

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Acts 20:26-30.**
- B. Since We are in the process of selecting additional elders and deacons in the congregation, I felt it only appropriate to spend this time and tonight's lesson on elders and deacons.
- C. In this morning's lesson we want to take a look at three basic things about elders and the eldership:
 1. The duties (work) of elders.
 2. The accountability and reward of elders.
 3. The congregation's responsibility toward the elders.
- D. So many times in situations like this too much time is spent on the qualifications of elders and deacons and not enough time is devoted to talking about what they are to do in the body.

I. A WORD ABOUT QUALIFICATIONS.

- A. When people begin thinking about whom would be qualified to serve as an elder, they usually think of only three qualifications out of the 24 listed in 1Timothy 3 and Titus 1.
- B. But an elder must be much more than married, have children and those children be faithful Christians. I believe the qualifications listed in the passages mentioned have more to do with the character of the man more than anything else.
- C. If you are considering nominating some men to be elders it would be good for you to sit down and review all the qualifications listed, and then if you still think they are qualified, go to them and talk with them about it. If you then think they are willing to serve, then nominate them.

II. THE DUTIES (WORK) OF ELDERS.

- A. Elders in the NT are the pastors, the presbyters, the bishops, the shepherds, the overseers.
- B. Just as the NT tells us of the qualifications for an elder in the Lord's church, so does it tell us of the work that God expects of those who "desire the office."
- C. Elders are to do the following works:
 1. Elders are to take heed unto the flock.
By this we mean that an elder must do for the congregation whatever a good shepherd would do for his flock of sheep. Feed, protect, doctor and lead (Ac. 20:28).
 2. Elders are to take the oversight and be examples to the flock.
Elders are to oversee, manage and superintend the flock, not by Lording it over them but as examples.
 3. Elders are to rule the church.
They must do this as a wise and loving father would rule his children--not as a tyrant or dictator, but by doing what is best for them (1Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:7,17).
 4. Elders are to encourage and discipline the congregation.
Elders are to encourage every member to walk faithfully with Jesus (1Th. 5:14,15).
- D. The ministry of being an elder; is a big one that cannot be taken lightly. It is a tough job to do well and therefore the office needs to be desired.

III. ACCOUNTABILITY AND REWARD.

- A. Everyone shall give an account of the things they have done on the day of judgment (Rom. 14:12; 2Cor. 5:10).
- B. This is especially true of elders and what they do with their ministry in the body of Christ (Heb. 13:17).
- C. But on the positive side there is great reward in doing this most important job:
 1. A double honor for those who rule well and work hard at preaching and teaching (1Tim. 5:17,18).
 2. A crown of glory, this unfading crown is to be given by the Chief Shepherd Himself.

IV. A CONGREGATION'S RESPONSIBILITY TO THE ELDERS.

- A. In almost every relationship of life there is a reciprocal of duties and responsibilities (for example; husband & wife, employer & employee) and this is true when it comes to the elder & congregation relationship.
- B. A congregation needs to do the following for the elders:
 - 1. Honor them.
This means respect, gratitude as well as financial support (if agreed upon), (1Tim. 5:17,18).
 - 2. Shield and protect them.
His name needs to be guarded against unfair criticism and false accusations. If not, these kinds of things can destroy a good man (1Tim. 5:19).
 - 3. Work with them, not against them.
Their job is tough enough as it is; when disagreements arise work them out quickly and agreeably (1Th. 5:14; also v12,13).
 - 4. Cautiously select them.
Be sure that not only is the individual qualified for the office, but has the character to do the work and works well with others (1Tim. 5:22).
 - 5. Obey them.
They should be obeyed as the elders obey Christ. There is no leadership without fellowship. Once the congregation has selected men for these leadership positions we need to obey them and support them (Heb. 13:17).

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. After the nominations are received, the elders will select those they feel are qualified to do the work with them. Then there will be a period of time for those who feel they have a scriptural objection to make such. Take this time to pray and visit with the men nominated if you have some problems with the selections.
- B. Lord willing, tonight, I want to talk to the congregation about deacons and their ministry to the congregation.
- C. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.