than leaders in the large metropolitan churches. This places a larger responsibility upon the congregation as well as upon denominational organizations for the training of those church leaders.

The small church usually has limited space. Maximum use of this space requires close study, ingenuity, and a considerable amount of cooperation on the part of all members. Limited available space will likely be accompanied by limited financial resources in the small church. However, a small number of members does not necessarily mean that these members are in the lower income bracket. Limited financial resources implies limited funds for buying curriculum materials, supplies, and equipment. Thus, the church must prayerfully determine its real priorities in the use of space and financial resources.

Basic understanding with regard to small churches

Leadership in small churches must take into account the particular needs of their church and the fact that the basic task for their church is the same as that of a large church.

1. Most small churches, even those with considerably less than one hundred members, have at least two "preaching" services each Sunday.
2. The time limitations are the same for the small church as they are for the larger congregation. The small churches are likely to stay small unless members are willing to invest time in spiritual growth activities.
3. Most leaders in the small church hold more than one leadership position.
4. Most small churches have a Bible school attendance out of proportion to their membership; however, in many cases this attendance consists primarily of children. Breaking out of the small church bracket involves reaching the parents of those children.
5. All program tasks need to be cared for in the small church; however, responsibility for these tasks may be

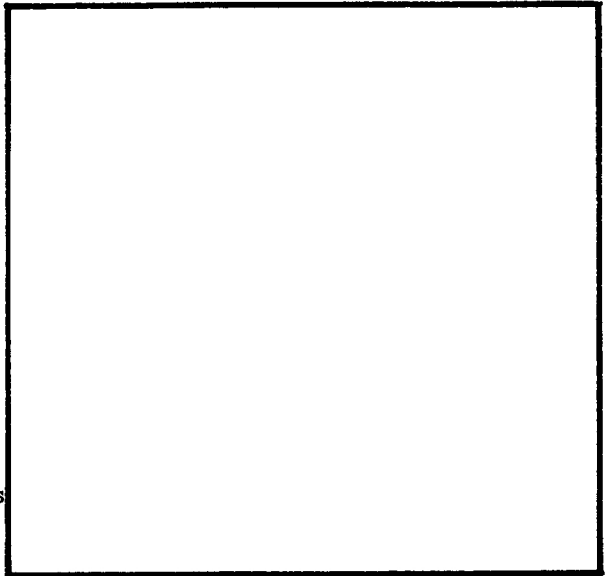
The similarity between small and large churches is that the _____ of each member are the same and should be met through similar _____ activities.

(needs, program)

What is one of the limitations which is the same in a small church as in a large church?

(time)

assigned by church action to individuals, committees, or program organizations to whom these tasks would not normally belong. Thus, the organizational structure of the small church may be much simpler than that of the large church, but it should contemplate the entire program.



5. Conclusion

The New Testament does not endorse any particular form of organization for carrying out the work of the church. It does specify clearly what the tasks of the church will be. On the basis of the suggestions in this lesson and experience in the local situation, each congregation is quite capable of determining the organization best suited to meet its own needs.

Home Study Exercise

Basic activity (Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading the study guide text, answer the following questions.

1. List five tasks of the church which require decisions. _____

2. Name five things the educational program should do. _____

3. How are personnel for the educational program selected? _____

4. Name five qualities desired in church leaders. _____

5. What is a church council? _____

6. Name five tasks of the church. _____

7. Who normally makes up the church council? _____

8. List five duties of the council. _____

9. Name three relationships of the church council and its responsibility to each. _____

10. What is the first step a church council should take? _____

11. What details will organizational plans include? _____

12. How does the council evaluate church work? _____

13. Name five primary programs of the church to which the church council gives coordination. _____

14. Name three values of a church calendar. _____

15. Why are the major church activities scheduled on Sunday and on one night of the week? _____

16. What activities should be included in a church calendar? _____

17. What similarities are there between small and large churches? _____

Supplementary activity (Levels 2 and 3). Read pages 159-165 in A Church on Mission by McDonough.

Plan a twelve-month calendar of activities for your church. The schedule of regular activities should be written for one month but need not be shown for the other months. List the special training and evangelistic activities planned for the year. The plans should consider the needs for training and reaching the objectives of the church.

Advanced activity (Level 3).

Write a brief description of the needs of the people of your church and what you would expect to be accomplished through the planned activities in the coming year.

Seminar Discussion

1. Who is responsible for the Christian education program of the church?
2. How are the leaders of a church normally selected?
3. What is the purpose, membership, and work of a church council?
4. Is it practical for a small church to have a church calendar of activities?
5. How does the work of deacons differ from that of a church council?
6. Explain the relation of the people and officers of a church to authority and responsibility within the church according to the organizational chart.