

Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord. And the news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas off to Antioch. Then when he had come and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and began to encourage the. all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord."

Acts 14:23 -- "And when they (Paul and Barnabas) had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed."

I Timothy 4:14 -- "Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery."

Titus 1:5 -- "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you."

I Corinthians 16:3 -- "And when I (Paul) arrive, whomever you may approve, I shall send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem."

II Corinthians 3:1 -- "Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you?"

Acts 15:1-2, 4, 6, -- "And some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.' And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue And when they arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them And the apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter." (Note also Acts 15:13-21; 16:4; I Cor. 8, 10; Romans 14)

2. Historical patterns of organized relationship between local churches

The three patterns or polities are the Episcopal, the Presbyterial, and the Congregational. They are named according to the location of the final authority, whether in bishops, elders, or congregations.

a. Basic principles of the patterns or polities (form of government)

(1) The Episcopal pattern

- (a) Final authority rests in the bishop
- (b) Unbroken succession of episcopal ordination from the time of the apostles to the present
- (c) A gradation of rank and office, in a hierarchical structure
- (d) All authority in the hands of clergy; none in the hands of the laity