



ORDER!

The Scripture which we apply to our business meetings, including today's meeting is found in Paul's letter to Corinth.

But let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner.
I Corinthians 14:40 NASB

It is my prayer that we will conduct today's meeting in this fashion. However, I call your attention to the third word in the passage - ALL. Paul did not write this verse to be applied to church business meetings (only), he meant it to be applied to our lives in general, and to our conduct in church specifically.

There was much disorder in the Corinthian Church and Paul was writing to straighten things out. I have cited the NASB translation of the passage as I think it is the clearest. We have also,

Let all things be done decently and in order.
I Corinthians 14:40 NKJV
But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.
I Corinthians 14:40 NIV

What is Paul instructing us to do, really? He lists two things. First, we are to do things εὐσχημόνως (euschamones, ⇒ good-scheme). Paul uses these same word two other times,

*Let us **behave properly** as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.*

Romans 13:13 NASB

*Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you; so that you may **behave properly** toward outsiders and not be in any need.*

I Thessalonians 4:11-12 NASB

In the first passage he contrasts the term with characteristics which are not "proper." The second passage supplies us with some synonymous terms. In a nutshell, he says we should live our lives as

Christians by behaving as we would have our kids behave.

The second term is τάξις (taxis). It is the basis for our word *taxonomy*, the classifying objects according to some system. We speak of the *syntax* of a sentence, the orderly arrangement of words according to the rules of grammar. Paul uses the word in one other passage.

*For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see **how orderly you are** and how firm your faith in Christ is.*

Colossians 2:5 NASB

So, let's put these two concepts together. While I am reluctant to get into today's politics, the current situation in Washington is precisely what Paul does NOT mean by "proper." There is a lot of talk in the Senate in recent days about "the Rule of Law." (It is mostly talk) but Paul wants you and me to do more than talk about proper ethics. He is directing us to practice them.

The proper thing for us to do as Christians is not what we can get away with but what is strictly by the rules. A lot of people today think we are being "nit-picky" when we do this, but this is what God expects of us.

Then, we are not only supposed to do correct things, we are to do things correctly. We need to have a place for everything and have everything in its place. Some would say it really doesn't matter how we do something as long as the result is correct. God expects more than that of us. He expected more than this of Luke who wrote,

*Therefore, since I myself have **carefully investigated** everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write **an orderly account** for you, most excellent Theophilus,*
Luke 1:3

People should be able to recognize us as Christians by the way we conduct our lives; by the way we do things that are proper and that we do them properly.

Wayne

