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Biblical authority

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Biblical authority

Autonomy of each local church

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S

Biblical authority

Autonomy of each local church

Priesthood of all believers

T

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T

S

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Autonomy of each local church

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Two ordinances (baptism & communion)

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Two ordinances (baptism & communion)

Individual soul liberty

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Two ordinances (baptism & communion)

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Saved, baptized church membership

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Two ordinances (baptism & communion)

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Two offices (pastors & deacons)

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Biblical authority

Autonomy of each local church

Priesthood of all believers

Two ordinances (baptism & communion)

Individual soul liberty

Saved, baptized church membership

Two offices (pastors & deacons)

Separation of church and state

The Autonomy of the Local Church

Acts 11:19-30, et al.

**Our English word *church*
comes from the Greek word
kyriakon, which means
“belonging to the Lord.”**

In the New Testament, the word *church* almost always translates the Greek word *ekklesia*.

the *local* church

the *universal* church

the *visible* church

the *invisible* church

the church *in prospect*

The Bible reveals that each local church is an independent body or assembly, accountable to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the church. No religious hierarchy outside the local church should dictate that church's beliefs or practices. All human authority for governing the local church resides within the local church itself.

Thus, the church is *autonomous*, or self-governing. Decisions regarding leadership, finances, membership, ministries, etc. are determined by consensus of the members of the congregation. That said, autonomy does not mean isolation. Baptist churches sometimes fellowship with other likeminded churches around mutual interests and in an associational tie, but Baptists will not join with any religious entity where decisions of doctrine and practice are made outside of the local assembly itself.

- 1. The local church is self-governing, under the headship of Christ.**
- 2. The local church has both the authority & responsibility to appoint its own leadership.**
- 3. The local church has the authority & obligation to regulate its own membership.**
- 4. The local church has the authority & ability to solve problems between its members.**

- 5. The local church has the authority & responsibility to commission and send out missionaries, choosing those whom it desires to support.**
- 6. The local church has the responsibility to exercise stewardship over the finances of the assembly.**
- 7. Each local church is answerable to the Lord Jesus for everything we do.**