

Progression of Church Polity in the New Testament
from the Beginning of the Church to Today

When	Before the Church Began	When the Church Began	The fledgling church	Mid-life through the 1st century church	Late 1st century church and today
Position	Christ	Christ, Apostles	Christ, Apostles, Deacons	Christ, Apostles, Elders, Deacons	Christ, Apostles, Elders, Deacons
Scripture Reference	Matthew 28:18, Colossians 1:18	Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 2-5	Acts 6	Acts 14, 15	Acts 14:23, 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1
Occasion	Post Resurrection, before Ascension	Pentecost (Acts 2:1)	First Deacons chosen (Acts 6:2)	First elders appear (Acts 14:23, 15:2)	“Elders appointed in every town” as overseers (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5)
Appointed by whom at that time?	By the Father (Matthew 28:18)	By Christ	By the people by direction and approval of the Apostles (Acts 6:1-6)	By the Apostles (Acts 14:23)	First Elders and Deacons by the Evangelist (Titus 1:5, 1 Timothy 3:8); subsequent Elders and Deacons by the established Elders
Role	Head	Foundation (Ephesians 2:20)	Service (“Deacon” is the transliterated male form of the Greek word for “servant”)	Oversee with Apostles (Acts 15:2), Deacons assumed serving as before	Elders left as sole overseers of each local congregation as Apostles die off, Deacons assumed serving as before