

LEADERSHIP

I. Its organization.

- A. The Bible reveals whenever the gospel was preached and obeyed local churches began.
 - 1. This was true in Jerusalem.
 - 2. This was true in Antioch (Acts 11:19-26).
 - 3. This was true in Corinth, Ephesus and everywhere the gospel was preached.
- B. These followers of Christ assembled together every first day of the week and many other times throughout the week.
- C. We then read about these congregations having elders.
 - 1. Paul, on the way back through the congregations he had established on his first missionary journey, appointed elders in every city (Acts 14:21-23).
 - 2. This is the plan for leadership that God has for His people.
- D. For a congregation to have a scriptural organization, it needs to have elders assisted by deacons.
- E. There were also what we might call scripturally unorganized congregations in the New Testament.
 - 1. These would be congregations that did not have elders.
 - 2. The congregations that Paul established did not have elders at first until he came back through and appointed men to that office.
 - 3. The congregations in Crete did not have elders at the time Paul wrote to Titus.
- F. We should point out that this was to be temporary and today, congregations should not be content to go along without elders, but should be working towards obtaining them.
- G. We might point out as well that a congregation can be unscripturally organized.
 - 1. Men who don't meet the qualifications we will later note who hold the office make it unscriptural.
 - 2. Some congregation might have devised another pattern for organization.
- H. A congregation may be unscripturally unorganized.
 - 1. This would be the case in a congregation where one man has the rule.
 - 2. This is the case in congregations where what is called "evangelistic oversight" is followed.
- I. For a congregation to be scripturally organized, which is God's plan for every congregation, there needs to be scriptural leadership.

II. Its qualifications.

- A. Not everyone is qualified to fill a leadership position.
- B. Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus and gave them the inspired list of qualifications for one to fill the role of elder in the Lord's church (1 Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:6-9).

- C. These can be broken down into positive and negative qualifications.
 - 1. There are some things they must be.
 - 2. There are some things they must not be.
- D. The purpose of this sermon is not to go over each qualification but we must understand that these qualifications must be met.
 - 1. There is not one that is more important than another.
 - 2. Each one must be in or out, whatever the case may be, of the life of any man who desires the office of an elder.
- E. He can't meet 80% or 90% of the qualifications and be fit to serve, it must be all.
- F. A man can't be appointed in hopes of getting him to meet these qualifications.
- G. These are traits that the man in question is to have exhibited over a period of years to show that he is qualified for the position.

III. Its designations.

- A. There are several scriptural names by which the leadership can be known in a congregation.
- B. Most commonly in the Lord's church the designation is elder but there are other biblical terms that point to the role of a leader.
- C. They are called elders or presbyters (Acts 20:17; 1 Timothy 4:14).
 - 1. This comes from the Greek word "presbuteros," meaning older.
 - 2. According to Vine's it also indicates spiritual maturity.
 - 3. This is in line with the qualification of "not a novice."
- D. They can be called bishops or overseers (Philippians 1:1; Acts 20:28).
 - 1. These two words come from the same Greek word that means "one who oversees, takes care of."
 - 2. This has to do with both his home and the congregation (1 Timothy 3:4-5).
- E. They are also called pastors or shepherds (Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 5:4).
 - 1. The word translated pastor means "shepherd."
 - 2. This has to do with the one of the obligations they have which we will now notice.

IV. Its obligations.

- A. There are certain things that elders must do in order to fulfill their role as shepherds, bishops or presbyters.
- B. God had given them certain duties that only that group of men can perform.
- C. To fulfill their role as shepherds they must:
 - 1. Take heed to themselves (Acts 20:28).
 - a. Elders need to be students and growing spiritually.
 - b. They need to watch the example they set.
 - 2. Take heed to the congregation.
 - a. They are to tend to the flock by watching over them and feeding them.
 - b. They are to watch out for trouble (vs 29-31).
 - 3. Just as a shepherd had a staff and other instruments, the shepherd

- of God's flock has prayer and God's word (vs. 32).
- D. Elders are to be in charge and rule in the Lord (1 Thessalonians 5:12-14; 1 Timothy 3:4-5; 5:17; Hebrews 13:17).
 - 1. Elders are over us in the Lord, which means in the Lord's work and will.
 - 2. They are to warn us who are unruly and support those who are weak
 - 3. He has not just to rule but to rule well.
 - E. He is to be a teacher (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9).
 - 1. To do this he must know God's word.
 - 2. He has to use it effectively in order reach the lost and stop the mouths of false teachers.
 - F. He is to watch for the souls of the flock (Acts 20:28).
 - 1. The reason for this is that he will give account of them on Judgment Day (Hebrews 13:17).
 - 2. Just as a shepherd would keep the flock of sheep away from that which would harm them, the shepherd of souls is to be on the lookout for that which spiritually harms.
 - G. He is to willingly take on the role of shepherd and leading by example (1 Peter 5:2-3).