

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

August 7

2022

The Eldership

The first reference to the eldership in the Lord's church appears in Acts 11:30, when the disciples in Antioch sent relief unto the brethren in Judaea, "and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."

Words Describing the Office.

Men in the eldership are described by different terms:

Elders (presbyteros).

This word is used of age as the elder of two people (Luke 15:25) or one advanced in life (1 Timothy 5:1). It is also used of rank or office, among the Jews (Matthew 16:21) and among Christians (Acts 14:23). This word describes men in the eldership as being men of experience and maturity.

Bishops (episkopos).

Bishops are overseers. Both terms are used in describing men in the eldership: "bishops" (Philippians 1:1) and "overseers" (Acts 20:28). This word indicates men in the eldership are charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly.

Pastors (poimen).

Christ gave some, pastors (Ephesians 4:11). This term describes the men as herdsmen or shepherds, who feed and lead the flock of God (1 Peter 5:2-3).

These are not three different offices in the church, but three different terms describing one and the same office.

Qualifications of the Office.

The eldership requires a plurality of qualified men. The abilities and qualities to be possessed by each man individually are set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Read both accounts. These qualifications are both positive and negative in nature and are a must.

Positive qualifications:

A man, desires the office, the husband of one wife, one that rules well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly, a good report of them which are without, apt to teach, able to exhort and convince the gainsayers, blameless, vigilant or temperate, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, patient, lover of good men, just, and holy.

Negative qualifications:

Not a novice, not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre, not a brawler, not covetous, not self-willed, and not soon angry.

There are also qualifications to be met by their wives for the men to be qualified to serve. "Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things" (1 Timothy 3:11).

Responsibilities of the Office.

The eldership office is not a room in a building that has a door with the word "office" on it. The office is a "work" (1 Timothy 3:1). The work is clearly outlined in the word of God. It is very grave as it pertains to "...the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Responsibilities include:

Taking heed to self (Acts 20:28).

This is the first responsibility of every elder. Overseeing the church (Acts 20:28). Elders are taught, "...taking the oversight, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind" (1 Peter 5:2).

Feeding the flock (Acts 20:28).

Peter wrote, "Feed the flock of God which is among you..." (1 Peter 5:2). This includes teaching the word of God.

Ruling (Hebrews13:17).

Men in the eldership "...have the rule over you..." (Hebrews 13:17). They must "rule well" (1 Timothy 5:17).

Watching for souls (Hebrews 13:17).

"...they watch for your souls..." What an awesome responsibility, as one soul is worth more than the whole world (Matthew 16:26)!

Stopping mouths (Titus 1:9-11).

Elders must stop the mouths of vain talkers and deceivers.

Setting the proper example (1 Peter 5:3).

Elders are not to be "...lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." They are to be a pattern to go by.

The work of elders is limited to the local church (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2).

Duties of the Church Toward the Office.

Saints in the local church have duties toward men in the office of the eldership.

Know them.

"And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you" (1 Thessalonians 5:12).

Esteem them.

"And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake...." (1 Thessalonians 5:13).

Be at peace.

"...And be at peace among yourselves" (1 Thessalonians 5:13).

Receive not an accusation.

"Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses" (1 Timothy 5:19).

Rebuke those who sin.

"Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear" (1 Timothy 5:20).

Call on them.

"Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church..." (James 5:14).

An eldership is needed in every church (Acts 14:23), in every city (Titus 1:5).

✍ John Isaac Edwards

Belleville church of Christ
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Schedule of Services

Sunday Bible Study	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship	5:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study	7:00 p.m.

Evangelist

Brad Phillips..... (765) 720-2816