

## WHAT IS THE EXTENT OF PASTORAL AUTHORITY? Pt. 3

### A. The UNSCRIPTURAL IMBALANCES regarding SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY.

There are the imbalances of:

1. **Heavy handed spiritual leaders who OVER-REACH and ABUSE their pastoral authority.** How does this happen?
2. **The UNDERMINING & SUPVERSION of scriptural pastoral authority.** How does this happen?
  - a) Through \_\_\_\_\_ resulting in church decisions being made by popular vote by “members” consisting of both spiritual and carnal believers (and maybe unbelievers), instead of an elder-led church with congregational input and feedback, operating under scriptural principles (Phil.1:1; Heb.13:17).
  - b) Through certain individuals throwing their functional weight around due to being big givers and / or founding or influential families in the church, thus, undermining the pastor’s authority practically. (Acts 20:28-32)
  - c) Through acquiring pastoral candidates from \_\_\_\_\_ their local church via an external pastoral search committee, causing the church to be hesitant to invest proper pastoral authority to this relatively “unknown” spiritual leader who may only be with the church for a few short years. In contrast, when the pastor / elder is considered and developed from \_\_\_\_\_ the church, the congregation will more intimately know the character and giftedness of the considered appointee, as well as better guaranteeing that the doctrine and direction of the church will more likely be preserved. While the finding of a pastor from outside the local church, especially small churches, may be a necessity for a period of time, steps should be taken if all possible to correct this (2 Tim. 2:1-2).
  - d) Through having an “elder board” (in addition to the pastor) consisting at times of scripturally \_\_\_\_\_ men in character, gift, and/or doctrine, which were previously appointed due to ecclesiastical politics, nepotism, or meeting some unbiblical plurality quota. The new pastor “inherited” this dilemma. In this arrangement, the “elder board” may not grasp that a pastor is not an “employee of the board” but is actually a servant of the Lord and a fellow-elder who usually is the “leader among leaders”.
  - e) Through the congregation, or even fellow-elders or deacons, not \_\_\_\_\_ the sound teaching of their pastor(s), or not \_\_\_\_\_ to the functional directives & policies of their spiritual leaders (James 1:22; 1 Tim. 4:16).
  - f) Through denominational-like churches or fellowships, where there is an organized \_\_\_\_\_ over a number of churches consisting of a president, cardinal, bishop, etc. This is contrary to the biblical local church leadership structure, as it intrudes in or limits the pastoral authority of the elders of an individual church (Rev. 2-3).

## **B. The SCRIPTURAL BALANCE of Godly Spiritual Leaders.**

### **1. They biblically \_\_\_\_\_ the church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ within scriptural parameters; they do not \_\_\_\_\_ the church. (1 Peter 5:1-10)**

“Lording it over” occurs when spiritual leaders ...

- a) Forget that \_\_\_\_\_ is the Head & Owner of God’s flock (Eph. 1:22; Matt.16:18), and that they are \_\_\_\_\_ under the authority of our Lord and the Word of God. (Matthew 20:25-28)
- b) Fail to allow the \_\_\_\_\_ to teach & bring others along in their understanding of the Scriptures and personal growth but demand doctrinal compliance before others have followed the Berean example & have searched the Scriptures themselves. On the other hand, pastors/elders must be on vigilant and on guard against false teaching / teachers. (2 Cor.1:24; Acts 17:10-12; 20:28-32)
- c) \_\_\_\_\_ their sphere and actions of leadership beyond scriptural parameters and principles so as to abuse their authority to gain prestige or power, or to further their own selfish aims & agendas like Diotrefes became guilty of (2 Cor. 10:13-14; 3 John 1:9-10).
- d) Point people to \_\_\_\_\_, instead of pointing them to Jesus Christ as sovereign and sufficient, so they are more concerned with obedience to the leaders instead of to God. (Heb.13:7, 17; 1 Cor.11:1)
- e) They \_\_\_\_\_ the decisions of believer-priests and require submission in personal areas of liberty and conscience when there is no scriptural basis or necessary reason involved. ( 1 Cor. 16:12)

### **2. They biblically lead with godly Christ-like \_\_\_\_\_ (bathed in \_\_\_\_\_) for the glory of Jesus Christ, the blessing of the congregation, and the furtherance of the Gospel of grace, not motivated by selfish, personal agendas or achieved through strong-arm legalistic methods.**

- 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-14
- Romans 12:1-3
- 1 Tim. 4:12-16
- Prov.11:14, 15:22
- James 1:5
- 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13
- Hebrews 13:17-18