



The text:

- *And God has **placed** in the church ... (1 Corinthians 12:28)*

Explanation of the word:

The translation '**placed**' implies that God places some people in the church in a position of authority.

Compare this to the situation where someone asks Jesus to intervene against his brother because they are to share the inheritance, when Jesus says:

- *"Man, who **appointed** me a judge or an arbiter between you?" (Luc 12:14)*

Here, '**appointed**' is the translation of the Greek verb '**kathistemi**'.

To be translated as follows according to the OLB:

- to set, place, put
- to set one over a thing (in charge of it)
- to appoint one to administer an office
- come forward as

Jesus asks therefore who has **appointed** Him to intervene between the two brothers, as **a person in authority**, as a judge or arbiter, whereby He is able to compel His decision to be carried out.

This is not so in the church.

An elder in the church is not appointed as a person in authority.

'**Placed**' in 1 Corinthians 12:28 is the translation of the verb '**tithemi**'.

To be translated as follows according to the OLB:

- to set, put, place
- to put down, lay down
- to set on (serve) something to eat or drink
- to make (or set) for one's self or for one's use
- to set forth

The translation in a few other texts:

- *"Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will **put** my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. (Matthew 12:18)*
- *On hearing of this, John's disciples came and took his body and **laid** it in a tomb. (Mark 6:29)*
- *And he took the children in his arms, **placed** his hands on them and blessed them. (Mark 10:16)*
- *Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. **Falling** on their knees, they paid homage to him. (Mark 15:19)*
- *For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already **laid**, which is Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:11)*
- *For in Scripture it says: "See, I **lay** a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, ... (1 Peter 2:6)*

As indicated by the OLB translation, '**tithemi**' is often translated in the Bible texts as '**to lay**'. When God lays people down in the church, they are not given an authoritarian role, but God places them in the church in a humble position.



Verse 28 in a more literal translation:

- *Furthermore, God has indeed **laid** in the church to: ... (1 Corinthians 12:28)*

And this for a **servant** or **leadership** role in the church, with Jesus' admonition:

- *"But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have one Teacher, and **you are all brothers.** (Matthew 23:9)¹*

God appoints people to a special place and says to the local church: That person is an apostle, a prophet, a teacher, a miracle ... etc.

This is the instruction to the church members, and, in particular, to the leadership, to discover which people God brings forward for the different tasks.

According to 1 Corinthians 12:1 Paul is describing spiritual life in the church.²

This is why, primarily, God appoints people who are living in a healthy relationship with Himself, under the power and the authority of Jesus Christ and His Word.

Their natural qualities are of secondary importance.

They do **not** function in an **appointment** with a **position of authority**, but are appointed to a position in order to function with a **humble attitude**.

In the functions God has in mind, these people will have to make an active contribution and time and energy will be required of them.

This is explained more fully in the study about the structure of the local church.³

Authority in the church.

The local church is a part of the body of Jesus Christ, of which He is the head.

Only people who accept the authority of Jesus in their life are designated by God to take up a position serving and leading the church.

They do not occupy that position authoritatively, imposing their will, for God desires every disciple of Jesus Christ to put himself on an equal footing with the other members of the church.

God requires the church members to recognise the authority of those whom He appoints because of their spiritual way of life.⁴

The authority within which the leaders function in the church is therefore an authority that is granted them by the church members **from below**, on the basis of the fact that these leaders place themselves under the authority of Jesus Christ and His Word.

When it transpires that leaders do not (no longer) place themselves under the authority of Jesus Christ and His Word, they automatically lose the authority granted to them, as a result of which they are no longer able to function in the task entrusted to them.

1 Study: Matthew 23:9 - Do not call anyone 'father'.

2 Study: Spiritual life in the church.

3 Study: 1 Corinthians 12:28 - Structure of the local church.

4 Study: Hebrews 13:17 - Have confidence in your leaders