

The Foundation of Serving the Church:
Scriptural Considerations for Elders - Part II
Sunday, February 23, 2020

IV. Other important thoughts from scripture concerning Elders and the responsibilities they have.

A. I think it is important to model our church governments after scripture! You can't improve on God's order!

1. Deacons were selected but elders were "appointed" in consultation of The Holy Spirit by the leaders in place.
2. We see this principle throughout the establishing of the Church!

Acts 13:1-3 (NASB)

1 Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

Acts 14:23 (NASB)

23 When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Titus 1:5-9 (NASB)

5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, 6 namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. 7 For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, 8 but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, 9 holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

3. Also, from this scripture, we realize the "kind of person" the elder is to be!
4. Christ-like. A good leader. Disciplined. A great reputation. Spiritually mature. Able to communicate the gospel. Able to defend the Christian faith.

B. Some scholars place elder, shepherd and minister all together because of some scripture references.

1 Timothy 5:17-18 (NASB)

17 The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. 18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages."

1. When read and applied it seems we need to make sure and apply culture, contextual meaning and broad understanding.
2. For example, we are very prone to interpret scripture from our prosperous western cultural context.
3. What we call "vocational ministers" who are full time and draw salaries from a local church were few or non-existent. Remember, Paul's vocation was a tent maker!
4. Another reason to be careful is that "able to teach" is listed concerning elders on many occasions. (I Timothy, Titus, etc.)
5. Some have chosen to develop categories of "ruling elders" and "teaching elders."

C. Another aspect of the appointment of an elder is "laying on hands!"

1. In the context of elders, Paul continues to instruct Timothy to"

1 Timothy 5:22 (NASB)

22 Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.

2. It seems that Paul is reminding Timothy of the involvement of The Holy Spirit in the process of appointing elders.
3. He says, "Don't be too hasty. Pray, seek God and consider."
4. The bottom line is found in Titus 1: To care for the church!

D. There are other places we see the term "elder" used.

James 5:13-15 (NASB)

13 Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises. 14 Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; 15 and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, [d]they will be forgiven him.

1. When reading this in “full context and original word meaning” you realize this is more than just a physically ill person asking for prayer!
2. This is a consultation and counsel of a believer by wise and spiritual leaders God has placed him with!
3. Word meanings and context indicate “spiritual sickness” rather than physical. Although this should not discourage us from praying with anybody about anything!
4. Last, it is worthy to consider the words of Peter about himself!

1 Peter 5:1-4 (NASB)

5 Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, 2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

5. An elder is more of a function rather than position!