

I Peter 5:1-4

The Work of Elders

Elders – An Overview From The New Testament...

- It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires *to do*. (1 Tim. 3:1 NASB)
- Elders first appear in the context of elders in Judea in Acts 11:27-30.
- The elders in Jerusalem. (Acts 15:2, 6, 22-23; 16:4; 21:18; etc.)
- Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in every church. (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5)
- Paul met with the elders from Ephesus. (Acts 20:17ff)

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- Paul instructed Timothy and Titus with regard to the appointment and qualifications of elders. (I Tim. 3; Titus 1)
- Peter included instructions to elders in I Pet. 5.
- The Hebrew writer addresses the eldership and those who are under their leadership in Heb. 13:17)

NT Terms That Describe This Office

- “Elder” *presbuteros* (Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2; 20:17; I Tim. 5:17; Titus 1:5; I Peter 5:1)
 - A look at those who have been referred to as “elders” in Bible times.
 - Numbers 11:16 → chosen as leaders among the people.
 - I Sam. 11:3 → leaders of cities.
 - Mk. 11:27 → leaders among the Jews.
 - “Elder” denotes not only to one who is older, but has experience, wisdom; and is able to serve a local church by leading and exercising mature judgment in spiritual things.

NT Terms That Describe This Office

- “Elder” is the most frequently used word to designate the leaders in a local congregation.
- The term fits the qualification of a man not being a “novice” – new convert. (1 Tim. 3:6)
- The word implies that the man possesses the needed dignity and wisdom to do the work.

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- “Overseer” *episkopos* (Acts 20:28; I Tim. 3:1; Titus 1:7; Phil. 1:1)
 - An overseer is a man charged with the responsibility of seeing that things to be done by others are done correctly; a superintendent.
 - One who looks over, superintends, inspects – sees that things to be done by a local church are done in a scriptural manner.
 - Term is also translated “Bishop” in some versions.

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- This term recognizes the position of oversight that elders have in a local church.
 - Not to make laws where God has not made them, but having the authority to see that his laws are carried out.
 - Exercising the oversight (I Pet. 5:2) in a local congregation, they are to rule. (Heb. 13:17)

NT Terms That Describe This Office

- “Shepherd” *poimen* (Eph. 4:11; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:4)
 - Used as a noun only one time in the NT. (Eph. 4:11)
 - Shepherd emphasizes the role of the elder as one who protects, guards, tends, cares for, feeds the flock which is among them.
 - “To feed, to tend a flock...to furnish pasture for food; to nourish.” (Thayer)
 - Used of one who will guard, tend and feed sheep; provide for the spiritual needs of a congregation.

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- “Steward”. *Oikonomos*.
 - “For the overseer must be beyond reproach as God’s steward.” (Titus 1:7)
 - A steward is one who manages the business, household, farm, etc. of another. He is not the owner, but has been entrusted to see that it runs properly and that everything is taken care of.
 - The church belongs to God. Jesus purchased it with his blood. (Acts 20:28)
 - Elders will be called to account for their work. (Heb. 13:17)

Texts That Define The Work: I Peter 5:1-4

- ***I Peter 5:1-4*** → So as your fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings and as one who shares in the glory that will be revealed, I urge the elders among you:
- ² Give a shepherd's care to God's flock among you, exercising oversight not merely as a duty but willingly under God's direction, not for shameful profit but eagerly.
- ³ And do not lord it over those entrusted to you, but be examples to the flock.
- ⁴ Then when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that never fades away.

Texts That Define The Work: Acts 20:17-35

- ¹⁷ From Miletus he sent a message to Ephesus, telling the elders of the church to come to him.
- ¹⁸ When they arrived, he said to them, “You yourselves know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I set foot in the province of Asia,
- ¹⁹ serving the Lord with all humility and with tears, and with the trials that happened to me because of the plots of the Jews.
- ²⁰ You know that I did not hold back from proclaiming to you anything that would be helpful, and from teaching you publicly and from house to house,
- ²¹ testifying to both Jews and Greeks about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus.

Texts That Define The Work: Acts 20:17-35

- ²² And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem without knowing what will happen to me there,
- ²³ except that the Holy Spirit warns me in town after town that imprisonment and persecutions are waiting for me.
- ²⁴ But I do not consider my life worth anything to myself, so that I may finish my task and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the good news of God's grace.
- ²⁵ "And now I know that none of you among whom I went around proclaiming the kingdom will see me again.
- ²⁶ Therefore I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of you all.

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- ²⁷ For I did not hold back from announcing to you the whole purpose of God.
- ²⁸ Watch out for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son.
- ²⁹ I know that after I am gone fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.
- ³⁰ Even from among your own group men will arise, teaching perversions of the truth to draw the disciples away after them.
- ³¹ Therefore be alert, remembering that night and day for three years I did not stop warning each one of you with tears.

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- ³² And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give *you* the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. ³³ I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes. ³⁴ You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my *own* needs and to the men who were with me. ³⁵ In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

Texts That Define The Work: Heb. 13:7, 17

- Heb. 13:7 → ⁷ Remember your leaders, who spoke God's message to you; reflect on the outcome of their lives and imitate their faith.
- Heb. 13:17 → Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls and will give an account for their work. Let them do this with joy and not with complaints, for this would be no advantage for you.

Texts That Define The Work: James 5:13

- James 5:13 → ¹⁴ Is anyone among you ill? He should summon the elders of the church, and they should pray for him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.

Texts That Define The Work...I Timothy 3

- I Tim. 3:2 → ² The overseer then must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, an able teacher,
- I Tim. 3:4-5 → He must manage his own household well and keep his children in control without losing his dignity. ⁵ But if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for the church of God?

Texts That Define The Work...Titus 1

- Titus 1:9 → He must hold firmly to the faithful message as it has been taught, so that he will be able to give exhortation in such healthy teaching and correct those who speak against it.

Summary of the Work of Elders...

- Shepherding
- Overseeing
- Ruling
- Protecting
- Watching
- Guarding
- Teaching
- Leading

Acts 20:24-35

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Acts 20:17-35

- ²² And now, behold, bound by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, ²³ except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. ²⁴ But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.
- ²⁵ “And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will no longer see my face.

Acts 20:17-35

- ²⁶ Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. ²⁷ For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God. ²⁸ 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. ³¹ Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.

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