

# SPECIAL STUDIES ON CHURCH LEADERSHIP

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## CHURCH LEADERSHIP

A STUDY OF I AND II TIMOTHY AND TITUS

BY

DANNY CAMP

# T H E W O R K O F T H E E L D E R S

IN THE NINTH STREET CHURCH, ELDON, MISSOURI  
by ROY WEECE

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## INTRODUCTION

### A. Initial suggestions to Elders and Deacons

1. Remember Qualifications - You're now being watched more than ever!
2. We are to be Peace-makers - not trouble makers.
3. Speak your feelings here - Don't speak against each other elsewhere. Don't conspire or plot against one another.
4. Listen to others' opinions. Respect them! Go with Majority Vote - Don't always insist on selling only your own idea.
5. Constantly look for Growth ideas.
6. Keep "What's BEST for the Congregation" in mind.
7. Present a "united front" to the church - you'll be a group. Both Elders and Deacons.
8. Problems will increase as family grows. Don't be Frustrated by Them.

## THE ELDERS' WORK

1. SHEPHERDING PROGRAM We divide the church into six groups. Each Elder is assigned a group for one year. He is to call on every family at least once within the year. This can best be done by appointment with one family each week. When some one is sick the Elder over that group calls immediately. When some one is absent, the Elder over that group calls immediately to check why.
2. RECLAIMING DELINQUENT CHURCH MEMBERS We checked the membership list to find who presently showed no signs of love for Christ. We prayed about them and our responsibilities

toward them. We contacted them by letter and asked them to meet with us for thirty minutes at the church building. We talked with them about their earlier interest in Christ. We questioned them about their delinquency. We encouraged them to return to Christ and meet with us again. Two of those we talked with stated their desire to "go the world's way." We announced this to the congregation.

3. COUNSELING WITH YOUTH AND ADULTS We have called in youth five at a time and talked with them about their relationship to Christ. We have talked with married couples who were contemplating separation. Also disputes among members who asked that we do so. (Elders must build these "bridges" and people will come.)
4. APPOINTMENT OF TEACHERS IN THE CHURCH Each July the Elders meet to appoint all the teachers for Sunday morning classes, Sunday evening classes, Wednesday evening classes, and any special classes to be taught that year. (The Elders also appoint annually money counters--Bible School presider--music man--Bible School Secretary--Organist----Pianist--Song Leader for Bible School--Church Dinner Sponsors--Church Recorder--Financial Recorder--Floral Arranger, etc.)
5. MISSIONS We are presently supporting two Bible Colleges and one foreign missionary with a percent of our offering. We are supporting one man in Canada and two children's homes on a part-time basis. We have sent four young men to other countries for summer work. (One each year for the past four). We are presently paying the salary of one man in another country. Our missions' giving for this year will be about 35 to 40 percent of total income.
6. WOMEN'S WORK The ladies of the church who are willing are assigned tasks related to the church life. Twenty different ladies are capably filling jobs relating to the church office. Others work in other areas.
7. ASSIGNMENTS FOR DEACONS Realizing that the Deacons are a special group of servants in the church, the Elders assign each of the eight Deacons a major task in the church life.

These assignments release the Elders and the evangelist for their responsibilities before God. The Deacon's tasks presently are: Lord's table, widows, supply room, buildings, utilities, literature, ushering, grounds, treasurer.

8. FACILITIES The Elders have determined the needs of the church in the area of building expansion. We have built three times in the past ten years. We are presently in a building program.
9. RELATIONSHIP TO LOCAL EVANGELIST The Elders have released him for teaching and evangelization throughout the United States. They have recognized the value of his being "itinerant" as well as "located". They have felt free to discuss his work with him and have been specific in work assignments.
10. NEW CONVERTS When a person gives his or her life to Christ and is baptized immediately, he is then introduced to the Elders and his relationship to them is explained. One Elder then takes three pages of instruction to the home of the new convert. The pages are: "What the Church Teaches" "What You, as a New Christian, can expect from the Elders and Evangelist." "What God Expects of You as a New Child."
11. LETTERS TO NON-RESIDENT MEMBERS When a member moves to another city, a letter is sent encouraging him to identify himself with the Christians there. A letter is sent to the church telling them of the arrival of the Christian.
12. ENCOURAGING YOUNG MEN TO QUALIFY FOR THE ELDERSHIP The Elders have summoned other men to special meetings in order to encourage them to prepare themselves to be Elders. This has also been done in private talk.
13. YOUNG PREACHER INTERNSHIP In two recent summers, a young Bible College student was employed by the church with hopes that he might help us and we might help him. We have talked of employing a young preacher after he graduates from Bible College and giving him some "on the field" training for six months or a year before he moves on to another work.

14. NEW CHURCH Property on the lake was offered with the understanding that a new church be started. The Elders investigated the possibility of doing so by a scheduled meeting with interested people in that area. If such a project continues, the Elders will guide it until such a time that it can continue on its own strength of local leadership.
15. TEACHING OF ELDERS Some of the Elders are presently teaching three classes each week. All are teaching. They have taught special courses for 6-8 periods in addition to the regular teaching.
16. INVITING CHURCH to bring grievances to them by setting definite time when members could come in. Mostly on Sunday afternoon works the best.
17. GO AND PRAY for them that are sick if any of the church are sick let them call for you.

#### WHAT DOES THE CHURCH TEACH ?

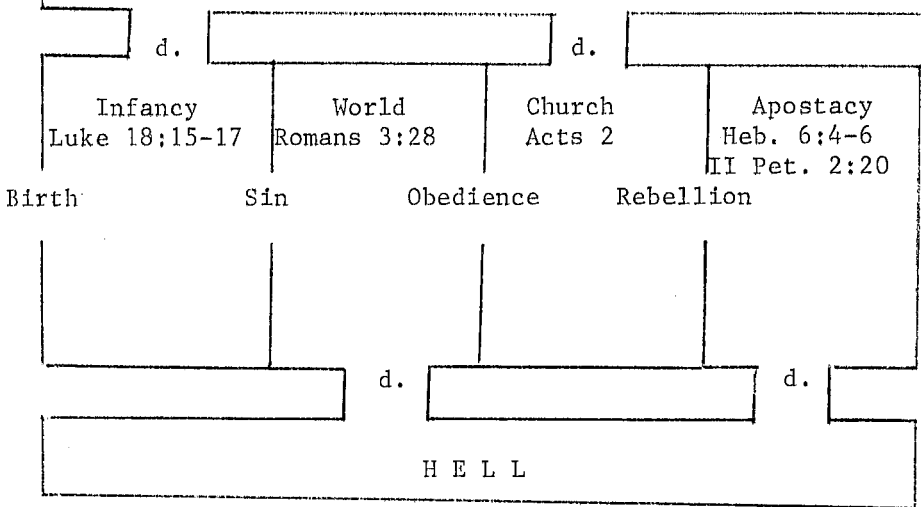
by Roy Weece  
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1. The Bible is God's only rulebook of life--the only infallible rule of faith and practice. II Timothy 3:16,17
2. God is the only God, the Supreme One, the Creator of the world.
3. Christ is the Son of God and the only Saviour of the world. Colossians 1:13-18
4. The only church God intended for the world as a divine institution is the church of His Son. It is His Body and His Bride. Ephesians 4:4-6; Matthew 16:18
5. The Law of Moses has been set aside and is no longer binding to Christians. Colossians 2:14; II Corinthians 3; Hebrews 8:13
6. Baptism is by immersion. Baptism is essential. Sprinkling

- is an idea of man. Acts 8:27-39; Mark 16:16; Galatians 3:27
7. The Lord's Supper is to be observed each Sunday. Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11; Acts 2:42
  8. Christians are to live holy lives. Christianity is more than just a Sunday affair. Colossians 3
  9. Elders are the spiritual leaders of the church. The only higher authority is Christ Himself. I Timothy 3:1-7; Acts 20:28-30
  10. Deacons are a special class of servants in the church. I Timothy 3:8-13
  11. Hell is real. The lost will suffer in this lake of fire eternally. II Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 14:11; Revelation 20:11-15
  12. Heaven is a tangible material locality. The eternal home of the redeemed. John 14:1-6
  13. The Judgement Day follows the Second Coming of Christ and is inevitable! Hebrews 9:27

Note---The diagram on the next page reveals the four possible conditions of any person living.

H E A V E N



W H A T C A N Y O U E X P E C T F R O M  
T H E E L D E R S A N D T H E P R E A C H E R ?

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1. YOU CAN EXPECT THE ELDERS TO GIVE GUIDANCE AS A GROUP.  
They will maintain only Bible teaching in the classroom and from the pulpit. Their purpose will be to lead the members of the church heavenward.
2. YOU CAN EXPECT PRIVATE COUNSEL FROM THE ELDERS.  
When problems arise in your life, the Elders are ever ready to help you. If you desire special instruction from the Bible, they will see that you receive it.
3. YOU CAN EXPECT WHOLESOME CHRISTIAN EXAMPLE FROM THE ELDERS.  
They are interested in displaying Christ through their lives and will do their best to demonstrate the kind of life a Christian should live.
4. YOU CAN EXPECT THE ELDERS TO MEET THESE QUALIFICATIONS:  
I Timothy 3                      Titus 1                      I Peter 5:1-4

"Without reproach" --- Guarded from error, well thought of by outsiders.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM THE ELDERS AND THE PREACHER

by Roy Weece- used by permission

- "Husband of one wife"--Married, happily married, better able to cope with situations that arise in the family of God.
- "Having obedient believing children"--Able to train God's family.
- "Given to hospitality"--Both in home and the church house.
- "A lover of good" --God is good and all He advocates is good.
- "Sober minded" --Steady mind. Not used by 'Pressure Groups.'
- "Just" --Natural sense of fairness, can exercise judgment.
- "Holy" --Pure. Worldly Elders make a worldly church.
- "Self-controlled" --Master of his mind and body. Not controlled by doubtful habits.
- "Faithful to the Scriptures"--This demands accurate knowledge.
- "Apt to Teach" --Able and willing to teach.
- "Orderly" --Scripturally organized.
- "Able to convict gainsayers"--Able to produce evidence that a teacher is false when it's true that he is.
- "Not self-willed" --Serving the interests of the church not his own.
- "Not soon angry" --Not "hot-headed". Righteously indignant at times.
- "No brawler" --Not quarrelsome but as gentle as a doctor with a patient.
- "No striker" --Not one who loves to scrap.
- "Not greedy" --A covetous man will not lead the church in a program of advancement.
- "Not contentious" --Not wearing feelings on his sleeve.
- "Not a novice" --Not a recent convert. Let him prove himself.

5. THE PREACHER IS HIRED TO INSTRUCT AND HELP SET THE CHURCH IN ORDER.



You can expect counsel, guidance, and wholesome Christian example from him also.

WHAT DOES GOD EXPECT OF YOU  
AS A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH?

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1. DAILY BIBLE STUDY.

Christians drop out of the church because they fail to study. God has provided the Bible as our spiritual food. The Bible will make you dissatisfied with self and sin. The proper knowledge of the Bible will take you to heaven. II Timothy 2:15, Acts 17:11

2. DAILY PRAYER.

Pray before meals. Pray on arising. Pray before retiring. Develop a prayer list. Pray for those who need Christ. Pray for delinquent church members. I Thessalonians 5:17

3. REGULAR ATTENDANCE AT THE SERVICES OF THE CHURCH.

Be around the Lord's table each Sunday morning. Listen to the Word of God preached from the pulpit. It will enable you to meet the temptations of the week. Be in Bible School class and listen to capable teachers instruct you in the way of Life. Attend the Bible classes and prayer meeting on Wednesday evening. Be faithful to these services and you will be more apt to reach heaven. Hebrews 10:25

4. GIVING OF MONEY.

Giving is God's plan for expanding His church. Giving links you to God. II Cor. 9:7, Matthew 6:19-21 Start with a tenth and increase as you grow in love for God.

5. LEADING SOULS TO CHRIST.

This is the main purpose of a Christian. . . To show others the road to God and heaven. If you fail in this obligation, you've failed to do that which is the nearest to the heart of God. This requires personally contacting those you work with and other calls suggested by the elders or the preacher. Matthew 28:18-20

6. BEING AN EXAMPLE OF CHRIST. I Peter 2:21

Your purpose as a Christian is to do only those things that Jesus would do. The only picture the world will get of Christ is what they see in a Christian's life. Determine to make the picture true to His character.

7. MAKING DEFINITE EFFORT TO DEVELOP SPIRITUALLY.

Are you a better person today than you were yesterday? Have you made attempts to eliminate from your life those things that are sinful? Start today. Prepare yourself for the judgment. II Corinthians 5:10.

THE ELDERS AND CHURCH DISCIPLINE

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I. BIBLE TEACHING

Matt. 18:15-17

James 5:19,20

I Cor. 5:1-13

Romans 16:17

II Thess. 3:14,15

Titus 3:10

Gal. 6:1,2

II. HISTORY OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE IN ELDON, MO.

- A. 1963 studied scriptures on subject privately and as a group.
- B. Agreed to pray for God's will in relation to church in Eldon and meet again after two months.
- C. Decision to begin by development of "Dead list" compiled from membership list.
- D. Two "extreme" cases selected. Both were visited in an attempt to lead them back. Neither responded. Announcement made to church following letter. (See LETTER 1)

TWO SUBTRACTIONS

It is with deepest regrets that we announce to the congregation that \_\_\_\_\_ has decided to sever relationship with Christ and His church. He has been visited by the Elders and begged to return to the meetings and begin to live the Christian life again. He chooses to continue in conduct unbefitting a child of God. The choice

is his, not the church's. Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ has made the same decision. We urge you remember them in prayer that they might turn from a life of deliberate sin and make known publicly their intentions to live again in Christ. Please study I Cor. 5; Matt. 18:15-17; Gal. 6:1,2; James 5:19, 20; Rom. 16:17

E. Each person whose name appeared on the list was summoned to a 30 minute meeting with the Elders and Roy Weece. (See LETTER 2)

F. Letter sent to those who didn't respond. (See LETTER 3)

G. 1968---Four types of letters sent out:

Those not attending regularly. (LETTER 4)

Those with no spark of "life." (LETTER 5)

Those who had not transferred to the church where they now reside. (LETTER 6)

Those who had been contacted in 1963 but had lapsed again.

H. Meetings with those who came.

I. Letters sent to those who did not respond. (LETTER 7 - Questionnaire)

J. Decision to make January of each year "Membership Inventory" time.

K. Letter sent to each non-responding member informing them of this decision. (LETTER 8)

L. Individual cases handled as necessary.

M. Membership Month. (LETTER 9)

## II. PROCEDURE PLAN OF ACTUAL SESSION.

A. Prayer for wisdom and love.

B. Introduce offender to Elders.

C. Introduce Elders to offender, explaining purpose and function of Elders.

- D. Preacher or Elder, acting as moderator, "We're here because we're interested in you. We love you. You are our brother in Christ. We realize none of us deserves Heaven and we do not feel superior to you from a human righteousness standpoint. We want to help you. Other places might seem more pleasant at this time but we're here because we hope to rekindle the love and interest you once had. God wants us to talk with you."
- E. Review offender's life from time he was saved to present.
- F. "Your failure to attend 'church' brings us here (or whatever the offense may be). We realize we can't force you to attend but we encourage you to attend."
- G. Each Elder expresses his feelings to the person.
- H. Questions--
- Do you want to be a member?  
 Do you believe in God? Why?  
 Do you believe in the Bible? Why?  
 Do you believe in Christ? Why?  
 What do you feel Christ expects of you as a Christian?  
 Do you think the Elders should have called you?
- I. If you don't act then we must act!
- J. Prayer by two Elders and offender if he will.
- IV. IT IS PRAISEWORTHY TO NOTE THAT ONE OF THE DISCIPLINED INDIVIDUALS REPENTED BY TURNING FROM A LIFE OF DELIBERATE SIN TO LIVE WITH CHRIST AGAIN.

LETTER 1

by Roy Weece

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

This letter is written deep concern and regrets. As the Elders of this congregation, we're interested in you and where you'll spend eternity. God has commanded that we watch over you and direct you heavenward. We have been selected to lead this congregation, of which you are a part, in the ways of God. This is why we came to talk with you about your SPIRITUAL condition.

This letter is to inform you that this coming Lord's Day, Sept. 29, an announcement will be made to the congregation of your decision to sever relationship with Christ and His Church. We are compelled to do this because of the Bible teaching in Matthew 18:15-17; I Cor. 5; II Thessalonians 3:14,15; Gal.6: 1,2. The Bible clearly teaches this is your decision and not ours. Your decision has been made by your conduct.

We will be praying that you'll decide to return to meet with God's people as He commands. When you do decide, please come and let your intentions be known publicly.

With Deepest Regrets,

The Elders of the Church  
on 9th Street

LETTER 2

by Roy Weece

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

In checking the record books of church membership, we noticed that you became a member of the congregation here on 9th Street some time ago.

We, the Elders of the congregation, would like to speak with you on a subject of mutual interest.

Would you please come to the new church auditorium at 7:30 in the evening on \_\_\_\_\_.

If for some reason you cannot come, would you please call EX 2-4720 and Roy Weece will pass the information on to us.

With Deep concern for a  
Christian World,

The Elders of the Church  
on 9th Street.

LETTER 3

by Roy Weece

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

We realize that you might have forgotten the recent letter which we sent asking that you come to meet with us. Your failure to appear causes us to write again requesting that you come and meet with us on \_\_\_\_\_ in the new church auditorium at 7:30 in the evening. We hope you will respect our request.

If for some sound reason you are unable to come on the suggested date, would you please contact Roy Weece at EX 2-4720 and he will suggest another possible date and will pass the information on to us.

It will be much better if you will come to meet with us rather than compelling us to come and see you.

With Deep Concern,

The Elders of the Church  
on 9th Street.

LETTER 4

by Roy Weece

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

As Elders of the Church on 9th Street, we are requested by God to supervise the activities of the church and "watch" over the members, attempting to direct them heavenward. This is sometimes pleasant and satisfying but sometimes very difficult. However, we are willing to do whatever God desires because we realize the great need of preparing people to meet God.

This is why we are writing you. We have a genuine Christian Love for you and so we write with hopes of helping--not to injure or hurt. We hope you will receive this letter in the same sincere spirit in which it's written. We have noticed that your interest has lagged and you have not attended as regularly as you once did. There must be reasons. We do know that God has not failed so perhaps we or someone else has done something to destroy or weaken your interest. We have no de-

sire to drive you away but rather to draw you back to a better relationship with Christ and His people. We want to see you come to full growth in Christ. We realize you may have problems of which we are not aware, but we are willing to help with them if you desire. Feel free to call on us at any time.

We do want to encourage you to "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Resist the Devil and he will flee from you." James 4:8

In Christian Love,

(Signed)

LETTER 5

by Roy Weece

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

As Elders of the Church on 9th Street, we are requested by God to supervise the activities of the church and "Watch-over" the members, attempting to direct them heavenward. This is sometimes pleasant and satisfying but sometimes very difficult. We are willing, however, to do whatever God wants because we realize the great need of preparing people to meet God.

This is why we are writing you. We have a genuine Christian love for you and so we write with hopes of helping. We hope you will receive this letter in the same sincere spirit in which it is written. We have noticed that you do not show the interest you once did. There must be reasons. We do know that God has not failed, so perhaps we or someone else has done something to drive you away. We have no desire to drive you away but rather to draw you back to a better relationship with Christ and His Church. We would like very much to recreate in you the love you apparently once had for Christ and His church.

We want to talk with you about this and are asking that you select one of the following nights: March 14, 21, 22. Please come to the church building any time during the hours of 7:00 and 10:00 in the evening. If you are interested in continuing as a member of the church, please come to talk with us about these important matters.

We realize you may have problems of which we are not aware but we are willing to help with them if you desire. Perhaps you are attending and taking an active part in some other Bible believing and practicing church. If you are, we rejoice in this. We remember with joy the day you united with the church and want to encourage that same good interest and enthusiasm for Christ.

In Christ's Love,

(Elders' signatures)

LETTER 6

by Roy Weece

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

As Elders of the Church on Ninth Street, we are requested by God to supervise the activities of the church and "Watch-over" the members, attempting to direct them heavenward. We are willing to do whatever God wants because we realize the great need of preparing people to meet God.

This is why we're writing you. We have a genuine Christian love for you and so we write with hopes of directing you—not injuring or hurting you. Recently we checked the records of church membership and noticed that you have not transferred into the church where you now live. Perhaps you have done so and we have not been informed, since this does happen sometimes. We feel it our responsibility to encourage you to unite with (church and address where they now reside).

We would appreciate hearing from you informing us that you have done so. If you ever move back to Eldon, we would encourage you to unite immediately with us again.

May you abide in Him until that Day Christ comes again is our prayer for you.

In Christian Love,



Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

In our recent letter to you regarding your Christian life and church membership, we asked that you come to talk with us about these eternal matters. We're very sorry you didn't come. Since you did not appear, we are asking that you return this form with the questions answered and we will appreciate it. This will enable us to better understand your feelings.

Thank you.

1. Were you unable to meet at the time suggested? \_\_\_\_\_
2. If the time was not suitable, what time would be? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Are you now meeting with another group of Christians with whom you would rather serve Christ? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Do you want to remain a member of this church by "renewing your vows to God?" \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you want your name removed from the membership of the Ninth Street Church? \_\_\_\_\_

In Deep Concern,

THE ELDERS  
(Names)

C H U R C H   G O V E R N M E N T

by Frank L. Cox- used by permission

It would be difficult indeed to stress too greatly the importance of proper church government. Without it, the congregation would soon become engulfed in the darkness of chaos and utter confusion. It is written, "God is not a God of confusion, but of peace."

Known unto men are various forms of government, namely: democracy, oligarchy, plutocracy, aristocracy, monarchy, and

theocracy. By which of these forms should the church of our Lord be governed?

Should the church government be a democracy, a rule of the many, a rule of the majority? Can members of the church, by majority vote or even unanimous vote change truth into a lie, or a lie into the truth? make vice a virtue, or virtue a vice? The truth of God is unchangeable. With it there can be no variation. The Word is the same yesterday and today, yea and forever. Though heaven and earth shall pass away, God's word shall not pass away. (Matt. 24:35)

Should the church government be an oligarchy, a rule of the few, a rule of the minority? Seeing that the congregation should not be governed by the majority, some erroneously conclude that it should be governed by the minority. "If not by the majority, then by the minority," they say. Against the force of an organized minority, an unorganized majority is utterly helpless. Adolph Hitler of Germany and Benito Mussolini of Italy learned this; and by means of a small minority, efficiently organized, each brought a great nation under his power. Unfortunately, contentious church members have learned of the power of an organized minority. Moved by selfishness and fired by worldly ambition, a mere handful of members has brought large congregations under its power and dominion. Not infrequently, the will of the few has been imposed on the many, lording it over God's heritage. Dark is the day for any congregation when it is dominated by such a group. We have very little confidence in the majority rule, still less in the minority rule!

Should the church government be a plutocracy, a rule of the rich? For the sake of advantage, some church members hold the rich or the powerful in admiration. (See Jude 16.) Consciously or unconsciously, brethren are brought under power of the man from whom they receive favors or wish to receive favors, from whom they borrow or wish to borrow. It is not difficult to understand how a congregation may find itself in the grip of such a personality. Should the body of Christ be governed by men of wealth because of their wealth or position in financial affairs? Should Mammon rule over God's people?

Should the church government be an aristocracy, a rule of the privileged class, those who are supposed to be superior in race, and rank, in social standing, in mental endowments? There is no privileged class in the church of God. All are brethren. Before the Father, they are equal. In Christ

Jesus are erased all racial distinctions, all social distinctions. (See Gal. 3:28.)

Should the church government be a monarchy, a rule of one? There are three well-known functions of government namely: the legislative, the judicial, and the executive. When all of these functions center in one personality, the government is monarchical in form. And for this very reason, the church government is a monarchy.

Should the church government be a theocracy, a rule of God? The statement that the church government is a monarchy is true, but too general in meaning. It should be qualified. Diotrephes, concerning whom the beloved John wrote, was a monarch. He loved to have the preeminence-- the preeminence of power--the power to receive, the power to cast out, the power to control. (Read 3 John 9,10.) But the church is more than a monarchy-- it is also a theocracy. The church is a monarchy with God--not a Diotrephes--on the throne. "The Lord is our lawmaker"--the legislative function. "The Lord is judge"--the judicial function. "The Lord is our king"--the executive function. (See James 4:12; Isa. 33:22; John 5:22; Matt. 28:18; Rom. 12:19.) So, the church government is a monarchy, the rule of one personality. The church government is also a theocracy, the rule of God. The Lord purchased the church; the church is his family, his society, his kingdom. Therefore, the Lord and the Lord alone should rule in the hearts and lives of his people. But he rules through the instrumentality of men--men in whose heart God dwells, men who recognize the Lordship of Christ: for only the men who are ruled by the Lord are qualified to rule for the Lord. These men are known as "elders" or "bishops." (For their qualifications, see: I Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9.)

## I

Each congregation should have a plurality of elders--not one elder over a plurality of congregations; not one elder over each congregation; not a group of elders over a group of congregations; but a group of elders over each congregation. (Tit. 1:5; Acts 11:30; Phil. 1:1,2.)

What authority has one elder over the affairs of the congregation he serves? None. The New Testament is silent concerning the authority of an elder, but speaks plainly concerning the authority of the eldership. It is only when an elder speaks

and acts with his fellow elders--and all speak and act in harmony with New Testament teaching--that he has authority. God's word, of course, is supreme in matters of faith and practice. When elders are divided on a matter of judgment, the law of meekness requires the minority rather than the majority to surrender the point of contention. Your writer knows a case where four of the five elders voted together on a point of judgment, but the fifth gave a contrary vote and his vote prevailed. The four were lacking in the quality of firmness, the fifth in the quality of humility. All the elders are equal before God and the congregation they serve.

## II

Writing under the caption of the "Main Elder", Foster L. Ramsey drives home some pertinent points. We are quoting his article in full.

"'Everyone liked Brother Blank's sermon, and we would have hired him to preach for us, but our "main elder" did not like him, so we did not employ him.' So ran the conversation of an elder of one of the churches as he talked with a friend of a neighboring congregation. Herein is found a practice that is becoming all too prevalent in the church of Christ; the practice of having a 'main elder'. Such practice is fraught with much danger. The early church went into apostasy which finally brought about the Roman Catholic Church with her pope, bishops, and other unscriptural offices.

"Such practice was unknown in New Testament times. No such official existed as a 'main elder'. No separate qualifications are given for a 'main elder'. No separate work is assigned to a 'main elder'. Consequently, the scriptures do not support this practice of having one elder set up over the other elders and over the church.

"When Peter wrote his first letter he exhorted the elders to take the oversight of the church, not as lords over God's heritage but as examples to the church. When one man can change the decision of all the other elders with no good reason except a personal like or dislike; then this is undoubtedly being a lord over the heritage of the Lord.

"Elders of the church are to work together in peace and harmony and love for one another and for the cause of the Lord. When this is done, then no single one of them will want the preeminence as does the 'main elder' and as did Diotrephes a-

bout whom John wrote. No decision will be made by any one elder, nor will any one elder thwart the wishes and desires of the other elders and the church when all of the elders work together with love in their hearts for the cause of Christ."

## DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ELDERS

by Seth Wilson-

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### Introduction:

#### Importance of Eldership

The most important institution in the world is the church of our Lord. The most important institution in any community is the local church. In Phil. 1:1, Paul addresses the church as "saints", "overseers", and "servants". Every member is a saint and should walk worthily of the high calling. To have a church we must have saints--men cleansed from sin and sanctified unto God, who have come out of the world and "hid their lives with Christ in God." Officers are not essential to the existence of a church. As need arises and as men are qualified, our "Rule of Faith and Practice" makes provision for selection of two classes of officers--elders and deacons, amenable to the local congregation and subject always to the authority of God's word. The church is not for the officers but the officers for the church. If the church is the most important institution in the world, then we can hardly attach too much significance to the office of deaconship and eldership. It is the zero hour in the life of a congregation when elders and deacons are selected by that congregation.

#### Scriptures concerning Elders' Work

Acts 20:17, 28-32; I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-11; I Tim. 5:17-19; I Pet. 5:1-4; Eph. 4:11-13; I Thess. 5:11-14; Heb. 13:7, 17.

#### I. They have a work to do.

(I Tim. 3:1 "he desireth a good work." It is a job, not simply a position of rank or honor. The elders have no special right to do works of Christian service; but have the special responsibility to do and to oversee.)

A. The names used to designate the officer indicate the

duties attached to it.

1. elders (πρεσβύτεροι, old men), Acts 14:23; 20:17; I Tim. 5:17; Titus 1:5; I Peter 5:1.
2. bishops or overseers (ἐπίσκοποι), Acts 20:28; I Tim. 3:1-2; Titus 1:7.
3. pastors or shepherds (ποιμένες), I Peter 5:4; Eph.4:11
  - a. feed (ποιμαίνω) literally, shepherd. Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2.
4. rulers or superintendants (προϊστάμενοι) I Thess.5:12; I Tim. 5:17.
5. teachers (διδάσχαλοι) Eph. 4:11; I Tim. 3:2; 5:17; Tit. 1;9.
6. rulers or leaders (ηγούμενοι), Heb. 13:7,17.  
(The elders are to teach, shepherd, oversee, and hold responsibility for the church.)

"Feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood." Elders hold the life of the church in their hands as a trust.

1. "Take heed...to feed." (προσέχετε...ποιμαίνειν) Acts 20:28b.
2. "Therefore watch ye" (διὸ γρηγορεῖτε), Acts 20:31a.
3. "Obey...for they watch on behalf of your souls..." (πειθεσθ αὐτοῖ γὰρ ἀγρυπνοῦσιν ὑπερ τῶν ψυχῶν υἱῶν ὡς λόγον ἀποδώσεσ) Heb. 13:17.

#### B. Indications of the extent of their work

They may have to watch the flock by night--a young man or woman in public dances, a man covetous in his business, a person young or old being led into the snare of gamblings or idleness, exposed to the soul disease of getting something for nothing. I Peter 5:2-4: "Tend the flock of God which is among you (ποιμνάτε τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποίμνιον τοῦ θεοῦ exercising the oversight not of constraint but willingly, according to the will of God, nor yet for filthy lucre but of a ready mind, neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away.

I Thess. 5:12: "But we beseech you, brethren, to know them

that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; (V. 13) and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their works sake. Be at peace among yourselves. (14) And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the fainthearted, support the weak, be longsuffering toward all." "Fainthearted" is literally feeble-minded--weak in will or understanding, wanting firmness or constancy, irresolute, wanting in courage, depressed by fear, easily discouraged. "Longsuffering" is to be of a long enduring spirit, not to lose heart, slow to anger, slow to punish, patient in bearing injuries and offences.

II Tim. 2:23-26: "...Must not strive, but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing, in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves;"

The flock, the whole flock, everyone in the flock is to be tended, fed, guided, watched over and guarded. If a shepherd would tend his sheep as many elders tend the flock of God, his sheep would certainly be sick, weak, and lean, and often lost even as the flock of God is. Supervision of the teaching in the Sunday School. Supervision of the teaching in the home.

If a member absents himself from the Lord's table, the work should be so well in hand that the elders take knowledge of the fact and act accordingly.

Note: We can see why elders must be carefully selected; why we are given such strict divine qualifications. The Christian Way of life is a "strait" (strict) and narrow way" for everyone entering into the Kingdom, but the elders must be such men that they keep the others in the narrow way without being a farce, without falling themselves, and without inviting rebellion.

Note: An erroneous popular obsession and the blame for it. The obsession has widely obtained that we elect elders primarily to preside at the Lord's table on the Lord's Day and to share in the discussion of finances at the monthly board meeting...The high and noble calling of the elder, his glorious opportunities and tremendous responsibilities, his heaven ordained work is all but lost sight of in the maze of departures from the divine pattern...The placing of the blame for this

state of affairs has largely been a matter of "passing the buck." Most of us are somewhat to blame, but allow me to place it in large measure on the shoulders of the preacher, the evangelist who should set things in order (Titus 1:5). Condoning of sin, flirting with worldliness in heavenly places, flattery ---those we frequently substitute for the declaration of the full counsel of God. If any preacher preach, let him preach as the oracles of God--he may lose his job, or even if he doesn't he may incur the displeasure of a great host; but he will save his own soul and the souls of some who hear. (Ezek. 9:6)." --Geo. M. Elliot

Corrective discipline is one of their great responsibilities as shepherds. I Tim. 5:20-21: "Them that sin reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear, (v.21) I charge thee in the sight of God, and Christ Jesus, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing by partiality." This was directed to Timothy but falls to the shepherds of the flock. Gal. 6:1: "Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself lest thou also be tempted."

Summary: Take charge of the Babes in Christ.

1. Guard their progress (See that they do progress) Heb. 10: 23-25; 12:12-13.
2. Restore the falling. I Tim. 5:21; I Thess. 5:14.
3. Preserve correct teaching. Titus 1:13.
4. Eject those incorrigible corrupted in life or teaching. I Cor. 5; I Thess. 3:6,14; Titus 3:10.
5. Receive the penitent after ejection. II Cor. 2:6-8.

C. Manner and attitudes to be used in such work.

Titus 2:15: "These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no man despise thee."

"Firmness does not exclude love, and vice versa, love does not exclude firmness...We must love the erring brother; but in loving the sinner, we must take care not to white-wash the sin...On the one hand, there must be no 'get even',



'I told you so', 'cold shoulder' spirit in dealing with the transgressor...On the other hand, any sentiment which we have toward the erring brother which will entice us to tamper with the New Testament teaching is not. 'love uncorruptible.' When the cold tide is carrying a brother to his death, we should not give him the icy end of the board; neither should we refuse him the means of salvation for fear of offending...So, "Let all that you do be done in love'. ..'Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you.' (Eph. 4:31,32)." George M. Elliott.

II Tim. 2:23,26: "...must not strive...be gentle..patient ...in meekness..."

I Peter 5:2-4: "...not be constraint, but willingly..a ready mind...Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples..."

Gal. 6:1: "...in the spirit of meekness."

II Cor. 4:1,2: "...not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully...but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

#### D. The ruling authority of the elders.

##### 1. They are to rule.

a. "Remember them that have the rule over you. (Μνημον εἶτε τῶν ἡγουμένων ὑμῶν) Heb. 13:7.

b. "Obey...submit" (Ἦεθεσθε τοῖς ἡγουμένοῖς...) Heb. 13:7.

c. "Salute all them that have the rule over you," (Ἄσπασσθε πάντα τοὺς ἡγουμένους) Heb. 13:24.

Note: These passages are translated in the Emphatic Diaglott "leader," in Rotherham "those who are guiding you."

d. "that are over you" (τοὺς προϊσταμένους ὑμῶν) I Thess. 5:1.

e. "...the elders that rule well..." (οἱ καλῶς προεστῶτες πρεσβύτεροι) I Tim. 5:17.

f. "one that ruleth well his own house....(but if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house how shall he take care of the church of God?) (ἐπιμελήσεται) I Tim. 3:4,5.

2. There are limits to their ruling power.

a. They are under Christ.

They serve as bondservants of Jesus Christ. God "gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body." (Eph. 1:22,23 and Matt. 28:18). They are not to usurp any authority-- cannot alter the divine law of admission, or the divine law of regulation, or the divine law of ejection.

b. They, under Christ, are servants of the congregation. II Cor. 4:5: 12:15.

This office is a function. It offers no place for ecclesiastical ascendancy but for service. I Peter 5:3: "Not lording it over the charge allotted to you." In III John 9-12, the example of Diotrophes, who loved the preeminence, is condemned. They are not to subject people to themselves but to the Lord Jesus. Elders are not given any power to force submission to their will. All that they do must be done by means of teaching and persuasion and example. Inasmuch as they teach the word of Christ, all the authority of Christ constrains the hearers to submit.

c. They are to be subject to one another, doing their work in harmony and co-operation.

An elder is "not self-willed" (Titus 1:7). No one man is to dominate. We can see the reason for a plurality of elders in every place. "...and appoint elders in every city" (Tit. 1:5). No one man should exercise the authority and bear the burden of the eldership. It is evident that there is no justification in the New Testament for calling one, who is the preacher, "the Pastor." With the other bishops (if he be a bishop) he may be designated a pastor. But he must be otherwise qualified, chosen and devoted to the responsible work of a bishop. It is more scriptural to call him "the minister." To take all the shepherding, pastoral work and responsibility from

the elders and put it on one man who happens to be preaching for the church is a very grievous error, fatal to the highest and sanest leadership in a church.

## II. They have submission and respect due them.

The eldership has almost all duties and no rights, but:

1. If they are to teach, the congregation must receive their teaching as long as scriptural.
2. If they are to rule, it is the duty of the members to submit to all their acts of discipline which are not in violation of the law of Christ.
3. If they are to correct the worldly they will be expected to be likely to make enemies and to be slandered, so the church should not be prejudiced by gossip or rumor against them.

I Tim. 5:19: "Against an elder receive not an accusation except at the mouth of two or three witnesses."

I Tim. 5:1: "Rebuke not an elder but exhort him as a father." This instruction even to a proven preacher having the inspiration of the Spirit of God.

I Tim. 17,18: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and teaching; for the scripture saith thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn; and, the laborer is worthy of his hire."

Gal. 6:6: "But let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things."

I Peter 5:5: "Likewise ye younger, be subject unto the elder. Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility to serve one another; for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

## III. The congregations have responsibility to God and to men to select elders who are both worthy and capable of doing the work God wants them to do. We should always strive to uphold the standards divinely set for the church and its workers.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OF THE WORK OF ELDERS

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### The Elders and the Bible School

1. Should the elders interview each prospective teacher of the bible school before permitting the individual to teach?
2. If a teacher is failing to teach the bible because of lack of ability and understanding, what action should the elders take?
3. If a teacher is willfully refusing to teach the bible or is perverting the truth, what action should the elders take?
4. How often should the elders, or a representative of the elders, visit every class of the bible school?
5. How can elders keep informed of literature used in the various departments of the bible school?
6. What responsibilities do the elders have for preventing the bible school from becoming a duplication of the worship service?
7. What efforts do elders make to increase regular attendance in the bible school?

### The Work and Problems of the Elders in Relation to Missionary Work

1. Are the elders of the local congregation responsible for the actions of living-link missionaries on the field?
2. Should the elders personally approve and invite visiting missionaries to speak to the church?
3. What responsibility do elders have in teaching missions to the congregation?
4. How are the elders present at this meeting active in the mission program of the congregation where they serve?

### The Relation Between the Elders and the Youth Program of the Church

1. What part do the elders have in supervising the program of the Christian Service Camps?
2. What responsibilities do the elders have in providing a youth program in the local congregation?
3. What encouragement do the elders give for youth to attend Christian Service Camps?

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4. What courses are taught in Christian Service Camps which reveal the qualifications and functions of the elders in the local congregation?
5. How do the elders oversee the selection of youth sponsors?

### The Relationship of the Elders to the Preacher and the Evangelistic Program

1. Should the preacher be an elder of the congregation with full rights and privileges of the eldership?
2. What dangers, if any, are there of preachers dominating the elders?
3. How can the proper relationship between preacher and elders best be maintained?
4. How should the elders select an evangelist for special meetings?
5. How often should special evangelistic meetings be held?

### The Elders Shepherding the Flock, Calling in the Homes, Dealing with Personal Problems

1. How much time do the elders present at this meeting spend in making personal calls in the homes of church members?
2. What program is best for serving home communion?
3. What plan is best for providing for widows and orphans?
4. Should the church have an emergency benevolent fund? If so, who should determine the use of the fund?

## THE DEACON'S ROLE IN MINISTERING TO THE BODY

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### I. SPIRITUAL BUSINESS:

- A. Earnestly uphold the faith. - I Tim. 3:9
  1. Strikes at the very core of usefulness.
    - a. Must work diligently for the church.
    - b. Faith and works are more than qualifications.
  2. Stands between the worshipper and Lord's Supper.
    - a. Kindness and consideration important.
  3. Inactivity will disqualify as surely as worldliness. II Cor. 8:11

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- B. Office instituted by apostolic order. -Acts 6:3
  - 1. Appointed over certain business.
  - 2. Account indicates official capacity within the church.
    - a. They planned - decided - implimented.
  - 3. Included within the continuing polity of church.-Phil.1:1

### II FINANCIAL BUSINESS:

- A. Finance Committee:
  - 1. Church Treasurer and Assistant are natural chairmen.
  - 2. Preparation of budget.
  - 3. Auditing of books.
  - 4. Comptrollers of funds.
    - a. Church Board authorizes payment.
    - b. This Board should be so designated by the congregation.
- B. Ways and Means Committee:
  - 1. Promote projects to suit funds.
    - a. Discourage deficit spending.
    - b. Encourage challenge to faith.
  - 2. Provide funds for projects undertaken.
    - a. Building fund drives.
    - b. Mission fund projects.
    - c. General fund support.
  - 3. Purchasing Agent for church.
- C. Annual Commitment Program:
  - 1. Lead in example.
  - 2. Lead in accomplishing program.
  - 3. Implimenting Committee.

### III. PROPERTY BUSINESS:

- A. Safeguard from legal infringement.
  - 1. Legislation: Protect tax-exempt status: Articles of Incorporation.
  - 2. Clear title: Proper deed: Adequate insurance: Trustees.
- B. Protect from natural deterioration.
  - 1. Building and contents. (church parsonage)
  - 2. Land: Erosion: Lawn: Sign: Parking lot: etc.
  - 3. Management of property: Irrigation: Snow: Janitorial: Waste.
- C. Increase Evaluation:
  - 1. Improvements: Additions: New construction: Repair: etc.

## THE DEACON'S ROLE IN MINISTERING TO THE BODY

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### IV. PERSONAL BUSINESS;

- A. Bevevolence: Missionaries: Evangelists: Members: General.
- B. Service: Transportation: Ushering: Lord's Supper.
  - 1. Bring them in - Seat them comfortably - Serve them Spiritual food.
- C. Favor: Reasonable personal service in emergency. Assist other officers. WARNING: Deacon not to be made flunky.

## THE WORK OF ELDERS

by Woodrow Phillips  
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SOME PRELIMINARY SCRIPTURES AND QUESTIONS which we need to consider:

Read these passages carefully in their context: Gen. 24:2; 50:7; Num. 11:16,17; Matt. 15:2; Acts 4:8; 6:12; 11:30; 13:1; 14:23; 15:2,4,6,22,23; 16:4; 20:17,28-32; 21:18; 24:1; I Cor. 12:28; Phil. 1:1; Eph. 4:11-16; I Thess. 5:12-14; I Tim. 3:1-6; 5:17-19; Tit. 1:5-11; Heb. 13:7,17,24; James 5:14,15; I Pet. 5:1-5; I John 1.

1. What does the term "elder" mean?
2. What does the term "bishop" denote in the New Testament?
3. What did the term "pastor" refer to in the days of the apostles? Eph. 4:11; I Pet. 5:1-4
4. Who directed the teaching of the local congregations in the first century?
5. When was the term "elder" first used to describe an office or official?
6. What term carries the thought of rulership?
7. What word means "shepherd?"

8. What is the marital condition of the eldership?
9. To what is "ruling his own household well" applicable?
10. Does this completely exclude single men from the office of elder? Defend your answer.
11. Explain the qualification, "not given to much wine."
12. Why do you feel as you do on this question of drinking wine?
13. Are the qualifications set forth in the N. T. for the eldership impossible to meet?
14. Explain your answer to #13.

THE WORK OF THE ELDERS AS INDIVIDUALS

This primarily refers to the elder as a Christian, the experience shared by all those who would follow Christ. Yet in some actions the elder sets himself apart from his fellow believers. These actions are quickly seen in his home establishment and in his ability to propagate the faith.

Are these qualifications actually different from the responsibilities of all Christians?

How valuable is the elder's Christian example?

Responsible Christian action ought to be a prime consideration in selection of elders.

How Christian must an elder be? Are there degrees of Christianity?

How can we improve our Christian witness in our home community as individuals?

What would be the total impact of a consecrated eldership in all of our churches?

Attempt to define consecration.

Do we tend to turn from grace to law in such definitions?

What scriptural principle can provide unlimited advance?



Consider Rom. 8:3-14; 12:1-8; I Cor. 10:31,32; Gal. 2:20,21.  
Christ living in me to the glory of God.

### THE WORK OF THE ELDERS AS CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES

Here we use the term "elder" in its official New Testament sense denoting an office.

The word "elder" is of Hebrew origin. In the O.T. it was used extensively as a title for rulers of tribes and nations. Gen. 24:2; 50:7; Num. 11:16,17.

The same title is used often in the N.T. I Pet. 5:1; I Tim. 5:17; II John 1.

We are interested in this word mainly as it denotes an office in the church.

Even in the N.T. the same word "elder", sometimes refers to the office of a ruler of the Jews. See Acts 4:5,8; 6:12; 24:1.

The Greek word is "presbyteros", which literally means one who is older. But not every older man can be an elder in the official sense. Attainment and growth in the Christian life is more important than years. No age is specified in the scriptures.

In I Tim. 4:14 the word "presbytery" appears. It is simply the Greek "presbyteriou" anglicized. If translated, it would read "the body of elders."

"Elders, among the Jews, were the rulers of the people, prominent men who took the lead in directing and controlling affairs. The elders of a city correspond to councilmen, just as we now call them 'city fathers.' The elders of the people were their representatives and rulers in government and management of affairs pertaining to the public welfare. As an official term, therefore, this word expresses the idea of government by men of age, prominence, experience and wisdom. It indicates that this office is one that imposes important duties and grave responsibilities, and that it should be filled by men who are competent to perform the work devolving upon them

efficiently and successfully. It indicates that an incompetent eldership is a great misfortune, and disastrous in its consequences."

--W.L. Hayden, p. 51, CHURCH POLITY

It is the work of the elders to conduct the business affairs of the church, with the delegated authority of the congregation behind their decisions. This eliminates the impossible task of convening the entire Christian community every time some minor matter must be decided.

The elders also guide the church in the larger decisions where congregational voice is deemed necessary, by the carefully and prayerfully made recommendations.

It would follow that the elders also control the activities of the deacons as servants of the church, since the elders regulate the church's action by their decisions.

This is not a unilateral action, for the N.T. teaches the plurality of elders.

Also, as representatives of the congregation, they are responsible to the congregation, and by their qualifications for the office--responsible to Christ, according to the requirements of the N.T. itself.

It might be good to suggest that they exercise the executive power of the church alone, since the Scriptures provide both the legislation and authority for judicial action.

Benevolence, education, evangelism, worship and community life all come under the responsibility of the eldership.

#### THE WORK OF THE ELDERS AS BISHOPS

"Bishop" is a term not commonly used in our churches. We have some inherent prejudice against this title because of its hierarchical connotations in modern church usage. Yet it is used in the N.T. in describing the work of elders, and in reference to the office. Read I Tim. 3:1,2; Tit. 1:7; Phil. 1:1.

"Bishop" is from the Greek word "episcopos" which literally means an overseer or superintendent.

In I Peter 2:25 this word is used in reference to Christ as the guardian of our souls.

Apparently in the N.T. the word "bishop" is used to denote one who has been appointed to oversee or superintend the interest of a particular congregation. Phil. 1:1.

There is no record of its use to indicate an official over more than one congregation. Historically you must come into the third century to find the title of bishop applied to a church officer ruling over a group of churches. There is some indication that one elder became the presiding officer for a set period of time over the eldership of a local congregation. In the second century these were called "monarchical" bishops. Presumably we have hit upon the notion of the "chairman of the board" in much the same fashion. This selection of leadership is certainly not hierarchical.

Notice that the words elder and bishop are used interchangeably in the N.T. Acts 20:17,28; Titus 1:5,7.

Since then, the word bishop itself indicates an overseer or superintendent, we can quickly grasp the work this must involve in relation to the congregation.

The church is the Christian community in any locality. It must have community life to be energetic and expanding, as well as to care for the needs of its members.

The community life is under the direction of the elders. What, in your mind, must the community life of the church include?

Without faithful participation himself, how can a bishop be qualified to superintend?

COMMUNITY LIFE MUST INCLUDE THE ENTIRE RANGE OF ACTIVITIES WHICH ARE NECESSARY for the well-being of each individual member of the church.

Here is where our churches have fallen short of the New Testament ideal.

BENEVOLENCE--caring for widows, orphans, handicapped, those temporarily destitute by disaster, and emergency needs is benevolence. This need not be charity. Self-help is the New Testament action indicated.

SOCIAL LIFE--We are a leisure-minded people. The church cannot provide every avenue of pleasure that may be legitimate for Christian usage, but it can provide far more than is generally recognized. That particularly of youth and advanced age.

OUTREACH-----Consciousness of the need of others is an American virtue. It needs to be a church responsibility in relationship to our total global mission. Missions can revitalize any church program when properly introduced and maintained.

#### THE WORK OF THE ELDERS AS PASTORS

Again, "pastor" is not a term commonly used for our elders. We often refer to the preaching minister as the pastor, and he many times fills the position of a teacher and shepherd. However, this word is used in the N.T. only in Eph. 4:11 and refers to the elders. It definitely describes a most important part of their work.

Read these Scriptures: Eph. 4:11-16; Acts 20:28-31;  
I Peter 5:1-5.

The Greek word is often in the verb form, meaning to shepherd, frequently translated "tend" or "feed". It is evident that this title describes the work of pastoring. Since Christ in I Peter 5:1-4 is called the Chief Shepherd, it clearly suggests that the elders are undershepherds.

The responsibility of tending the flock of God is all too lightly regarded.

It is certainly permissible for the congregation and the elders to hire a pastor to lead in this work but this does not elim-

inate the work of all the other elders in pastoring.

This is closely related to the work of the elder as a teacher, but here the elder is serving as overseer as well as laboring in the propagation of the faith.

Under the position as pastor comes the work of directing the worship, home visitation, and teaching program of the church.

To "feed" the flock is to impart spiritual nurture to each member.

Worship is a means of feeding. The feasting at the Lord's table, properly understood, is the highlight of the Christian's week.

The preaching of the Word is feeding the flock upon the Bread of Life. Here again the pastor must be certain that his flock is being properly fed. If he does not preach himself, he is the guardian of the pulpit so that heresy, digressive doctrine or anything other than the Word of God will not be preached to the flock.

To divide the membership under the direction of the elders and to rotate the divisions to allow the pastors better opportunity for home visitation is a good plan. A general rule might be to place twelve families under each elder and have him visit them once each quarter inquiring as to their spiritual, material and social welfare and needs.

Thus a congregation of 50 families (about 200 members) could be cared for by four elders and with only one call each week for each elder. The entire congregation would be called upon by all the elders under a rotation system in one year's time.

Home visitation of this kind is not necessarily evangelistic, but it is a good practice for complete shepherding.

It is in this matter of being shepherds that I fear our elders fall the farthest short of the N.T. instructions. Yet this is not an impossible task nor one that is burdensome. What a real blessing it is when faithfully performed with evident joy of

serving.

It is a good suggestion to take one deacon with you as you make your pastoral calls, in order to help him grow toward proficiency in the work which may one day be his.

How many churches do you know that have tried this rotation pastoring by the elders? Is this a workable program?

Do you think the one man pastor system is adequate, no matter how hard your preacher works at the job?

Would this eliminate the need for a paid preacher? Why not?

Would this program increase his efficiency and outreach? How?

Do your elders actually look out for the flock by attention to them at worship?

What has the failure of this practice produced in our churches in this generation?

Would not a return to pastoring by the eldership remove this grave danger to the practice of New Testament Christianity?

Shepherding and teaching are closely interrelated in the work of the church.

Naturally this indicates a personal qualification to teach. Many have argued that an elder does not need to teach, but that he is to supervise the teaching. That may be true, but nothing so hampers a school as to have supervisors who know nothing of teaching.

Pastoring requires teaching, I may agree that this does not require standing before a class as a teacher, but I cannot agree that the elder can be properly qualified who does not know the content of, or how to impart, the Christian message.

Read these Scriptures: Eph. 4:11; I Cor. 12:28; Acts 13:1; II Tim. 2:2

Note especially: I Tim. 3:2; 5:17; Tit. 1:9.

It does not follow that all the teachers must be elders, or that all the teaching must be done by elders. See Tit. 2:3,4. A strong indication is made that the elders are to supervise all the teaching.

Every Christian has responsibility to teach the Word of God to others. See Matt. 5:13,14,19; Col. 3:16; Tit. 2:3; Heb. 5:12; 3:12,13; 10:24,25.

It is imperative that the elders know the thing to be taught, the Word of God. They must constantly give a strong voice in upholding New Testament principles.

As teachers, they are to deliver the faith, not only to their own generation, but to future generations. They must reverence the Bible as the complete revelation of God. They are commanded to commit the same to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also (II Tim. 2:2).

As a teacher the elder is constantly before the congregation and under observation. He must be on guard not to dominate, and not to retreat in the face of any error in teaching that may be introduced into the studies or the lives of members.

CONCLUSION: The apostles seemed to consider themselves to be elders. At least, Peter and John so refer to themselves. I Pet. 5:1; II John 1; III John 1.

The churches of the N.T. day, soon after their beginning, had elders to lead them. See Acts 14:23; 15:2-6; 20:17,28; 21:17-24; Phil. 1:1.

Here are the specific duties listed:

Acts 11:29,30 - representing the Jerusalem church in receiving an offering

Acts 15:1-29; 16:4 - conferring with apostles and others about a matter of dispute

Acts 20:28 - feeding (shepherding) the flock

Acts 20:29-31 - watching and protecting the flock from "wolves"

Acts 20:35 - helping the weak

- Acts 21:17-24 - giving advice on how to allay false opposition
- Eph. 4:11-16 - equipping the saints for their full ministry and maturity
- I Thess. 5:12,13 - admonishing and directing the disciples
- I Tim. 3:2 - teaching
- I Tim. 3:3-5 - gently and skillfully taking care of the church
- I Tim. 5:17 - laboring in the Word and teaching
- Tit. 1:9-11 - exhorting in sound doctrine and convicting gainsayers
- Heb. 13:17 - watching on behalf of souls, leading the flock
- James 5:14,15 - praying for the sick
- I Pet. 5:1-5 - setting an example, exercising oversight.

#### ELDERS AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

by Woodrow Phillips  
used by permission

1. Christian Education is a church responsibility. "Teach others also", II Tim. 2:2
  - a. Since the elders are the church's spiritual overseers, this becomes their responsibility.
  - b. Elders ought to encourage by all means the fulfilling of this basic need for Christian nurture and training.
  - c. The untaught church is a wayward and willful church.
  - d. The church that understands God's will is best equipped to accomplish it.
2. Christian Education in the local church.
  - a. This may be divided into several phases of which the Bible School is one. Preaching, teacher training, youth programs, etc. are others.
  - b. A program that reaches every member and enlarges the membership should be the elders objective.
  - c. An organized program will more nearly meet these aims.
3. Christian Education outside the local church.



- a. This includes Bible Colleges, conventions, camps, rallies, etc.
- b. The eldership should take an active interest in all these specialized types of Christian Education.
- c. To take an active interest is to safeguard your own church school.
- d. To participate is to help in the total Christian Education program.

4. Specialized Christian Education.

- a. Again this would include the Bible College.
- b. This education provides ministers, missionaries, and special workers. Therefore, it should be of special interest to elders who lead in the selection of such workers by the local churches.
- c. Become acquainted with this type of education by reading about and visiting the Bible Colleges.
- d. Help maintain these schools to enlarge the church's education program.

5. Safeguarding the faith.

- a. No local church, Bible school, college, camp, or convention is any more alert spiritually or more faithful than those who attend and help direct its functions.
- b. You need to study and be aware of trends in literature, teaching, etc., and to give a strong voice for the New Testament principles.
- c. Guard your local congregation in this manner.
- d. Your own spiritual development will help others.

6. Supporting the total program of Christian Education.

- a. Help encourage the church to meet the needs of Christian Education.
- b. Be a Christian Education booster.
- c. Give liberally yourself.
- d. Recruit for the Bible school and specialized service.
- e. Serve on special boards and trustee groups as much as you can.
- ~~f. Be active in all Christian Education enterprises to~~

encourage others and to safeguard the faith.

## Elders and the Bible School

1. The Responsibility and Qualification "to teach."
  - a. The elder is to be "apt to teach."
  - b. This may not require class leadership but certainly indicates such ability.
  - c. "to teach" here must mean also a knowledge of the Word of God.
  - d. How can the elder select teachers and safeguard the teaching, if he does not so qualify?
2. Oversight without disturbance.
  - a. We need no Diotrephes in the church.
  - b. Oversight without disturbance requires a clearly defined relationship between elders and the Bible school.
  - c. Teacher qualifications should be set by the elders.
  - d. Approval of all teacher appointments should be also required.
  - e. Act as a group--not individually in any discipline problem.
3. Fixing personal responsibility for the Bible School Program.
  - a. This is one of many reasons for organization.
  - b. Departmental superintendents and Bible school superintendents should understand their responsibility for both teachers and teaching.
  - c. Monthly teachers' meetings should iron out difficulties.
4. Evaluating the effectiveness of your Bible School Program.
  - a. As elders seek to determine if your Bible school is efficient.
  - b. Is it reaching new pupils?
  - c. Is it teaching the Word of God?

- d. Are converts coming from the Bible School?
  - e. Is the church aided because of your Bible School?
5. Providing the means for better Bible teaching.
- a. Better materials, housing, etc. are church responsibilities.
  - b. Better qualified workers---specialists can be secured from our Bible colleges.
  - c. Encourage your teacher training classes.
  - d. Take part in them yourself.
  - e. Review all literature used etc.
6. Encouraging the Bible School by faithful study in the school's program.
- a. Bible school is for adults too and can mean the difference between spiritual attainment and spiritual bankruptcy for you.
  - b. Don't fail to attend your own Bible school class.
  - c. Your participation is your finest endorsement.
  - d. Your giving is your seal of approval.
  - e. Your own soul will benefit from Bible school attendance.

All of these together give a brief composite of all the work of elders. Diligent study of these passages will help us all to realize the full responsibility that God has placed upon this office. If you are an elder, you will determine to increase your effectiveness as a leader in the local congregation. If you are not an elder, you will have respect for their efforts and support them with cooperation, with prayer, and with financial aid as needed (I Tim. 5:17,18). You will submit to them when they try to minister to your spiritual needs, and follow their teaching and direction as far as it is faithful to the Word of God. You will also feel more the need to be careful in choosing men for the work, to give consent to those who can do the work, and removing from office those who cannot do it according to the will of God.

## THE PASTOR OR THE PASTORS?

by Chester Williamson  
used by permission

In most of the religious denominations, "the preacher" possesses greater authority than any other member of his congregation. Hence, he is appropriately called "the pastor," with the modern meaning, "the minister or priest in charge of a congregation or parish." Some of them list elders among the officiators, but always as subordinate to the "pastor."

But does this title accurately indicate the relationship which "the preacher" of a church after the New Testament pattern has to a local congregation? When a minister of a Christian church or church of Christ assumes the title--as many of us do--does it not contribute to the confusion concerning New Testament church polity?

### ORIGIN OF WORD

The word pastor, apparently, is an adaptation of a Latin word meaning "to feed." It came to us with minor changes of structure, through the old French and medieval English languages.

The first syllable, past, carries the verbal idea, "to feed" and the second syllable, or, is a suffix, denoting "one who does what the verbal part of the word indicates."

Even the early Latin ancestor of the word was used to denote one who, not only fed, but guided, protected, and nursed the flock. In our English New Testament, pastor is used to translate the Greek word poimen, which expressed the same total meaning. In short, it is synonymous with shepherd.

Just as every Christian is a missionary in the sense that he is sent to help carry out our Lord's Great Commission, and an evangelist in that he is to carry the Gospel (Good News) to others, he also has responsibilities in connection with the feeding and guiding (according to Biblical instructions) and with the spiritual care of himself and of other members of the flock. Hence, he is, to some extent, a pastor.

There is no question but that "the preacher" has special

and heavy responsibilities along this line, but it is appropriate to refer to him as "the pastor"?

#### CLASSES OF WORKERS

Ephesians 4:11 says: "And he gave some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers." Here we have four classes of workers listed.

The work of the apostles would necessarily include both evangelizing and shepherding, and ample Scriptural references could be adduced to show that they did both types of work.

We also have recorded prophecies by Paul, Peter, and John (e.g., Revelation). But their work was so thoroughly characterized by their witness to the resurrection of Jesus that apostle became an apt and inclusive technical word to name them.

Prophets were direct spokesmen of God. Not all of them were apostles; hence, the need for this title in listing New Testament workers. But Paul says, in I Cor. 13:8, "...whether there be prophecies they shall be done away." What can this possibly mean, except that the prophetic function in the church would cease?

The time came when eyewitnesses to the resurrection of Christ were all dead, and when God's revelation was completed, direct spokesmen for God were no longer needed.

But the need for evangelists and pastors continues. Most commentators seem strangely confused as they seek to explain the work of these two classes of Christian workers in the terminology of an apostate church.

Acts 21:8 refers to "Philip the evangelist." Why was Philip called the evangelist? Someone has said that that was to distinguish him from Philip the apostle, but the added clause, "who was one of the seven," takes care of that. Evidently, he was called an evangelist because of the nature of the work in which he was then engaged. See Acts 8.

When Paul enjoined Timothy to "do the work of an evangelist" (II Tim. 4:5), he was not merely saying, "Be a soul winner, as every Christian should be." His letters to Timothy and Titus contain many teachings which are applicable to every Christian but their general tenor is that of instruction to a special class of workers.

And the work of that special class seems to correspond largely with that of "the preacher" of today. It is suggested that since the early evangelists did not remain with a particular congregation over a long period of time, "the preacher" should not do so today. It should not be forgotten, however, that these men served at a time when new congregations were springing up very rapidly. They served in the way most practical for their time; we should do the same. Paul said nothing in his "epistles to evangelists" which recommends a short ministry.

Does the phrase, "pastors and teachers" refer to the same class of workers as the work evangelists? No, these are obviously separate listings. Note several Scriptures which seem to imply that "pastor and teacher" is a suitable title for an elder or bishop (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9).

#### ELDERS--PASTORS

"And from Miletus he (Paul) sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church" (Acts 20:17). To these men he said, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock..." (Acts 20:28,29). A pastor is one who feeds and tends the flock, and elders are instructed to do this work.

Again, it is to elders that Peter addresses himself when he writes: "Tend the flock of God...exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly,...nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock" (I Peter 5:2,3).

That he is addressing these men as pastors is also made evident by I Peter 5:4, which says: "And when the chief Shepherd (archpoimenos or chief pastor) shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away."

Why not reserve the name pastor as a helpful synonym for elder? Why not select for the office only men who are qualified to lead--not boss--in the feeding, nursing and general spiritual oversight of the flock? Why not permit "the preacher" to lead--not boss, nor be the only worker-- in the evangelistic phase of the church's work? Why not all work together in the total program of the church?

-from THE RESTORATION HERALD  
December, 1966

YOU SHOULD READ  
THE EVANGELIST AND THE ELDERS

The problem about which we are concerned is one which arises when an evangelist is called to a church and immediately gives himself to what he terms "setting the church in order." Most assuredly there are few churches which do not need guidance into a more perfect understanding of the New Testament ministry, but in too many instances the setting of the church in order consists in removing the present eldership from offices to which they have been appointed by the congregation and setting in their places men chosen by the evangelist. More often than not such a practice results in division in the congregation and goes beyond the duty invested in the evangelist. Our purpose is to discover what the relation is between the evangelist and the eldership.

The primary task involved in the office of the evangelist is that of preaching the good news of the Grace of God as revealed in the Gospel of Christ. This fact is seen from the meaning of the word "evangelist" which is derived from a word meaning, "to preach or proclaim good news." At a later time it will be shown that in particular instances oversight is vested in the office.

## THE EVANGELIST AND THE ELDERS

### TIMOTHY

It is an office which is to be filled under the direction of the church and its eldership. When Paul arrived in Derbe and Lystra, a disciple was found whose name was Timothy. Timothy was recommended very highly to Paul by the churches in Lystra and Iconium. Paul made investigation and found the recommendation well directed.

The churches, under the direction of the Eldership set Timothy aside to the work of the evangelist. (I Tim. 4:14) Paul himself imparted to Timothy the Miraculous gift of the spirit which enabled Timothy to be equal to the occasions when the exercise of the gift would be needed. (II Tim. 1:6) The latter gift is not a prerequisite for present day evangelists inasmuch as the perfect revelation for the church is given in the pages of the New Testament (I Cor. 13:10), which the evangelist is to employ in lieu of the special gift of the spirit.

The procedure followed by the churches in Lystra and Iconium setting Timothy apart for the work of the evangelist is wise and orderly. The same procedure must be followed today. The church is charged with evangelism. There is a sense in which every individual in a local congregation can evangelize, but there is also a broader area of work to be done which cannot be by every individual. The church in Jerusalem may evangelize Jerusalem but the church in Jerusalem cannot go to Africa. Nevertheless Africa must be evangelized. The church in Jerusalem has access to the office of the evangelist. She can choose out from her number and recommend to the office of evangelist that man in whom she has confidence and in whom is seen to abide the qualities required of an evangelist. The church can then duly ordain that man by the laying on of hands, accompanied by fasting and prayer and recommend him to Africa as one who can be trusted "to hold fast the form of sound words."

It can be seen from the case of Timothy that the evangelist is a servant of the church therefore, that he is to exercise his office in such a way as to bring no reproach upon the church, and hence to Christ, nor to cause the church to regret its decision to place confidence in him as a qualified evangelist.



## THE EVANGELIST AND THE ELDERS

In view of that which we have seen we conclude that no man has the right to appoint himself as an evangelist and go about setting the churches in order as has been suggested in presenting our problem.

Evangelists may deny that they have any responsibility to a church or churches, and this because of the task which is laid upon them. But let them know that even such an eminent Evangelist as Paul the Apostle was under the oversight of the church in Antioch.

### THE WORK OF PAUL AND BARNABAS AT ANTIOCH AND ELSEWHERE

Barnabas, who was sent to Antioch to note that which was done, along with Paul, spent much time teaching the brethren. Nothing is said about the organization of the church in Antioch. However, these two men of God, serving as evangelists from the church in Antioch passed through the regions of Lys-tria, Iconium, and Antioch, and confirmed the souls of the disciples and exhorted them to continue in the faith. They remained long enough to ordain elders in every church located in the vicinity of these towns. These were new churches brought into existence through the proclamation of the gospel, though yet lacking in some things, particularly having the office of the elder filled. To the work of ordaining elders Paul and Barnabas gave themselves. It was their responsibility to set in order the things that were lacking. How did they fulfill their obligation? Did they choose the men and ordain them, or did the congregation do the choosing, leaving Paul and Barnabas to prescribe for them their duties, and at the same time to ordain them? To these questions we seek an answer.

#### WORDS TRANSLATED "ORDAIN"

"Ordained" in Acts 14:23 translates a word which means to "stretch out the hand" "elect," "appoint." It is used in one other place in the New Testament in connection with a brother chosen by the churches to accompany Paul and Titus with the bounty which had been collected. The context is clear that neither Paul nor Titus were responsible for choosing, but rather the congregations were. Paul and Barnabas did not choose those elders themselves but left the choice to the congregations,

## THE EVANGELIST AND THE ELDERS

who elected them by a show of hands. Paul and Barnabas pointed out to them what their responsibilities were and set them aside to their task with prayer and fasting on behalf of the congregation.

In the church in Jerusalem (Acts 6) the Apostles were exercising complete oversight in addition to carrying out their tasks of ministering in the word and in prayer. These tasks were more than they could do. They needed help in administering the affairs of the church. The brethren were instructed to "look you out" from among you seven men. The phrase "look you out" includes within it the fact that an examination or an inspection is to be made and the apostles were careful to instruct them in the areas in which they were to do the examining. The disciples followed instructions. They "Chose out for themselves as recipients of this special favor and privilege" involved in serving tables, the seven mentioned in verse five, who, in the judgment of the disciples were "of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and Wisdom. The apostles advised the disciples to choose those "Whom we may appoint over this business." The word "Appoint translates a word which means "to place or set down." The meaning is to place one in charge of a thing. When the seven were chosen by the brethren they were then set before the apostles who prayed and laid hands on them, thus ordaining, or setting them aside to their new responsibilities, which were pointed out to them.

A passage directly connected to the problem stated in the beginning is Titus 1:5 and especially as the relationship of Titus to the elders is concerned. A careful consideration of this verse in the light of the passages already discussed in this study will serve to help solve the problem. In the verse it will be noted that Paul did two things, and instructed Titus to do two things. Paul first of all left Titus in Crete for a purpose. He instructed Titus to (1) "set in order the things that are wanting." This is a good translation, though may be elucidated by translating thus, "to do that which remains to be done." The text does not tell us what yet remained to be done, except in the second portion of the instruction, namely, (2) ordain elders in every city." "The word translated "ordain" in this verse is the same word used in Acts 6:3, "whom we may appoint over this business." In connection with Acts 6:3 it will be noted that the apostles set to their task those chosen

## THE EVANGELIST AND THE ELDERS

out by the congregation of Jerusalem, marking the boundaries of their duties. Titus was to act in the same capacity for the church in Crete, as did the apostles for the church in Jerusalem. Titus was to act in keeping with instructions received from the Apostle, as Paul said, "As I had appointed thee." The word translated by "Appointed" means "To arrange throughout." There is included in the word the idea of a charge given, but more than that, there is included the mode for selecting the elders which mode had been arranged for by Paul himself, and which mode Titus is to follow. There can be no question concerning the mode for selecting elders which Paul had arranged for throughout the boundaries of the church. The clear cut example is given in the discussion of Acts 14:23, which example Titus is to follow, and in Acts 6:1-6, which are in perfect harmony one with another.

### CONCLUSION

The office of the evangelist is a divinely given one. The primary task involved is that of preaching, and exhorting, and setting in order the things which may be lacking in the churches. A man must be set apart to the office by a church or churches, having met the qualifications for an evangelist, and is responsible to the church or churches which sets him apart. He must arrange for the appointment of elders in those churches where elders are lacking, following the method arranged for by the apostle Paul. In no instance is he to assume the prerogative of dismissing the elders holding office, and appointing men in their stead. Such is completely contrary to scripture precedent and for that matter, even contrary to sound reasoning. Let them continue to preach the word, exhort the brethren, and leave the selecting of the elders to the brethren.

## SHEPHERDING PROGRAMS THAT WORK

by Roy S. Wheeler, Minister  
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used by permission

### INTRODUCTION:

There are three keys to the success of any shepherding program. If we have the right purpose, right people, and the right power, the program will work.

#### 1. The right purpose behind a shepherding program

##### A. To feed the new "lambs."

1. John 21:15 - Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."
2. Acts 20:28 - "To feed the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood."
3. This feeding can be done by the Elders of a local church through:

- a. Personal Bible study
- b. New converts class
- c. New Member Packet explanation follow up

##### B. To oversee the flock

1. Helping bear burdens. Galatians 6:2 - "Carry each others burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."
2. Sharing each other's mistakes. James 5:16 - "Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective:" Galatians 6:1 - "Brothers, if a man is trapped in some sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently."
3. Rejoicing and weeping. Romans 12:15 - "Rejoice with

those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn."

4. Exhort and convict. Titus 1:9 - "He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it."

2. The right people behind a shepherding program  
(I Peter 5:1-4)

A. I Peter 5:2 - "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers--not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be;"

B. "not greedy for money, but eager to serve;"

C. I Peter 5:3 - "not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock." Also consider Hebrews 13:7 - "Remember your leaders; who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith."

3. The right power behind a shepherding program

A. The job is a big one. No minister is big enough to handle the job by himself; thus, elders were appointed to do the work of shepherding. I Timothy 3:1 - "Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task." Titus 1:5-"The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you."

B. No man can do this work without God's help. That is why Jesus promised, "I will be with you always, even to the end of the world." - Matthew 28:20

C. The Spirit through the Word give the elder power to feed and to oversee the flock of God. II Timothy 2:15- "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."

II Timothy 3:16,17 -"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, (17) so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

#### CONCLUSION:

On the following pages you will find three simple Shepherding Programs that have been used in churches according to the size of the church. If worked, these can be successful.

#### SHEPHERDING PROGRAM FOR MEMBERSHIP UNDER 500

-by Roy S. Wheeler  
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#### STEP NO. 1:

The congregation is to be divided into Fellowship Groups in alphabetical order (zones could also be used; this would depend upon local situations).

- A. Lists will be printed by church office and given to each elder.
- B. Attendance will be kept each week by Silent Roll Call.
- C. A copy of each person's attendance will be given to each elder at the first of each month at Elders' Meetings.

#### STEP NO. 2

Each elder is to visit with each family under his Fellowship Group during the first month of the program to deliver new church directory, fill out information cards for the families, etc. This should be done by appointment some evening or on the weekend. It would be a great value if your wife could accompany you during these visits.

#### STEP NO. 3

A phone call should be made to each family in your Fellow-

ship Group not attending church at all during the first month.

STEP NO. 4:

The elder will then personally call on each family not attending for two months, urge their attendance and check to see if there is any problem.

STEP NO. 5:

The elder and minister will call on families who have not attended for three months. These should be appointment calls with the distinct purpose of discussing their problems in relationship to their church attendance.

STEP NO. 6:

As new members come into the fellowship they become the responsibility of the elder over their alphabetical group. He will then:

1. Deliver New Member Packet with contains
  - a. Membership or baptismal certificates
  - b. Information concerning the church, youth, choirs, Bible School, women's work, etc.
  - c. Tracts on church membership
  - d. Membership directory
  - e. Talent and interest sheet
2. Go over financial condition of church (assets and budget) and deliver offering envelopes.
3. He also shepherds them through the year.
  - a. Watches attendance
  - b. Directs them to Bible School Class, etc.

OTHER SUGGESTED DUTIES:

1. It is suggested that elders call their families for special functions, such as revivals, fellowship suppers, special programs at the church, etc.
2. It is suggested that each elder personally pray for the families in his fellowship group. This will be beneficial both to the elder and to the family.
3. It is suggested that each elder get to know his people; remember their birthdays (this information can be taken from the church paper each week), wedding anniversaries, take note of deaths within their families or serious illnesses and remember them during those times.

## SHEPHERDING PROGRAM FOR MEMBERSHIP OF 500 to 1,000

STEP NO. 1:

The congregation is to be divided into Fellowship Groups by alphabet (zones could also be used depending upon local situations).

STEP NO. 2:

Each elder is to then choose from his Fellowship Group five (5) men who will serve as shepherds with him in his Fellowship Group. This should be done by a personal visit in the home of the individual with a complete explanation of the program and a commitment to be made on his part.

STEP NO. 3:

The elder and his five (5) shepherds will then divide the Fellowship Group into five (5) groups of equal commitment. Sheets will then be printed for each group so that each elder and his five shepherds will have a list of the people for which they are personally responsible.

STEP NO. 4:

Each shepherd is to visit with each family on his list dur-



ing the first month to deliver new directory, fill out family information cards, etc. This should be a visit by appointment some evening or on a weekend. It would be a great value if your wife could go with you.

STEP NO. 5:

A phone call should be made to each family on your list not attending church at all during the month. Attendance figures will be mailed to you the first week.

STEP NO. 6:

The elder and committee member will personally call on each member not attending for two months.

STEP NO. 7:

The elder and minister will then call on families who have not attended for three months.

STEP NO. 8:

As new members come into the fellowship they become the responsibility of the elder over their alphabetical group. He will then:

1. Deliver New Member Packet which contains:
  - a. Membership or baptismal certificates
  - b. Information concerning the church, youth, choirs, Bible School, women's work, etc.
  - c. Tracts on church membership
  - d. Membership directory
  - e. Talent and interest sheet
2. Go over financial condition of church (assets and budget) and deliver offering envelopes.

3. He also shepherds them through the year.
  - a. Watches attendance
  - b. Directs them to Bible School class, etc.

OTHER SUGGESTED DUTIES:

1. It is suggested that each elder meet with his five (5) shepherds once each six (6) weeks to discuss any problems they may have encountered and to pray for those who are delinquent in their attendance. This could be done at a breakfast meeting, possibly at church on Sunday morning or Saturday morning, or an evening time of fellowship in the home of the elder.
2. It is suggested that each shepherd call their families for special functions, such as revivals, fellowship suppers, etc. just to urge their interest in attendance.
3. It is suggested that each shepherd personally pray for the families in his group. This will be beneficial both to the shepherd and the families.
4. Above all, each shepherd is to get to know his people, remember their birthdays, wedding anniversaries, and to call upon them when they are sick or have personal problems.

SHEPHERDING PROGRAM FOR MEMBERSHIP OF 1,500 AND UP

STEP NO. 1:

The congregation is to be divided into ZONES with as many zones as the church has elders. A city map is to be used and determined by the number of families. Each elder should have the same number of families. Zones are then assigned to the elders.

STEP NO. 2:

Each elder will then choose from his zone the following zone leaders:

a. Zone Evangelist

1. Watch for new families moving into the zone. Call on them inviting them to church and leaving information brochures.
2. Will be given names of all who visit the church from that zone and will make a personal call on them.

b. Zone Shepherd (could be the elder)

1. Deliver New Member Packet which contains:

- a. Membership or baptismal certificates
- b. Information concerning the church, youth, choirs, Bible School, women's work, etc.
- c. Tracts on church membership
- d. Membership directory
- e. Talent and interest sheet

2. Go over financial condition of church (assets and budget) and deliver offering envelopes.

3. He also shepherds them through the year.

- a. Watches attendance
- b. Directs them to Bible School class, etc.

4. Counsel those in his zone who have personal problems.

5. Work with those in his zone who are absent from the services of the church.

c. Zone Fellowship Chairman

1. Make sure all new families get acquainted with other families in zone by inviting them to fellowship (coffee & cake, ice cream, etc.)

2. Plans zone fellowship dinners at church at least once each two months.
- d. Zone Hospitality Chairman
1. Visit all sick and hospitalized within the zone.
  2. Arrange for food to be taken into homes of sick or where there has been a death in the family.

STEP NO. 3:

Each elder will meet monthly with his zone leaders to discuss problems, rewards, etc.

## ELDERSHIP DESCRIBED

## THE NEW TESTAMENT PICTURE OF ELDERS OF THE CHURCH

-by Seth Wilson  
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## INTRODUCTION:

We do not own the church. We do not govern it. Christ bought it with His blood, and He is absolute Head over everything pertaining to the church. It is His body and His Kingdom (Ephesians 1:21-23; Colossians 1:13, 16-18; Romans 14:17). The people who make up the body are subject to Him as a King. He is not merely Head of an institution's corporate business. He is Lord of all (Acts 2:36; 10:36). All authority in heaven and on earth is His (Matthew 28:18).

No majority can ever be large enough to set aside His will on anything, or to establish any other rule over His people. Every so-called vote by any member or officer of the church must not express our right to decide or to rule. It must express the consent each of us gives to a person or a policy as being what Christ wants for His church.

We do not have a right to vote in the church as in a democracy; but we have a duty to God to express our understanding of His will for us and to work for agreement with others con-

cerning His will. A "vote" may not settle what is the Lord's will; it may only begin a devoted study and effort to clarify it for all the members. If Christ's will can be found in the Bible, we should find it, clarify it and accept it without voting.

Of course, the whole church can agree that other matters (not settled by scripture) may be done according to the decision of a certain number of members, or by some responsible representatives of the congregation. But a vote never gives any majority any right to disregard any minority (Matthew 18: 6-10).

Christ Himself gave to the church members of His word to teach His will: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (Ephesians 4:10,11). These pastors are shepherds, also called elders or bishops (overseers). The Holy Spirit, said Paul, made them overseers (Acts 20:28). And the Holy Spirit, speaking through Peter and Paul, commanded them to do the shepherding (Acts 20:28-35; I Peter 5:1-4). "They watch in behalf of your souls, as they that give account" unto the Lord (Hebrews 13:17). They are to be esteemed exceeding highly in love for their work's sake (I Thessalonians 5:12, 13), and they are to receive the additional honor of financial support (I Timothy 5:17,18).

#### WHAT IS AN ELDER?

The New Testament gives a fuller picture of the elder and his work than most people realize. Please read each passage.

1. An older man. The Greek word presbyteros gives us the English derivatives "presbyter" and "presbytery" (I Timothy 4:14). He is a man of maturity, looked up to for his experience, wisdom and leadership ability.
2. An overseer. Our English word "bishop" is derived from episkipos, which means overseer (Acts 20:28; Titus 1:5,7).
3. A shepherd of God's flock. (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:1-4). "Pastors" in Ephesians 4:11 is used to translate the poimen, which everywhere else is translated shepherd.

4. A steward, manager of God's business (Titus 11:7). This passage does not say that he is to be blameless in giving; but he is to be a man with nothing laid to his charge, because he is God's manager of the household of God on earth.
5. A teacher. (I Timothy 3:2; 5:17; Ephesians 4:11-16; Titus 1:9-11).
6. A superintendent, caretaker, one presiding or taking the lead(I Timothy 3:5; 5:17; I Thessalonians). In these passages proistemi is sometimes translated "rule" or "are over you"; but it means to stand before, lead, attend to. Jesus told the apostles they must not exercise authority as rulers do (Matthew 20:25-27). Peter taught the elders they must not be lords over the flock (I Peter 5:1-4).
7. A leader. In Hebrews 13:7,17,24 some versions say "them that have the rule over you"; but it is a form of hegeomai and is better translated "your leaders" in at least forty distinct versions I have checked. These include four by preachers of our restoration movement, and at least two Roman Catholic versions done by large committees.

The four best English versions made before the King James Version all said: "them that have the oversight." The point is this: there is no Bible passage which clearly makes elders rulers of the church! They have responsibility to lead, teach, oversee, help, serve and show the way; but they have no authority to coerce anyone.

Members are indeed taught to obey (peithomai, be persuaded, trust, rely upon) them, and to submit (hypeiko, yield) to them (Hebrews 13:17); but these are milder verbs than ones used in teaching Christians to serve (douleuo, be a slave) and be subject to and in reverence for Christ.

Summary: elders are men of faith, understanding, commitment, exemplary life and character; experience, teaching ability, and loving concern for every member. They are leaders, whether elected or not, and not made such by being appointed an elder.

## WHAT SHOULD ELDERS DO?

Read these passages which state what elders in the early church were doing or were told to do. The pictures are in them, not in my remarks. I only list them with brief notes of what I see there. Am I seeing something that is not there? Is there something there which you have not seen before?

1. Acts 11:19-30. Elders may handle money for the church and oversee benevolence. Didn't Barnabas know about Acts 6: 1-6?
2. Acts 15:2,4,5,22,23; 16:4. Elders are obligated to help settle doctrinal disputes. Their most constant responsibility is to find out what God has really revealed and to teach it.
3. Acts 20:28. Elders shepherd all the members of God's flock. They are overseers of the church by God's appointment.
4. Acts 20:29-32. Elders protect Christ's church from false teachers, whether members or outsiders. They use God's Word for this, and with it build up the members. Elders feed, lead, and guard every member of the household of faith.
5. Acts 20:33-35. Elders work to meet the needs of each Christian and "help the weak" even at their own expense and when it involves hard work, after Paul's example (Cf. I Thess. 2:3-12; II Corinthians 11:28,29; 12:14-18).
6. Acts 21:17-24. Elders lead in planning strategy and overcoming obstacles. They gave advice to all, even to an apostle.
7. Ephesians 4:11-16. Elders use the Word of God to develop all the members to maturity, understanding of Christ, unity of faith, and ability of each one to do his or her part in the body of Christ. They promote effective use of each member. What a big job! Memorize this key description; repeat it often.
8. I Thessalonians 5:12,13. Elders work among the believers, ~~lead, attend to, counsel and admonish all of them.~~

9. Galatians 6:1-3. Elders surely are among those "who are spiritual" and who restore gently any who fall into sin.
10. I Timothy 3:2,4. Elders are expected to teach. At home too.
11. I Timothy 3:5. Elders take care of the church.
12. I Timothy 5:17. Elders lead and maintain the church, especially by laboring in the word and teaching.
13. Titus 1:7. They are God's stewards, managers of God's affairs, superintendents of His business. They do not do all the work of the church, but they lead, assist and oversee it all.
14. Titus 1:9-11. Elders persuade Christians to accept sound doctrine; they correct, refute and silence false teachers.
15. Titus 3:10. Elders lead in admonishing the makers of division again and again. They lead the church in refusing the influence of such folk, if they do not change.
16. Hebrews 13:17. Elders watch out for the spiritual welfare and security in Christ of each Christian. They lead and teach so that persons obedient to Christ rightly submit to their teaching and care. They do not rule as Christ taught the apostles not to rule (Matthew 20:25-28); they teach and uphold the rule of Christ in every part of every heart.
17. James 5:14-20. They pray for the sick, including counseling and aiding in confession of sin, restoring sinners.
18. I Peter 5:1-4. Elders do not "run the church" or exercise authority, but they are shepherds who set an effective example for all and who lead members in a holy and mature walk with Christ. They have a reward from the Chief Shepherd.

Elders have responsibility for every kind of action and program by which all the members are built up in the faith, matured spiritually, completely filled with Christ, and used in the service of the Lord. The key word is responsibility:

1. responsibility for INSTRUCTION of all in divine truth,



2. responsibility for PROTECTION from being led astray,
3. responsibility for CORRECTION of ideas and actions which are contrary to Christ's rule in each of us.
4. responsibility for DIRECTION of every member in a life that works to contribute to the growth and good of all the rest.

Each of these applies until we all attain unto PERFECTION in the likeness and activity of Christ in each one (Ephesians 4:11-16; Colossians 1:27-29). Read the descriptions of the life to be lived (Ephesians 4:17; 6:19) and think of the great changes that had to be made in each of thousands of people.

The responsibility of the elders is not to do what the people want, but to serve and lead the people in the will of Christ, even if they are resisted or persecuted for it.

Elders are not merely board members like directors of a corporation, meeting to hear reports and make decisions for others to carry out. They are much more than officer figures to stand at worship stations for part of the Sunday ceremonies.

Elders are not bosses, but servants of servants in a serving brotherhood of love. They do not make rules for the church. Christ had done that. In their responsible work they do make decision-making, and it cannot be completed in board meetings.

Their task is difficult and not always welcomed; it is to change people's minds! But who can do that? We cannot, but the Word of God can--not simply as words undigested--but the Word of God realized as controlling conviction and actualized in real lives, full of hope and love. Acts 20:32

Yes. Elders have to make decisions and form judgments--just as other Christians do. Theirs have more influence, and may lead and assist in the judging we all have to do. They certainly do not make all the decisions and judgments and hand them down as binding on others because of authority. What they really are to do is teach and show the will of Christ.

If elders do their work with real submission to Christ and with enduring love for His people, they will have effective influence--enough to look like authority! They will not need authority. When men with the Word of God in their hands and love of Christ in their hearts come to minister God's truth and grace with humble and gracious persistence they are more irresistible than they would be if they used authority.

The work is not done by human skills and institutional devices. It is the work of Christ by the transforming power of His Word and His Holy Spirit. We cannot make Christians by hand, or by any other kind of manipulation. We can offer our hearts and lives to God, for Him to work through us as carriers of His Word, examples of His work, expressions of His love.