

## INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Acts 20:28-30**.
- B. It is important for a congregation to select Elders who are qualified to hold the position.
- C. It is equally important for the men who go into this ministry to desire to do the work.
- D. Tonight we look at what the NT teaches about the work of Elders.

## THE WORK OF ELDERS.

- A. Three important Greek words:
  1. *Presbuteros* is translated as presbyter or elder.
  2. *Episkopos* is translated as bishop or overseer.
  3. *Poimen* is translated as pastor or shepherd.These words give insight as to the work of an elder: he is to be an overseer; a shepherd.
- B. See: **Ac. 20:17, 28; 1Pet. 5:1,2; Titus 1:5-7**.
- C. NT examples of elders show a plurality in each congregation not just one. The preacher serves under the elders, and the elders' authority is only over the congregation they serve in.
- D. The Work of Elders:
  1. **A watchman** (Ac. 20:28-30; Heb. 13:17).

(**Ac 20:28-31**) "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. **29** "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; **30** and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. (**Heb 13:17**) Obey your leaders, and submit *to them*; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

    - a. The ministry of Elders is that of taking care of the flock. They must guard against things coming into the church that would be harmful for it.
    - b. False teaching, materialism, gossip, etc., are just a few of the things that must be kept in check if the church is to grow spiritually and numerically.
    - c. Members are to follow their leaders. There is no leadership without followship!
  2. **To mature the church** (Eph. 4:11-16).

And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, **12** for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; **13** until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ. **14** As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; **15** but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him, who is the head, *even* Christ, **16** from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

    - a. Equipping the saints means to train them in works that will benefit others.
    - b. When a church knows what it is to be doing it will be much more difficult for sin to take hold. Let the positive root out the negative.
    - c. The elders do not have to do all the teaching and instructing, but they should be part of it. Elders should be regularly teaching class and visiting in the classes to make sure what is being taught is according to the Bible and is profitable for all.
  3. **To discipline the membership** when necessary (1Th. 5:12-15).

But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, **13** and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. **14** And we urge you, brethren, **admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men.** **15** See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all men.

- a. This is the most difficult work for an elder. There will be times in the church where brethren will not be living or teaching as they should. Elders are to be sensitive to these things and set in when needed.
  - b. Other church members can be of great help to the elders by ministering to the special needs of those mentioned in 5:14.
4. **To shepherd the flock** (1Pet. 5:1-3).  
 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.
- a. Elders are the pastors, not preachers. Elders have the oversight of a congregation, not the preacher.
  - b. Elders serve the flock, and are not to have an attitude of lording their authority over the flock. An elder needs to be involved in as many things as possible so as to be a good example to the church.
5. **To offer prayers** for the sick (Jas. 5:13-15).  
 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praises. **14** Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them 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, they will be forgiven him.
- a. One big part of the ministry of elders is that of prayer. They are to be men of prayer. As the apostles were to be about “prayer and ministry of the word” so should elders be about “prayer and ministry.”
  - b. Elders are also to visit those who are physically sick. While many times brethren will call for the preacher to be in attendance during surgeries and make hospital visits; it is the elders who have this responsibility before God.

#### CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. As we consider the addition of new elders and deacons may we consider them from the aspects of being qualified, and then willing to do the work.
- B. We are to give this matter serious thought and prayerful consideration.
- C. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.