

## **How Theology Should Shape and Ground the Church?**

The relationship between theology and local church ministry is often strained. Academic theology is perceived as too intellectual, obtuse and irrelevant to the realities of pastoral ministry and mission. However, biblically faithful theology is essential because the church needs to be founded on the truth of God and his gospel, and equipped to meet the many challenges of our secular post-Christian context. Without a solid theological foundation churches and pastors will drift into liberalism and heresy. This session will encourage theologians to serve the church appropriately and churches to appreciate and benefit from the work of theologians.

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### **1. What is Theology?**

A multiplicity of disciplines!

- Theology Proper
- Biblical Studies
- Systematic Theology
- Biblical Theology
- Historical Theology

### **2. The Foundations of the Church**

Jesus Christ as the cornerstone – Eph 2v19-22; 1 Cor 3v9-12; 1 Pet 2v6-8

Jesus Christ as the final and sufficient revelation of God – John 1v18; 14v9; Heb 1v1-4

The church as the pillar and foundation of the truth – 1 Timothy 3v15

The Scriptures as the living and sufficient word of God – Heb 4v12; 2 Tim 3v15-16

### **3. The Importance of Theology to the Church**

Understanding God's revelation in Christ

Summarising God's revelation in Christ

Defending God's revelation in Christ

Applying God's revelation in Christ

Doctrine of God – Social Trinitarianism v Classical Doctrine of God

Justification – New Perspective v Reformation Orthodoxy

Race & Gender issues – Exegesis v Redemptive Trajectory  
Biblical authority – Divinity v Humanity of Scripture

#### **4. The Dangers of Theology to the Church**

Undermining confidence in the truth of God's revelation  
Undermining confidence in the accessibility of God's revelation  
Distortion of the coherence of God's revelation  
Imbalance in the priorities in God's revelation

Technical/philosophical language as more ultimate  
Pride of academic expertise  
Narrowness of knowledge in specific area  
Assuming importance of your area of expertise

#### **5. The Practice of Theology for the Church**

Who is your audience? (Secular academy, professional theologians, church leaders, congregation members)  
Where is your accountability? (Institution, professional peers, local church)  
How are you serving the body? (Philippians 2)

#### ***Resources:***

<https://www.religion-online.org/article/the-nature-and-function-of-theology/>

<https://www.gordonconwell.edu/blog/the-role-of-theology-in-the-life-of-the-church/>

<https://www.crossway.org/articles/why-the-local-church-needs-good-biblical-theology/>

<https://banneroftruth.org/uk/resources/articles/2004/the-importance-of-theology/>

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2016/october-web-only/ten-reasons-why-theology-matters.html>

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/the-importance-of-theology-and-theological-understanding/>