



Lesson 78

Lesson 78: Leaders and the Congregation

Scripture: Hebrews 13:7, 17

What Do These Two Verses Teach Us?

- Both verses teach us that there are **rulers** in the Church.
- Ephesians 4:11 tells us that Christ gave the Church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers. NT apostles and NT prophets were transitional position. They transition believers/disciple from Judaism to the Church.
- If there are “rulers” then there must be “those who are ruled”; therefore – government.
- God has ordained church government. If it is God ordained then Christians must submit them - selves to that government.
- Verse 17 commands Christians to **obey** and **be submissive** to those who rule within the Church. Not to do so is sin.
- The same verse teaches the “weight” of responsibility the leaders have – they are to watch after (not physical lives but) the **souls** of those whom God gives them.
 - The leaders must also give an account to God! They are accountable to GOD. (Hebrews 4:13; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10)
- Church members are exhorted (commanded) to make the leader’s job a JOY and not to cause GRIEF.

The Office of an Elder (1 Timothy 3:1)

- Three terms are used in the New Testament to describe the office of elder:
 - ① “Bishop” or “overseer” – one who oversees the work of the Church. (Acts 20:17; 28; 1 Peter 5:1-3)
 - ② “Elder” (“an old man”) – an elder is a mature man with spiritual wisdom and experience - not a novice.
 - ③ “Pastor” which means “shepherd” – one who cares for the flock of God. (1 Peter 5:2; see John 21:16)
- These titles are interchangeable – see Titus 1:5, 7.
- An overseer, elder, pastor is one charged with oversight of a congregation. He is charged to be a watchman for “the flock” given him. See Ezekiel 3:16-21; Acts 20:28-31)
- **NOTE:** These words describe an OFFICE and are NOT titles.

- In some cases, elders came from their own church. In other cases, elders came from outside.
- How many elders are required in a Church?
 - The New Testament does not state a specific number. In some cases, it refers to a plurality of elders.
- The church today – some have several pastors; some have a few; many have one; much more **share** one pastor.

Qualifications For A Pastor (1 Timothy 3:2-7)

- Not anyone can be a pastor. **GOD's** standards are very high. Notice the word "**must**" in 1 Timothy 3:2-7.
- **NOTE:** This is NOT a complete list. The whole Word of God must be consulted for a complete list.
- ★ The **number one** qualification for *any* leader - especially in a Church is leading by example. Remember Hebrews 13:7;
- ★ The **second requirement** is that he must be a **servant** to the congregation. (Matthew 20:26-28; Philippians 2:5-8)
- ★ Sixteen more qualifications:
 - (3) Blameless: not sinless but striving to live for holiness in all of his conduct. (1 Peter 1:15)
 - (4) Husband of one wife: married; not divorced; husband in accordance with Scripture.
 - (5) Vigilant; Self-Controlled; Circumspect – he must be able to cope with all situations.
 - (6) Sober-minded: having a sound mind; curbing one's desires and impulses.
 - (7) Of Good Behavior: well behaved; well mannered; modest.
 - (8) Hospitable: loves the stranger; his house is open.
 - (9) Able to teach: his **primary** responsibility (Acts 6:2, 4)
 - (10) Not given to wine: he walks by the Spirit and does not allow other things to influence his thinking.
 - (11) Not violent: leads in accordance with the teachings of Christ. This does not mean he is not to be firm. Leads in accordance with Matthew 20:20-28.
 - (12) Not greedy for money: See 1 Peter 5:1-3.
 - (13) Gentle: forbearing; yielding, fair.
 - (14) Not quarrelsome: not looking for a fight; not contentious.
 - (15) Not covetous: for money; reputation; more numbers; anything.
 - (16) Has a godly **family**: husband and father in accordance with Scripture; children well-behaved.
 - (17) Not a novice: a mature Christian who has been a student of God's Word and has experience in the Church and life.
 - (18) A Good Testimony Outside the Church

God's Protection of His Elders (1 Timothy 5:19-20)

- Elders are to be **RESPECTED** (because of the office) and not murmured about, complained about, or gossiped about. Consider Hebrews 13:17.

- God protects His elders by instructing the Church in how to accuse an elder of wrongdoing.
- Accusations made against an elder without using God's instructed way is sin.

God's People And Their Leaders

- (1 Timothy 5:17) Those who do their job should receive double honour.
- (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13) Elders are to be very highly esteemed.
- (1 Timothy 5:18) Elders are to be paid for their work and their physical needs met. (1 Cor. 9:5-12)
- (Hebrews 13:7, 17) Church members are to be submissive to their elders. (1 Cor. 16:16)
- (Hebrews 13:17) Church members are to make their elder's job a JOY.
- (Acts 6:1-3) Church members should take responsibilities away from their elders that interfere with their primary role as teachers of the Word.

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