

What the Church Was Meant to Be – Part 2

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Introduction:

A. Elders in the church are important. (Acts 20)

1. Paul met with the Elders at Ephesus.
2. These elders planted churches throughout Asia Minor.
3. Paul ordained elders in every city they went to. (Acts 14:23)
 - a. The elders are to serve the Lord with humility.
 - b. They are to be aware of the trouble coming on them.
 - c. They are to evangelize and teach.
 - d. They are to take heed for the flock as overseers.
 - e. They are to rule and to feed the flock.
4. Elders have been purchased by Christ's blood.

B. Pastors and elders and shepherds are all the same.

1. Paul always refers to elders in the plural with two exceptions.
 - a. I and II John, Chapter 1, each refer to the elder John.
 - b. Usually churches have elders.
2. What kind of men are they?
 - a. They have the desire to serve the lord. (1 Timothy 3:1)
 - b. God gives men the desires of their hearts.
 - c. They must be blameless; no issue of guilt before the community.
 1. Husband of one wife; a one woman man.
 2. This doesn't exclude the divorced but speaks of a spiritual man.
 3. Divorce must be examined on a case by case basis.
 - d. They must be temperate, not a man of excesses, being sober minded.

1. Priorities must be right.

2. I used to play softball until I realized it interfered with ministry.

e. They must be men of good behavior.

f. They must be able to articulate the truth.

g. They must not be given to wine.

1. Elders must not drink at all. (Proverbs 31)

2. The New Testament standard is higher than the old.

h. They must not be violent.

i. They must not be greedy for filthy lucre.

j. They must be patient, not fighters.

k. They must not be novices.

l. They must have a good reputation with those outside the church.

m. They must hold fast the truth they have been taught.

n. They must be knowledgeable of sound doctrine.

o. Titus also gives qualifications of elders. (Titus 1)

C. The people of the church are to submit to their elders. (1 Thessalonians 5:12)

1. The people are to esteem the elders by loving them.

2. They are to be paid well. (1 Timothy 5:17)

3. If an elder sins he should be rebuked publicly.

D. Who are the elders?

1. Pastors.

2. Lay people. (1 Corinthians 9:10-11)

3. There is equality between elders but some will work harder in studying and teaching doctrine and they should be paid for this.

4. God will single out some elders as pastors and teachers.

5. Elders need to be like minded in serving the church.

6. Elders have various gifts.
7. There are twelve thrones for the apostles as all were gifted but three sick out, Peter, James, and John, and Peter stands out above the three.
8. Each elder has his own area of ministry.
9. When one desires to preach he should be sent out to found a church.
10. Some of our best elders are full-time employees in other areas.
11. The church is to be led by a plurality of godly men.
12. I disciplined men for years before appointing elders.
13. To deny this principle of plurality of elders is to injure a church.

I. What are the principles by which godly men operate? (Acts 27)

A. Paul's shipwreck is a strange place to go for this but there are principles here. Paul is on his way to Rome for trial and they set sail under Julius, who seemed impressed with Paul for he allowed him to see his friends at Sidon.

1. This is the first characteristic of a leader: he is trusted.
 - a. Jesus said he who would be lord must be servant of all.
 - b. This is crucial.
 - c. I study much because I care about the people I minister to.
2. The second characteristic of a leader is that he initiates action.
 - a. Paul tried to warn the pilot that sailing now would be dangerous.
 - b. He saw the need to help and he acted.
 - c. God often puts something in people to solve problems.
 - d. Sure enough Paul was right and the ship ran into trouble.
3. A third characteristic of a leader reinforces his leadership.
 - a. Finally Paul said they should have listened to him. (Acts 27:21)
 - b. He was ready to give more advice.
4. A fourth characteristic is that a leader is positive.
 - a. Looking at obstacles is deadly.

- b. Paul was ready to encourage everyone that they would not die.
- 5. A fifth characteristic of a good leader is wisdom.
- 6. A sixth characteristic of a good leader is faith.
 - a. When the sailors tried to abandon ship Paul took charge.
 - b. The pilot began taking orders from Paul.
- 7. A seventh characteristic of a good leader is integrity.
 - a. All escaped safely to the land.
 - b. This is what Paul had said.
- 8. An eighth characteristic of leadership is success.
- B. A summation of leadership is giving a godly example. (Acts 27:33)
 - 1. This is the heart of leadership.
 - 2. Paul told others to do as he had done.
 - 3. Churches grow not by advertising and gimmicks but by good leadership.

II. Closing.

- A. Timothy was a key leader and had reached a low point.
 - 1. He may have been ready to quit.
 - 2. He had a godly mother and grandmother.
 - 3. He was gifted and zealous.
 - 4. He was called son by Paul.
 - 5. He had been criticized, however, and fought with selfish men.
 - 6. He seems to have been intimidated by intellectual challenges.
 - 7. He was intimidated by his youth.
 - 8. Paul wrote that God had not given him the spirit of timidity but of power and a sound mind.
 - 9. Paul reminded him he was like a farmer or a soldier or an athlete.
- B. Effective leadership is essential to sustained growth.