

# Essential Commitments of a Local Church

## Pt. 8

I Thess 5:12-13

<sup>12</sup> And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, <sup>13</sup> and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.

### Introduction:

## **VII. We are Committed to a plurality of Godly Leadership than the Business or Democratic Model.**

One rather cynical writer looking at the church said that the church reminded him of Noah's ark, of which he said, "If it weren't for the storm outside, you couldn't stand the stench inside."

That's a jaded view of the church. And it's far from the reality of what the church should be and what the true church is. The church is the most blessed institution on the earth, the only one built by the Lord Jesus Christ, the only one He said He'd promise to

bleed, and the gates of hell would never be able to hold it in.

Now, we're not saying the church doesn't have difficulty; it does. The reason the church has difficulty is because the church has people, and we're all fallen, and we're all sinful, and we're all imperfect, and we have weaknesses, and we face difficulties. Fallen and sinful people make up the church. Weak people make up the church. And in many ways we have to say the church is a hospital.

Sure, we have faults. The admission of that, the recognition of that is the basic stance from which you begin to grow, from which you begin to move in the right direction. We have to start with the confession of our failures and our weaknesses.

So we acknowledge the church is going to have trouble. I've never seen a church that didn't. That's because people have problems and leaders have problems; relationships therefore are stretched and strained and made difficult.

Then you can add to that the reality that Satan works hard against the church, and so do his demons, and so do his human agents.

But when the church choose to ignore or restructure or redefine the function and Leadership of church, we will reap a whirlwind of trouble.

Much of what we have seen in the news the last couple of years with the sexual abuse scandals in the Independent Baptist Churches and now the Southern Baptist churches resulting in the convictions of hundreds of volunteers, youth leaders, deacons and Pastors had come directly from unbiblical Ecclesiology

In an Article that was written by Tom Ascol on Feb 13, 2019

Southern Baptists, Sexual Abuse, and a Far More Serious Problem

He points out that the issues that have brought this about have been in play for some time

## **1. Unregenerate Membership**

That is, most SBC churches have nearly **three-times as many members** as they do people (including visitors and small children, at least some of whom, presumably are not members) in attendance on any given Sunday. As the late evangelist Vance Havner used to say, “We Southern Baptists may be many, but we ain’t much.”

Let me break this down for you. If you are in a church that has 600 members but only averages 200-300 in attendance

## **2. NO Church Discipline**

“....one thing is certain—Baptist churches that do not practice regenerate church membership and church discipline are blatantly defying the God who has given us the inerrant Word! And honestly, all of their boasts about

believing in biblical authority are empty bluster. Furthermore, their neglect is rebellion against God and spiritual abuse of those members who remain on their rolls but receive no practical love and care.”

(all of this article is included in the end of the notes)

## **I would add**

### **3. The Lack of Biblical Leadership Plurality of Godly men with accountability**

Leadership is the key to a Church being what God intends for it to be.

Biblical, Godly, Spirit Filled Leadership that fulfills all that God expects for them in His Church is the means that God has chosen to bring the body of Christ Maturity as a beautiful Bride.

But Ungodly, Unbiblical Leadership can destroy a once vibrant, flourishing church.

There are many examples of great works of God that were destroyed by the sinfulness of Leadership in local churches.

Few have stated that truth as eloquently as the godly **Richard Baxter**, a pastor in the Puritan movement of seventeenth-century England:

Take heed to yourselves, lest your example contradict your doctrine, and lest you lay such stumbling-blocks before the blind, as may be the occasion of their ruin; lest you unsay with your lives, what you say with your tongues; and be the greatest hinderers of the success of your own labours.... One proud, surly, lordly word, one needless contention, one covetous action, may cut the throat of many a sermon, and blast the fruit of all that you have been doing.

Take heed to yourselves, lest you live in those sins which you preach against in others, and lest you be guilty of that which daily you condemn. Will you make it your work to magnify God, and, when you have done, dishonour him as much as others? Will you proclaim Christ's governing power, and yet contemn it, and rebel yourselves? Will you preach his laws, and wilfully break them?

If sin be evil, why do you live in it? if it be not, why do you dissuade men from it? If it be dangerous, how dare you venture on it? if it be not, why do you tell men so? If God's threatenings be true, why do you not fear them? if they be false, why do you needlessly trouble men with them, and put them into such frights without a cause?

Do you 'know the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death;' and yet will you do them? 'Thou that teachest another,

teachest thou not thyself? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery,' or be drunk, or covetous, art thou such thyself? 'Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?' What! shall the same tongue speak evil that speakest against evil? Shall those lips censure, and slander, and backbite your neighbour, that cry down these and the like things in others?

Take heed to yourselves, lest you cry down sin, and yet do not overcome it; lest, while you seek to bring it down in others, you bow to it, and become its slaves yourselves: 'For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage.' 'To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.' O brethren! it is easier to chide at sin, than to overcome it.

(*The Reformed Pastor* [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1979], 63, 67–68)

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). *1 Timothy* (pp. 102–103). Chicago: Moody Press.

While integrity is most desirable in secular leadership, its absence is fatal to spiritual leadership. Underlining this, John Stott writes,

Communication is by symbol as well as speech. For “a man cannot only preach, he must also live. And the life that he lives, with all its little peculiarities, is one of two things: either it emasculates his preaching

or it gives it flesh and blood” [J. H. Bavinck, *An Introduction to the Science of Missions* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presb. & Ref., 1960), 93]. We cannot hide what we are. Indeed, what we are speaks as plainly as what we say. When these two voices blend, the impact of the message is doubled. But when they contradict each other, even the positive witness of the one is <sup>negated</sup> (destroyed) by the other. This was the case with the man Spurgeon describes as a good preacher but a bad Christian: he “preached so well and lived so badly, that when he was in the pulpit everybody said he ought never to come out again, and when he was out of it they all declared he never ought to enter it again.” [Lectures to My Students (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 1:12–13].

It is at this point that a practical problem presents itself to us. Pastors are told to be models of Christian maturity.

(*Between Two Worlds* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982], 264)  
 MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). *1 Timothy* (pp. 113–114). Chicago: Moody Press.

## Review

### Essential Commitments of a Local Church Pt. 8

#### I. We are Committed to a High View God Rather than a Deification of Man.

**II. We are Committed to the Absolute Authority and Sufficiency of the Scriptures Rather than the Tradition of Man**

**III. We are Committed to Sound Doctrine Rather Than the Dumbing Down of Doctrine.**

**IV. We are Committed to the Preaching of the Word Rather than Pragmatic Methodology**

**V. We are Committed to Integrated Worship with the Family rather than the Segregation of the Family**

**VI. We are Committed to Personal Holiness Rather than Worldliness.**

**VII. We are Committed to a plurality of Godly Leadership than the Business or Democratic Model.**

VIII. We are Committed to Evangelism of the Sinner rather than Moral Reform of the Society.

IX. We are Committed to the Return of Jesus Christ rather than the Riches of Earth



# Lesson

## VII. We are Committed to a plurality of Godly Leadership than the Business or Democratic Model.

The reason this commitment is stated this way to reflect that we do not adopt the Business or Democratic Model of Leadership.

**1. Business model** = The CEO, management approach. This has a tendency to distant the Leader from the Congregation. This become a process of management of peoples and programs. This is opposite of the the mandate of Scripture.

We are Shepherds, not CEOs

We are Examples, not Managers

We are Teachers, not Bosses

We are Counselors not Dictators

The Church is a Body not a Business

The Church is a Family not a Franchise

The Church is People not a product

The Church has a Message not Merchandise

This was the whole approach of the Seeker Movement.

Rick Warren and Bill Hybels were the ones that really promoted this viewpoint.

The Church has a product to sell =i.e. gospel  
So we need to find out what the consumers  
i.e. lost “unchurched” want.

So we survey them to determine what they like  
and we give it to them.

Its the “Burger King Church” —have it your  
way

A more Christianized approach of the CEO  
approach is what we see in the Independent  
Fundamental Baptist Churches and the Larger  
Southern Baptist Churches.

There Pastor is the man. The Lead Man,  
The authority, and all other associate pastors  
are at the bidding of the Lead pastor. The may  
have name associate pastor, but they are not  
the Pastor.

In some IFB churches, the Pastor is seen as the final authority on all matters.

## **2. The Democratic Model**

This is the typical governmental approach in many of the smaller Southern Baptist Churches.

This is the vote driven, committee driven church where all the government is vested in the congregation. In some of the smaller churches, everything is voted on, and all things are done only in committee.

Southern Baptist have historically argued this from the doctrine of the “priesthood” of all believers, hence all have the same authority in the church.

This is Unbiblical on a number of levels

1. The Priesthood of the Believer has nothing to do with the government of the church. But rather that we all have access to God Through Christ and are those who bring others to Christ.

2. Congregational Government is Unbiblical in many ways

1. It places the government in the hand of mature and immature, babes in Christ and often unbelievers

2. It opens the door for division and strife in an unprecedented manner by having everyone having their own Biblical or unbiblical opinion.

3. It diminishes and in some cases eliminates the spiritual role of the pastors.

4. It divorces itself from the means God has ordained to lead His Church.

So what is the Biblical pattern.

***1. The Rules***

***2. The Requirements***

***3. The Responsibilities***

**I. The Rules**

1. The Names
2. The Number
3. The Nature

## 1. The Names

There are 3 Names that are used to refer to the office of Pastor  
Elders, Bishop, Pastor/Shepherd

### 1. Elders

*presbuteros*. Now, that identifies a church leader as one characterized by – mark this – spiritual maturity and wisdom – spiritual maturity and wisdom. The leaders are those who are spiritually mature, spiritually wise. That term, elder, is used over and over and over again in the New Testament. Very early on, as the church is being established in the book of Acts, it is a high priority to make sure that those churches have elders; that is, men who are characterized by spiritual maturity and spiritual wisdom, who can lead the church.

**Acts 14:23 (NKJV)**

<sup>23</sup> So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

### **Acts 20:17 (NKJV)**

<sup>17</sup> From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church.

### **Acts 20:28 (NKJV)**

<sup>28</sup> Therefore take heed to yourselves and to 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.

### **1 Timothy 5:17 (NKJV)**

<sup>17</sup> Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.

### **Titus 1:5 (NKJV)**

<sup>5</sup> For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—

### **James 5:14 (NKJV)**

<sup>14</sup> 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.

### **1 Peter 5:1 (NKJV)**

**5** The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:

## **2. Bishop**

This is the word overseer, sometimes translated by the Old English word bishop. It is the word *episkopos* in the Greek; it means to look over, to oversee. This indicates that the church leader is not only characterized by spiritual maturity and spiritual wisdom, but by spiritual oversight and spiritual authority. In this word, you have oversight and authority. They go together.

### **1 Timothy 3:1 (NKJV)**

This *is* a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.

### **Philippians 1:1 (NKJV)**

Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi,  
with the bishops and deacons:

### 3. Pastor/Shepherd

It means shepherd, it comes from *poimēn*. This indicates that the leader in the church is characterized by spiritual feeding and spiritual protection. Here you're looking at the duty that he has to feed the flock and protect them from the wolves. So the leader in the church is characterized by spiritual maturity, spiritual wisdom, spiritual oversight, spiritual authority, spiritual feeding, and spiritual protection.

#### **poimainó: to act as a shepherd**

**Original Word:** ποιμαίνω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** poimainó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (poy-mah'-ee-no)

**Definition:** to act as a shepherd

**Usage:** I shepherd, tend, herd; hence: I rule, govern.

Cognate: 4165 poimaínō – properly, to shepherd, caring for (protecting) the flock.

4165 /poimaínō ("shepherding, pastoring") is distinct from "feeding" (1006 /bóskō). 4165 (poimaínō) focuses



on "tending" ("shepherding") (WS, 274), which includes guarding, guiding, and folding the flock and is only provided (ultimately) by Jesus Christ – the Shepherd, who calls under-shepherds (such as elder-overseers) to guard and guide His people by His direction (1 Pet 5:1-5). See 4166 (poimēn).

[4165 /poimainō ("to shepherd, tend") occurs 11 times in the NT, usually with a figurative sense of "shepherding (tending) God's flock." This provides Spirit-directed guidance (care) conjunction with feeding His people (teaching them Scripture).]

### 1 Peter 5:1–2 (NKJV)

5 The **elders** who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:  
 2 **Shepherd** the flock of God which is among you, serving as **overseers**, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;

### Acts 20:17 (NKJV)

<sup>17</sup> From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the **elders** of the church.

### Acts 20:28 (NKJV)

<sup>28</sup> Therefore take heed to yourselves and to 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.

The Word Shepherd is used in the verb form here to refer to the one of the responsibilities of the Elders of the church.

## 4. Deacons

### 1 Timothy 3:8 (NKJV)

<sup>8</sup> Likewise deacons *must be* reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money,

### Philippians 1:1 (NKJV)

Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

**diakonos: a servant, minister**

**Original Word:** διάκονος, οὔ, ὁ, ἡ

**Part of Speech:** Noun, Feminine; Noun, Masculine

**Transliteration:** diakonos

**Phonetic Spelling:** (dee-ak'-on-os)

**Definition:** a servant, minister

**Usage:** a waiter, servant; then of any one who performs any service, an administrator.

1249 *diákonos* (from 1223 /*diá*, "thoroughly" and *konis*, "dust") – properly, "thoroughly raise up dust by moving in a hurry, and so to minister" (WP, 1, 162); ministry (sacred service).

1249 /*diákonos* ("ministry") in the NT usually refers to the Lord inspiring His servants to carry out His plan for His people – i.e. as His "minister" (like a deacon serving Him in a local church).

[A. T. Robertson, "1249 (*diákonos*) properly means 'to kick up dust,' as one running an errand." 1249 (*diákonos*) is the root of the English terms, "diaconate, deacon."]

This root (*diakon-*) is "probably connected with the verb *diōkō*, 'to hasten after, pursue' (perhaps originally said of a runner)" (Vine, Unger, White, NT, 147).]

## ***1. The Names***

## ***2. The Number***

An important note:

The Elders and Deacons are always identified in the plural form when it is discussing the Leadership in a Church. Singular churches have a plurality of Leadership.

You never see in the New Testament an example of a Church led by a singular elder. No matter how small the church, there is always plurality of Elders.

**Acts 14:23 (NKJV)**

<sup>23</sup> So when they had appointed **elders** in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

**Acts 20:17 (NKJV)**

<sup>17</sup> From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the **elders** of the church.

**Acts 20:28 (NKJV)**

<sup>28</sup> Therefore take heed to **yourselves** and to 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.

**1 Timothy 5:17 (NKJV)**

<sup>17</sup> Let the **elders** who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.

**Titus 1:5 (NKJV)**

<sup>5</sup> For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint **elders** in every city as I commanded you—

## James 5:14 (NKJV)

<sup>14</sup> 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.

## 1 Peter 5:1 (NKJV)

**5 The elders** who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:

## Deacons

## 1 Timothy 3:8 (NKJV)

<sup>8</sup> Likewise **deacons** *must be* reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money,

## Philippians 1:1 (NKJV)

Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and **deacons:**

The Reasons for a Plurality of Elders and Deacons in a local assembly have a number of Benefits

First and most obvious,

It is the pattern that God has set for his Church and the Command of God to fulfill. And since it is from God, it would be the wisest way.

### **Elders Provide Wise Counsel**

Church leadership requires making a lot of leadership decisions. From choosing our next sermon series to what is taught in Sunday School, from choosing what ministries that our church will have to how to carry out these various ministries, from choosing what counseling advice to give to operating under our church budget, thousands of decisions are required. If truth be told, I am not an expert in all of these areas, I do not always have a lot of experience, and I likely will not have knowledge of all of the options that go into making a good decision.

Hearing other perspectives and receiving the thoughts and advice of my fellow elders is incredibly valuable to making wise decisions. By the end of fruitful discussion, I have come to see why a promising idea that I had should not be implemented. When we engage in brainstorming together, I am amazed to see how many good ideas come up and are refined through our discussion. As I am counseling a member through a difficult struggle or situation, the insight that I have received has been tremendously helpful to provide hope and spiritual growth to the one who has asked for help. No wonder we read of the benefit of an abundance of counselors in Proverbs!

### **Elders Share Ministry Burden**

Additionally, biblical and faithful shepherding of a local church requires far more than what one man can do on his own. When I consider all that Scripture calls me to do as a pastor, I immediately recognize how much help I am going to need to carry out the spiritual soul care that is needed among the flock of God. At the same time, with elders working with me, I am often amazed at what we can do together.

I have no doubt that I would quickly burn out from pastoral ministry if I didn't have anyone to share the burden with me. Thankfully, God does not want me to serve alone, and I have fellow elders who shepherd the church with me as well as support my own ministry efforts. By serving together, I have seen how effective we have been in loving our congregation and reaching out to our community.

### **Elders Complement My Gifts**

While God has given me gifts and skills to carry out my pastoral responsibilities, I am weak and need help. In the Bible, we read about the church as the body of Christ, made up of many members working together (1 Cor. 12). We also see that this is true within an eldership as well. God calls us to various ministry responsibilities as elders, and some are best carried out by a hand or an eye or a mouth or a foot. To engage in a ministry that is pleasing to God, we need each other.

While I was mentored for ministry, I remember sitting in elders' meetings where one man was a respected theologian, another was an experienced counselor, another was an able administrator, and another was

focused on missions and evangelism. By using their gifts together to lead the church, their ministry was far richer than if we would have been limited to the gifts of one man. I have found the same enrichment in the church where I currently serve, where different gifts and skills are used to the glory of God and the good of His people.

### **Elders Prevent Cult of Personality**

With one man in charge of a church, he can easily become the center of attention in church life. He is the one everybody looks to for help and inspiration. His will quickly becomes the will of the church. And the personality of the leader is reflected in the personality of the church. But when a pastor serves among elders, they share the ministry. He alone doesn't have authority, but he shares his authority with others. The church becomes more well-rounded and equipped as a result.

Of course, a church with a plurality of elders can still develop a cult of personality around the lead pastor. When a church denies the parity and equality of elders, or when the lead pastor has such a dominant personality that the only elders who serve with him are "yes men" who rubber stamp his decisions, then a cult of personality can result. However, a plurality of elders should prevent this kind of leadership when qualified and godly men are called to serve as elders together with a preaching pastor.

### **Elders Encourage Biblical Faithfulness**

The Apostle Paul warns the elders of the Ephesian church: "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for



the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood” (Acts 20:28 ESV). So elders must carefully watch over themselves. But we shouldn’t read this in an overly individualistic way, as if each elder should simply watch over his own spiritual life. Paul is also reminding the eldership here to pay careful attention to one another. After all, Satan’s first line of attack is often to attack the leadership of the church. And since elders are still sinners, we continue to wrestle with our sin. So we need each other to encourage one another in our faithfulness to Christ and in our ministry to His church. Together, we hold one another accountable as we shepherd Christ’s flock.

*The Practical Benefits of a Plurality of Elders*

*JOHN DIVITO | AUGUST 30, 2017*

[wwwFOUNDERS.org](http://wwwFOUNDERS.org)

1. The Names
2. The Number
3. The Nature

What I have in mind here is the specific design God has set for the Leadership of the church.  
i.e. Whether male or female or both.

The Bible is very clear regarding this. There is no ambiguity concerning this.

## Reasons

## 1. The Biblical Qualifications for Elders and Deacons Call for Male Leadership

### 1 Timothy 3:2 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach;

2 δει ουν τον επισκοπον ανεπιληπτον  
ειναι μιας γυναικος ανδρα νηφαλεον  
σωφρονα κοσμιον φιλοξενον διδακτικον

Newberry, T., & Berry, G. R. (2004). *The interlinear literal translation of the Greek New Testament* (1 Ti 3:2). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

### ανδρα

anér: a man

**Original Word:** ἀνήρ, ἀνδρός, ὁ

**Part of Speech:** Noun, Masculine

**Transliteration:** anér

**Phonetic Spelling:** (an'-ayr)

**Definition:** a man

**Usage:** *a male human being*; a man, husband.

[New International Version](#)

Now the overseer is to be above reproach, **faithful to his wife**, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

### [Weymouth New Testament](#)

A minister then must be a man of irreproachable character, **true to his one wife**, temperate, sober-minded, well-behaved, hospitable to strangers, and with a gift for teaching;

### **1 Timothy 3:12** (NKJV)

<sup>12</sup> Let deacons be the **husbands of one wife**, ruling *their* children and their own houses well.

**12** διακονοι εστωσαν **μιας γυναικος ανδρες**  
τεκνων καλως προϊσταμενοι και των ιδιων οικων

Newberry, T., & Berry, G. R. (2004). [The interlinear literal translation of the Greek New Testament](#) (1 Ti 3:12). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

### **1 Ti 2:8**

**8** I desire therefore that the **men** pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;

### 1 Ti 2:12

**12** And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a **man**, but to be in silence.

1 Peter 3:1–5 (NKJV)

**3** Wives, likewise, *be* submissive to your **own husbands**, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, .....<sup>5</sup> For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their **own husbands**,

## **2. The Roles God has set in the Church Demand Male Leadership.**

**1 Timothy 3:14–15 (NKJV)**

<sup>14</sup> These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; <sup>15</sup> but if I am delayed, *I write* so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

**1 Timothy 2:11–14 (NKJV)**

<sup>11</sup> Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. <sup>12</sup> And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. <sup>13</sup> For Adam was formed first, then Eve. <sup>14</sup> And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

## 1 Corinthians 14:34–40 (NKJV)

<sup>34</sup> Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but *they are* to be submissive, as the law also says. <sup>35</sup> And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.

<sup>36</sup> Or did the word of God come *originally* from you? Or *was it* you only that it reached? <sup>37</sup> If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord. <sup>38</sup> But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.

<sup>39</sup> Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues. <sup>40</sup> Let all things be done decently and in order.

Thus, *didaxai* (διδάξαι) (aorist), is to teach, while *didaskein* (διδασκειν) (present 2:12), is to be a teacher. Paul, therefore, says, “I do not permit a woman to be a teacher.” The context here has to do with church order, and the position of the man and woman in the church worship and work. The kind of teacher Paul has in mind is spoken of in Acts 13:1, I Corinthians 12:28, 29, and Ephesians 4:11, God-

called, and God-equipped teachers, recognized by the Church as those having authority in the Church in matters of doctrine and interpretation. This prohibition of a woman to be a teacher, does not include the teaching of classes of women, girls, or children in a Sunday School, for instance, but does prohibit the woman from being a pastor, or a doctrine teacher in a school. It would not be seemly, either, for a woman to teach a mixed class of adults.

Wuest, K. S. (1997). [\*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader\*](#) (Vol. 7, pp. 48–49). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

## 1. The Rules

## 2. The Requirements

The most important qualities leaders can demonstrate are not intelligence, a forceful personality, glibness, diligence, vision, administrative skills, decisiveness, courage, humor, tact, or any other similar natural attribute. Those all play a part, but the most desirable quality for any leader is integrity.

While integrity is most desirable in secular leadership, its absence is fatal to spiritual leadership. Underlining this, John Stott writes,

Communication is by symbol as well as speech. For “a man cannot only preach, he must also live. And the life that he lives, with all its little peculiarities, is one of two things: either it emasculates his preaching or it gives it flesh and blood” [J. H. Bavinck, *An Introduction to the Science of Missions* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presb. & Ref., 1960), 93]. We cannot hide what we are. Indeed, what we are speaks as plainly as what we say. When these two voices blend, the impact of the message is doubled. But when they contradict each other, even the positive witness of the one is negated by the other. This was the case with the man Spurgeon describes as a good preacher but a bad Christian: he “preached so well and lived so badly, that when he was in the pulpit everybody said he ought never to come out again, and when he was out of it they all declared he never ought to enter it again.” [*Lectures to My Students* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 1:12–13]. It is at this point that a practical problem presents itself to us. Pastors are told to be models of Christian maturity. (*Between Two Worlds* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982], 264)

All leadership seeks to accomplish one goal: influence. Leaders seek to influence people to achieve their objectives. Influence is a direct result of teaching and example. What a man is will influence his followers to be fully committed to what he says. Teaching sets the nails into the mind, but example is the hammer that drives them in deep. Not surprisingly, the Scripture has much to say about the power of example to influence behavior, both for good and for evil. In Leviticus 18:3 God warned Israel not to follow the example of their pagan neighbors: “You shall not do what is done in the land of Egypt where you lived, nor are you to do what is done in the land of Canaan where I am bringing you; you shall not walk in their statutes.” Deuteronomy 18:9 repeats that warning: “When you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations.” Proverbs 22:24–25 warns, “Do not associate with a man given to anger; or go with a hot-tempered man, lest you learn his ways, and find a snare for yourself.” The power of an evil ruler to influence his subordinates is seen in Proverbs 29:12: “If a ruler pays attention to falsehood, all his ministers become wicked.” Hosea echoed that warning: “And it will be, like people, like priest; so I will punish them for their ways, and repay them for their deeds” (Hos. 4:9). Our Lord gave this indictment of the Scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23:1–3:



Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying, “The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things, and do not do them.”

The Bible also encourages us to follow godly examples. Paul commended the Thessalonians for becoming “imitators of us and of the Lord” (1 Thess. 1:6). To the Philippians he wrote, “The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things” (Phil. 4:9). He encouraged both Timothy (1 Tim. 4:12) and Titus (Titus 2:7) to be good examples for their people to follow. Hebrews 13:7 exhorts us to follow the example of godly leaders, while James 5:10 points us to the example of the prophets. Peter admonishes elders to be examples to their flocks (1 Peter 5:3).

The power of example can be seen in the influence of two of Israel’s kings. Repeatedly, godly kings of the southern kingdom are said to have followed the example of David (cf. 1 Kings 3:3; 15:11; 2 Kings 18:1–3; 22:1–2; 2 Chron. 29:1–2; 34:1–2), while wicked kings of the northern kingdom are said to walk in the sins of Jeroboam (cf. 1 Kings 16:1–2, 18–19, 25–26, 30–31; 2 Kings 3:1–3; 10:29, 31; 13:1–2, 6, 10–11; 14:23–24; 15:8–9, 17–18, 23–24, 27–28; 17:22).

It is not enough for a leader in the church to teach the truth, he must also model it. Richard Baxter writes,

It is not likely that the people will much regard the doctrine of such men, when they see that they do not live as they preach. They will think that he doth not mean as he speaks, if he do not live as he speaks. They will hardly believe a man that seemeth not to believe himself. (*The Reformed Pastor* [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1979], 84)

Integrity is living what you teach and preach. That is why all the qualifications for leaders given in this passage describe their moral character. It is not the typical list a corporate analyst might come up with, because the issue is not leadership skills, but spiritual example. One who would lead people to Christlikeness must be a pattern of godly behavior for his people to follow. He must be above reproach in his moral life (see chapter 9 of this volume), home life, spiritual maturity, and public reputation.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). *1 Timothy* (pp. 113–115). Chicago: Moody Press.

## **1 Timothy 3:1–13** (NKJV)

### ***Qualifications of Overseers***

**3** This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. <sup>2</sup> A bishop then must be **blameless**,

423 **anepílēptos** (from 1 /A "not" and 1949 / epilambánomai, "apprehend") – properly, not apprehended (found wrong) when censured or attacked, i.e. without blame in light of the whole picture. Here the person (accuser) trying to seize someone's character by unjustified censure is shown to be groundless, i.e. when the matter is understood in its full context.

*Anepilēptos* (**above reproach**) means “not able to be held.” The man who is above reproach cannot be arrested and held as if he were a criminal; there is nothing for which to accuse him. In Titus 1:6, the same idea of being above reproach is conveyed, but a different term (*anengklētos*—“unreprovable”) is used.

The present participle *einai* (**be**) indicates he is in a present state of being above reproach. Obviously, it does not mean he has not committed sins in his life. What it does mean is that his life has not been marred by some obvious sinful defect in character which would preclude him setting the highest standard for godly conduct. He must be a model for the congregation to follow (cf. Phil. 3:17; 2 Thess. 3:9; Heb. 13:7; 1 Peter 5:3). He also must not give the enemies of the church reason to attack its reputation.

## the husband of one wife,

one woman man, speaks of character more than martial status. He is not known as a womanizer, a lustful man.

Now, to consider the meaning of the words, “the husband of one wife.” The Greek is *mias* (μίας) (one) *gunaikos* (γυναικος) (woman) *andra* (άνδρα) (man). The word “man” is not *anthrōpos* (άνθρωπος), the generic term for man, but *anēr* (άνηρ), the term used of a male individual of the human race. The other two words are in the genitive case, while *anēr* (άνηρ) is in the accusative. The literal translation is, “a man of one woman.” The words, when used of the marriage relation come to mean, “a husband of one wife.” The two nouns are without the definite article, which construction emphasizes character or nature.

Wuest, K. S. (1997).

[Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader](#) (Vol. 7, p. 53). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Paul is not referring to a leader’s marital status, as the absence of the definite article in the original indicates. Rather, the issue is his moral, sexual behavior. Many men married only once are not one-woman men. Many with one wife are unfaithful to that wife. While remaining married to one woman is commendable, it is no indication or guarantee of moral purity.

Some may wonder why Paul begins his list with this quality. He does so because it is in this area,

above all others, where leaders seem most prone to fall. The failure to be a one-woman man has put more men out of the ministry than any other sin. It is thus a matter of grave concern.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). *1 Timothy* (p. 104). Chicago: Moody Press.

Various interpretations have been offered that evade the meaning of this standard. Some have argued that its intent is to forbid polygamy. A man could not, however, even be a member of the church if he was a polygamist, let alone a leader. If that were all Paul meant, it would be an unnecessary prohibition. Further, polygamy was not an issue in Ephesus. It was uncommon in Roman society, in part because sexual encounters outside of marriage as well as divorces were easily obtainable. Nor was polygamy a feature of first-century Jewish society.

Others maintain that Paul here forbids remarriage after the death of a spouse. As already noted, however, this standard, like all the rest, refers to moral character, not marital status. Further, the Scriptures permit and honor second marriages under the proper circumstances. Paul expected younger widows to remarry and raise a family (1 Tim. 5:14), and widows could be described as one-man women (5:9). In 1 Corinthians 7:39 he wrote, “A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.”

Still others hold that this qualification excludes divorced men from spiritual leadership. That again ignores the fact that Paul is not here referring to marital status. Nor does the Bible forbid all remarriage after a divorce. In Matthew 5:31–32 and 19:9, our Lord permitted remarriage when a divorce was caused by adultery. Paul gave a second occasion when remarriage is permitted, when the unbelieving spouse initiates the divorce (1 Cor. 7:15). While God hates all divorce (Mal. 2:16), He is gracious to the innocent party in those two situations. (For a complete exposition of the relevant passages on divorce, see *Matthew 1–7*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary [Chicago: Moody, 1985], and *1 Corinthians*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary [Chicago: Moody, 1984.]) Since remarriage in and of itself is not a sin, it is not necessarily a blight on a man’s character. If divorce resulted from a man’s inability to lead his family (v. 5), however, then it is a disqualification.

Nor does Paul intend to exclude single men from the ministry. If that was his point here, he would have disqualified himself, since he was single (1 Cor. 7:8).

A one-woman man is a man devoted in his heart and mind to the woman who is his wife. He loves, desires, and thinks only of her. He maintains sexual purity in both his thought life and his conduct. That qualification was especially important in Ephesus, where sexual evil was rampant. Many, if not most, of the congregation had at one time or another fallen prey to sexual evil. If that was before a man came to Christ, it wasn’t a problem (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17). If it happened after his conversion, even before he assumed a leadership role, it was a problem. If it happened after he assumed a leadership role, it was a definite disqualification. Those same standards apply to men in positions of spiritual leadership today. Scripture makes clear that sexual sin is a reproach that never goes away. Proverbs 6:32–33 says of the adulterer, “The one who commits adultery

with a woman is lacking sense; he who would destroy himself does it. Wounds and disgrace he will find, and his reproach will not be blotted out.” Paul also indicates that failure to keep the body pure and controlled results in being disqualified for preaching (1 Cor. 9:27).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). *1 Timothy* (pp. 104–105). Chicago: Moody Press.

## temperate.

A leader in God’s church must also be **temperate**. *Nēphalios* (**temperate**) literally means “wineless,” or “unmixed with wine.” While it is true that wine “makes man’s heart glad” (Ps. 104:15), it also has the potential for great harm. That is why it was commonly diluted with water in biblical times. Even so, it retained its potential for harm to those who drank it unmixed or to excess. Proverbs 20:1 warns, “Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise.” Proverbs 23:29–35 graphically describes one snared by wine:

Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long over wine, those who go to taste mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your mind will utter perverse things. And you will be like one who lies down in the middle of the sea, or like one who lies down on the top of a mast. “They

struck me, but I did not become ill; they beat me, but I did not know it. When shall I awake? I will seek another drink.”

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). *1 Timothy* (pp. 105–106). Chicago: Moody Press.

In a metaphorical sense, *nēphalios* means “alert,” “watchful,” “vigilant,” or “clear-headed.” That may be its primary sense in this passage. A leader must be one who thinks clearly. He must possess the inner strength to refrain from any excess that would dull his alertness. William Hendriksen writes, “His pleasures are not primarily those of the senses ... but those of the

**soul**” (*New Testament Commentary: The Pastoral Epistles* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981], 122).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). *1 Timothy* (p. 106). Chicago: Moody Press.

### sober-minded,

4998 sóphrōn (from sōos, "sound, safe" and 5424 /phrén, "inner outlook" which regulates outward behavior) – properly, safe (sound) because moderated, referring to what is prudent because correctly (divinely) balanced (which is far more than being "the middle of the road").

4998 /sóphrōn ("acting in God's definition of balance") makes someone genuinely temperate, i.e. well-balanced from God's perspective. True balance is not "one-size-fits-all" nor is it blandly static. Biblical moderation (4998 / sóphrōn) describes "a man who does not command himself, but rather is commanded by God" (K. Wuest,

Word Studies, 2, 46). This root (sōphro-, "soundness") then reflects living in God-defined balance.

Third, a leader in the church must be **prudent**. This quality is the result of being temperate. The **prudent** man is well-disciplined, and knows how to correctly order his priorities. He is a person who is serious about spiritual things. That does not mean he is cold and humorless, but that he views the world through God's eyes. The realities that the world is lost, disobedient to God, and bound for hell leave little room for frivolity in his ministry. Such a man has a sure and steady mind. He is not rash in judgment, but thoughtful, earnest, and cautious. He follows Paul's counsel in Philippians 4:8: "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things." His mind will be controlled by God's truth, not the whims of the flesh. Jesus Christ will reign supreme over every area of his life.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). [\*1 Timothy\*](#) (pp. 106–107). Chicago: Moody Press.

of good behavior,



Fourth, an overseer must be (of good behavior), **respectable**. *Kosmios* (**respectable**) carries the idea of “orderly.” A man **prudent** in mind will have a **respectable**, or orderly life. His well-disciplined mind leads to a well-disciplined life. “The ministry is no place for the man whose life is a continual confusion of unaccomplished plans and unorganized activities”

(Homer A. Kent, Jr., *The Pastoral Epistles* [Winona Lake, Ind.: BMH Books, 1982], 127).

As noted in chapter 7 of this volume, the word *kosmos*, from which *kosmios* derives, is the opposite of “chaos.” A spiritual leader must not have a chaotic, but an orderly lifestyle. If he cannot order his own life, how can he bring order to the church (v. 5)?

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). [1 Timothy](#) (p. 107). Chicago: Moody Press.

## hospitable,

church leaders must be **hospitable**. That word translates *philoxenos*, a compound word from the Greek words for “to love,” and “strangers.” The word thus literally means “to love strangers.” It is a frequently commanded Christian virtue (cf. Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:2; 1 Peter 4:9). It does not refer to entertaining friends, but showing hospitality to strangers

[1 Timothy](#) (p. 107). Chicago: Moody Press.

The door of the Christian home, as well as the heart of the Christian family, ought to be open to all who come in need. That is especially true of the overseer. Elders

are not elevated to a place where they are unapproachable. They are to be available. A pastor's life and home are to be open so that his true character is manifest to all who come there, friend or stranger.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). [1 Timothy](#) (p. 108). Chicago: Moody Press.

## able to teach;

The overseer in the church must be **able to teach**. Here is the only qualification that relates specifically to his giftedness and function. *Didaktikos* (**able to teach**) appears only here and in 2 Timothy 2:24 in the New Testament. An elder must be a highly skilled teacher, who works hard in his studies and proclamation (cf. 5:17). That is the one qualification that sets him apart from the deacons. Since, as noted below, the primary duty of the overseer is to preach and teach the Word of God, being gifted for that is crucial.

Some may wonder why Paul includes this qualification in the midst of a list of moral qualities. He does so because effective teaching is woven into the moral character of the teacher. What a man is cannot be divorced from what he says. "He that means as he speaks," writes Richard Baxter, "will surely do as he speaks" (*The Reformed Pastor*, 63)

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). [1 Timothy](#) (p. 108). Chicago: Moody Press.

### 3 not given to wine,

Another requirement for one who desires to be an elder is that he **not be addicted to wine**. This quality is not concerned with whether or not he gets drunk. Obviously, someone given to drunkenness would in no way be qualified for the ministry. An elder who is **not addicted to wine** is a man who does not have a reputation as a drinker. He doesn't frequent bars or involve himself in the scenes associated with drinking.

The Bible points out the tragic consequences when leaders are drinkers. Isaiah blasted the spiritual leaders of Israel for this very sin: "And these also reel with wine and stagger from strong drink: The priest and the prophet reel with strong drink, they are confused by wine, they stagger from strong drink; they reel while having visions, they totter when rendering judgment" (Isa. 28:7).

A man who is a drinker has no place in the ministry. He is a poor example, and will surely be the cause of serious sin and disaster in the lives of others who follow his example as drinkers, justifying their indulgence because of their leader. A leader must be a man whose associations are radically different from those of the world, and whose example leads others to righteous conduct, not sin.

In ancient times most people consumed wine, since it was the staple liquid to drink. The water was impure,

and mixing the wine with water not only significantly diluted the alcohol content, but purified the water. A mixture of eight parts water to one part wine was common, so as to avoid any dissipating effect. Timothy was even reluctant to take the mixed wine, so as not to set an example that could cause someone to stumble. Thus, he was committed to abstinence, and Paul had to tell him, “no longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments” (5:23). Drinking only water was contributing to his poor health.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). *1 Timothy* (pp. 110–111). Chicago: Moody Press.

### not violent,

Nor may an elder be **pugnacious**. *Mē plēktēs* (**pugnacious**) literally means “not a giver of blows,” or “not a striker.” A leader in the church must not be one who reacts to difficulty with physical violence. He must not settle disputes with blows. He must react to situations calmly, coolly, and gently (cf. 2 Tim. 2:24–25).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). *1 Timothy* (p. 111). Chicago: Moody Press.

### not greedy for money,

866 *aphilárgyros* (from 1 /A, "not," 5368 /philéō, "fond of" and 696 /árgyros, "silver") – properly, "not fond of silver," i.e. not covetous for money; free from the love of materialism; not dominated (over-influenced) by the desire for financial gain; non-materialistic. See also 5365 /philargyría ("love of money").

### not covetous;

This word is not in the earliest manuscripts

**146.** αἰσχροκερδής *aischrokerdēs*; from 150 and 2771; *greedy of base gain*:—fond of sordid gain(2), sordid gain(2).

Thomas, R. L. (1998). *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek dictionaries : updated edition*. Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc.

### but gentle,

*Epieikēs* (**gentle**) describes the person who is considerate, genial, forbearing, and gracious, who easily pardons human failure. Such a person remembers good, not evil. He does not keep a list of all the wrongs done to him, or hold a grudge. Many men leave the ministry because they can't accept criticism. A leader, when wronged, must have no thought of retaliation.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). *1 Timothy* (p. 111). Chicago: Moody Press.

### not quarrelsome,

**Uncontentious** translates *amachos*, which means “peaceful,” or “reluctant to fight.” It refers not so much to physical violence as to a quarrelsome person. To have a contentious person in leadership will result in disunity and disharmony, seriously hindering the effectiveness of that leadership team.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). *1 Timothy* (p. 111). Chicago: Moody Press.

#### **4** one who rules his own house well,

It is not enough for the overseer to have an exemplary personal life, he must also have an exemplary home life. He must not be, like Talkative in Pilgrim’s Progress, “a saint abroad, and a devil at home” (John Bunyan, *Pilgrim’s Progress* [reprint; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976], 76). The family is the proving ground for leadership skills

Throughout history, there have been those who advocated celibacy for spiritual leaders. Such a faction existed in Ephesus (cf. 4:3). In contrast, however, the Word of God assumes that a leader will be married and have a family. Although that does not eliminate single men, it is nevertheless the norm. Spiritual leaders are to be successful leaders in the family.

**Manages** means “presides,” or “has authority over.” The same word is translated “rule” in 5:17, showing the link between leading the home and

leading the church. In the home, as in the church, it is God’s plan for men to assume the leadership role (cf. 2:9–15).

**Well** is from *kalos*, a rich word that could also be translated “excellently.” Its meaning can be better understood by comparing it to *agathos*. *Agathos* means “inherently,” “morally,” or “practically good.” *Kalos* takes that a step further and adds the idea of aesthetically good, beautiful, and appealing to the eye. An elder must be one whose leadership in the home is not only intrinsically good, but also visibly good.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). *1 Timothy* (p. 116). Chicago: Moody Press.

It is possible for a man to meet the moral qualifications for a pastor, yet be disqualified because of his evident lack of leadership in the home.....

**Household** includes an elder’s family and more, because it reaches to everything connected with the home. He must be a good steward of his house and his finances—all the people and resources over which he has responsibility. Someone, for example, who managed his family well, but mismanaged his money and possessions, would be disqualified. The man who serves as a pastor must demonstrate that he can lead people to salvation and sanctification because he has done that in his own home—which is a model, a pattern for all homes to follow.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). *1 Timothy* (p. 116). Chicago: Moody Press.

#### 4 **having his children in submission with all reverence**

Further, a leader in the church must keep **his children under control with all dignity**. That qualification is not meant to exclude men without children, but merely assumes they will be present. *Hupotagē* (**under control**) is a military term. It speaks of lining up in rank under one in authority. An elder's children are to be respectful, well-disciplined, and believers (Titus 1:6). **Dignity** includes courtesy, humility, and competence. It could be translated "respect," or "stateliness." An elder's children must bring honor to their parents. The obvious implication is that his family is ordered, disciplined, not rebellious, as Paul adds in Titus 1:6, "not accused of dissipation or rebellion." He also demands in that same verse that the elder have "children who believe." The point is that one given the task of leading men and women to justification, sanctification, and service in the church must have shown in the home that he is capable of such leadership.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). [1 Timothy](#) (pp. 116–117). Chicago: Moody Press.

<sup>5</sup> (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?);



<sup>6</sup> not a novice,

lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the *same* condemnation as the devil.

<sup>7</sup> Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

### ***Qualifications of Deacons***

<sup>8</sup> Likewise deacons *must be* reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, <sup>9</sup> holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. <sup>10</sup> But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being *found* blameless.

<sup>11</sup> Likewise, *their* wives *must be* reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. <sup>12</sup> Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling *their* children and their own houses well. <sup>13</sup> For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

### 3. The Responsibilities

#### I. First Responsibility LABOR

recognize those who labor among you

**Diligently labor** (2872) (**kopiao [word study]** from **kopos** = labor, fatigue) This root word **kopos** (see word study) is used in secular Greek of “a beating,” “weariness” (as though one had been beaten) and “**exertion**,” was the proper word for physical tiredness induced by work, exertion or heat.

**Kopiao** means to physically become worn out, weary or faint. To engage in hard work with the implication of difficulty and trouble. **Kopiao** speaks of intense toil even to the point of utter exhaustion if necessary (cp elders preaching and teaching [1Ti 5:17](#)). The work described by **kopiao** was left one so weary it was as if the person had taken a beating (Paul calls Timothy and all disciples to this "backbreaking labor" [so to speak] in order to make disciples - [2Ti 2:6-note](#)). **Kopiao** describes not so much the actual exertion as the weariness which follows the straining of all one's powers to the utmost.

**Stedman** writes that those in **leaders** word hard...

They spend hours toiling in difficult and sometimes demeaning work. Contrary to what some people think, it is not true that pastors work only one day a week. The ministry is a very demanding job. (Ibid)

**MacArthur** adds that **kopiao**

does not stress the amount of work, but rather the effort. A man's reward from God is proportional to the excellence of his ministry and the effort he puts into it. Excellence

combined with diligence mark a man worthy of the highest honor. (MacArthur, John: 1Timothy Moody Press or Logos)

**ACTS 20:35** In everything I (Paul) 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.'

**Romans 16:6** (note) Greet Mary, who has **worked hard** for you...  
**16:12** (note) Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, workers in the Lord. Greet Persis the beloved, who has **worked hard** in the Lord.

**1 Corinthians 4:12** and we **toil**, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure;

**1 Corinthians 15:10** But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me. (**Comment:** Note the juxtaposition of human effort and God's grace. We are to work hard and yet it is God working in and through us and thus He alone receives the glory!)

**Galatians 4:11** I fear for you, that perhaps I have **labored** over you in vain. (Comment: Paul fear that some might fall prey to the false teaching of the Judaizers who added works and legalism to salvation by faith alone.)

**Philippians 2:16** (note) (The saints at Philippi were to keep) holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor **toil** in vain.

**Colossians 1:29** (note) And for this purpose (to present every man complete in Christ, a mature believer ever being conformed to the image of the Son) also I **labor** (kopiao), striving (agonizomai) (How?) according to His

power, which mightily works (Greek = *energeo* ~ God's power, His grace, His Spirit, "*energized*" Paul) within me.

**1 Timothy 4:10** (note) For it is for this (with a view to the promise which godliness holds forth so that it might actually be fulfilled -- see note 1Ti 4:8) we **labor** (*kopiao*) and strive (*agonizomai*), because we have fixed our hope on the living God, Who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.

**1 Timothy 5:17** Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who **work hard** at preaching and teaching.

**2 Timothy 2:6** (note) The **hard-working** farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops

## II. Authority over the Sheep

and are over you in the Lord

**Have charge over** (4291) (**proistemi** from **pró** = before, over + **hístemi** = put, place, stand) literally means those who are put or placed before you or over you. **Proistemi** has the basic meaning of "standing before" others and, hence, the idea of leadership. It

describes one who presides over others, and exercises a position of leadership (rule, direct, be at the head of).

**Rogers** writes that *proistemi* has two possible meanings in this passage

either to preside, lead, direct or to protect , to care for.

(Rogers, C L - originally by Fritz Rienecker: *New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament*. Zondervan. 1998)

In secular Greek **proistemi** was used in some context (not these ways in NT) meaning to put forward as a pretence or use as a screen. To stand before so as to guard.

**Proistemi** (as in this passage) also includes the idea of having an interest in, showing concern for, caring for or giving aid.

**Hiebert** adds that **proistemi**...

literally means "standing before," hence to be at the head, to direct, to rule. It may denote informal leadership or management of any kind, but papyrus usage establishes that it can be used of various kinds of officials.' It points to the spiritual guidance these men are giving to the church, a recognized function of the elder. It combines the concepts of leading, protecting, and caring for.' (Ibid)

Here are the 7 other NT uses of **proistemi** and is rendered -- engage in (2), have charge over(1), leads(1), manage(1), managers(1), manages(1), rule(1).

**Romans 12:8** (note) or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who **leads** (stands on the first place), with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

**1 Timothy 3:4** He (**overseer**) must be one who **manages** (**proistemi** - to stand before, to rule over, to manage. Note that in the ancient Greek culture, the authority of the father was exceedingly great.) his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity 5 (but if a man does not know how to

**manage** (proistemi) his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)

**1 Timothy 3:12** Let deacons be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households.

**1 Timothy 5:17** Let the elders who **rule well** (Guthrie notes that the word means general superintendence and describes the duties allotted to all presbyters) be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.

**Titus 3:8 (note)** This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God may be careful to **engage** (here **proistemi** speaks of a responsible preoccupation with something. Take the lead in. Be careful to busy yourself with. The word also has a technical meaning - "to practice a profession") in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.

**Titus 3:14 (note)** And let our people also learn to **engage** (proistemi) in good deeds to meet pressing needs, that they may not be unfruitful.

There are 5 uses of **proistemi** in the non-apocryphal Septuagint - [2Sam. 13:17](#); [Pr. 23:5](#); [26:17](#); [Isa. 43:24](#); [Amos 6:10](#)

**In the Lord** - This phrase clearly identifies these men not as secular leaders (as one might think of leading men in the community) but as those who lead in connection with spiritual concerns **in** the sphere of the Lord -- as His appointees, under His authority, etc

**Stedman** comments that...

Leaders have been appointed by the Lord Jesus, regardless of the human process by which they were chosen. That does not mean that they cannot be changed or that in the course of events they will not go someplace else. What it means is that when they are in

leadership they are to be regarded as the Lord's men and the Lord's women. He has sent them among us. (Ibid)

**Hiebert** adds that...

Their position does not stem from personal ambition but rather from their spiritual maturity. Their position of leadership in the church is based upon the recognized fact that both they and those being led are **in the Lord**. "His Lordship underlies their leadership." Their authority is not that of a formal ecclesiastical hierarchy but rather is "one exercised in the warmth of Christian bonds." (Ibid)

We're not self-appointed. It's not manmade. You didn't give us that authority. We didn't take it on our own. It's not from men. We are called, equipped, appointed by God. It is our duty to rule for His sake, the Lord's sake, not for personal power, personal prestige, personal gain, personal career advancement, but for the Lord. That little phrase "in the Lord" is the sphere in which our authority rests. Our authority is in Him. He delegated it to us. We only have it as we're obedient to His Word and His will. We have a delegated authority. It is not our own, and it does not go beyond the expression of His will, in His Word and through His Spirit. And so, we are given authority, but only in the Lord, not beyond that.

### III. Instruction

admonish you,

**Give instruction** (3560) (warning, cautioning, gently reproving, exhorting) (**noutheteo [word study]** from **noús** = mind + **títhemi** = place) literally means to place in the mind and so to warn or give notice to beforehand especially of danger or evil. The idea is

to lay it on the mind or heart of the person, with the stress being on influencing not only the intellect, but also the will, emotions and disposition. The idea is to counsel about avoidance or cessation of an improper course of conduct. **Noutheteo** has the connotation of confronting with the intent of changing one's attitudes and actions.

**Noutheteo** is in the **present tense** which indicating that these leaders were continually admonishing, warning, cautioning, etc. It often conveys an implication of blame attached or of calling attention to faults or defects. It follows that noutheteo speaks of the activity of reminding someone of what he has forgotten or is in danger of forgetting. It may involve a rebuke for wrongdoing as well as a warning to be on guard against wrongdoing. It directs an appeal to the conscience and will of one being admonished in order to stir him to watchfulness or obedience.

### **Morris** remarks

While its tone is brotherly, it is big-brotherly

English dictionaries state that to **admonish** is to indicate duties or obligations to; to express warning or disapproval to especially in a gentle, earnest, or solicitous manner; to give friendly earnest advice or encouragement to; to reprove firmly but not harshly; to advise to do or against doing something; warn; caution.

Paul in his parting words to the Ephesian elders reminded them that

"from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" and therefore they had to "be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years (note what Paul did for 3 years! **Is this an active aspect of ministry in the modern day church?**) I did not cease to **admonish** (noutheteo) each one with tears." ([Acts 20:30, 31](#))



In a note on the [Romans 15:14](#) passage **John MacArthur** writes that **noutheteo...**

is a **comprehensive term for counseling**. In this context, it refers to coming alongside other Christians for **spiritual and moral counseling**. Paul is not referring to a special gift of counseling, but of the duty and responsibility that every believer has for encouraging and strengthening other believers. Tragically, many Christians today have been convinced that competent counseling can only be accomplished by a person who is trained in the principles of secular psychology—despite the fact that the various schools of psychology are, for the most part, at extreme odds with God’s Word and frequently with each other. Although they may profess that “all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness” ([2Ti 3:16-note](#)), many evangelicals—both those who give and those who receive counseling—do not rely on the full sufficiency of God’s Word.... When God’s Word rules our hearts (cf [Col 3:16-note](#)), His Holy Spirit makes us “rich in the true wisdom” and prepares us to admonish one another, to “teach and help one another along the right road.” The place for Christians to counsel and be counseled is in the church. That is not, of course, to say that it must be done in a church building, but that it be Christian counseling Christian. That principle applies to general admonitions among fellow believers, as Paul mentions in this text, as well as to counseling regarding more serious and prolonged problems confronted by a biblically oriented and spiritually gifted Christian minister.” (MacArthur, J: [Romans 9-16](#). Chicago: Moody Press or Logos) (bolding added, reference links added)

Paul considered himself a spiritual father to the local churches, and it was his duty to warn his children --

"I do not write these things to shame you, but to **admonish** you as my beloved children" ([1Corinthians 4:14](#))

Children who are not warned can get in a lot of trouble! Using the noun form (nouthesia) Paul instructs fathers, writing...

"And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and **instruction** (**nouthesia**) of the Lord." ([Ep 6:4-note](#))

**Fathers, are you warning your children?** It is critical for their well being in a amoral society which has run amuck and scoffs at the life giving Biblical principles like this one in Ephesians!

In **admonishment** there is a moral emphasis, in **teaching** a doctrinal emphasis.

The **Wycliffe Bible commentary** says that

"The 'doctor of souls' has a warning and teaching ministry, not self-centered but patient-centered."

**Listen to what Richard Baxter said several centuries ago.** "To preach a sermon, what skill is necessary to make the truth plain, to convince the hearers, to let irresistible light into their consciences, and keep it there, and drive all home; to screw the truth into their minds, and work Christ into their affections; to meet every objection, and clearly to resolve it; to drive sinners to a stand, and make them see that there is no hope, but that they must unavoidably either be converted or condemned – and to do all this, as regards language and style, as befits our work, and yet as is most suitable to the capacities of the hearers? This, and a great deal more that should be done in every sermon, must surely require a great deal of holy skill.

So great a God, whose message we deliver, should be honored by our delivery of it. It is a lamentable case, that in the message from the God of heaven of everlasting moment to the souls of men, we should behave ourselves so weakly, so unhandsomely, so imprudently, or so slightly, that the whole business should miscarry in our hands, and God should be dishonored, and His work disgraced, and sinners rather hardened than converted; and all this through our weakness or neglect. How often have carnal hearers gone home jeering at the palpable and dishonorable failings of the preacher? How many sleep under us, because our hearts and tongues are sleepy, and we bring not with us so much skill and zeal as to awake them?", end quote.

No king, no President, no politician, no doctor, no lawyer, no judge, no military commander on earth has such an awesome responsibility as the one who shepherds the sheep by giving instruction out of the Word of God. To prostitute that is a frightening, frightening error.

### **Southern Baptists and Sexual Abuse**

The **first story** by the *Houston Chronicle* on sexual abuse within Southern Baptist churches and entities is horrific to read. The information that the authors compiled into a **database** was gathered primarily from public sources. The power of having all of that data from the last twenty years in one place is that the breadth and depth of the problem becomes undeniable.

The stories are tragic and the victims who have suffered at the hands of church leaders and volunteers deserve our sympathy, prayers and support. Seven-hundred victims

and over two-hundred victimizers were discovered in the initial research of the reporters. Those numbers will undoubtedly swell since the article contains within it an invitation to provide confidential information about “sexual misconduct in Southern Baptist churches.”

Responses to the story have been appropriate, as far as they go. Al Mohler, President of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, addressed the issues of minister ordination and associational accountability in [his assessment](#). Denny Burk, Professor of Biblical Studies at Boyce College, is [“Grieved Beyond Words and Resolved.”](#) This article from the *Chronicle*, and the ones to follow, will no doubt inform the work of the SBC’s “Sexual Abuse Presidential Study Group,” which was appointed by President JD Greear last year.

As painful as it is to read, I am grateful that Southern Baptists are acknowledging the serious problem of sexual abuse within their ranks. I am sorry that they were in many respects forced into admitting it by the *Houston Chronicle*. However, given the way that many Southern Baptist churches operate, we shouldn’t be surprised at the revelation that abuse takes place within them.

### **A More Serious Problem**

An honest examination of Southern Baptist churches reveals a much deeper problem than even sexual abuse. The real problem is spiritual before it is moral. That is, Southern Baptists have a problem with God. They trumpet their affirmation of the inerrancy of Scripture and unhesitatingly call it the written Word of God. Yet, at the

same time the overwhelming majority of their churches blatantly defy the God of that Word.

Yes, I said, “blatantly defy.” The kind defiance displayed by the teenager who smiles politely and says, “Yes sir; yes ma’am,” to his parents when they tell him to be home at 10PM when he has no intention of doing so. He drags in at 1AM or 3AM, depending on how he feels. The next day he will again let “Yes sir” and “Yes ma’am” roll off his tongue with a pleasant smile on his face, knowing full well that he will comply with their instructions only so far as they fit in with his own ideas of what is best.

That is the kind of defiance of God that is found in most of the key positions in the SBC today. By “key positions” I do not mean denominational posts (though the same could be said of many who fill them, as well), but local church pastorates. How else can we explain the **loud trumpeting of Southern Baptists’ commitment to inerrancy** while at the same time blatantly refusing to do what the inerrant Scriptures say to do?

### **Regenerate Church Membership**

By way of illustration let me limit myself to two, interconnected teachings of Scripture which, when neglected, provide a breeding ground for church members to be abused in many ways. First is the biblical directive that churches should have only Christians as members (Acts 2:41; the use of “brothers” to address churches; etc.). Baptists have long contended for this principle of **regenerate church membership**. In order to be a genuine Baptist, you must be a genuine Christian. Baptism can

only be properly administered to those who have a credible profession of faith in Christ. Only baptized believers are to be members in a Baptist church.

Yet, by even the most basic of metrics—the assumption that real Christians attend church regularly—it seems evident that most SBC churches are largely comprised of unregenerate members. That is, most SBC churches have nearly **three-times as many members** as they do people (including visitors and small children, at least some of whom, presumably are not members) in attendance on any given Sunday. As the late evangelist Vance Havner used to say, “We Southern Baptists may be many, but we ain’t much.”

Let me break this down for you. If you are in a church that has 600 members but only averages 200-300 in attendance (which would be an average-to-above-average percentage for most Southern Baptist churches), apart from some extenuating circumstance, you are in an unhealthy church. Such a church denies not only its Baptist identity but also the very inerrant Word of God on which that identity is based.

### **Church Discipline**

The second teaching is what we commonly call “church discipline.” The inerrant Word of God says (even in red letters!) that if a brother sins, then his fellow church members are to try to help him to repent. If he does not, then his sin is to be told to the whole church so that they might speak to him collectively. If he refuses to repent even when the whole church calls him to it, then he is to

be removed from the membership of the church (Matthew 18:5-18). Paul makes the same argument for church purity in 1 Corinthians 5, though he tells us to go directly to the step of excommunication in the case of scandalous, public sin.

Those two passages (and others that teach the same thing) are inerrant, aren't they? Then why do so many inerrantists disobey them? Are they theoretical inerrantists? Inerrantists with their fingers crossed? Cowardly inerrantists? Man-fearing inerrantists? Maybe there is some other explanation, but one thing is certain—Baptist churches that do not practice regenerate church membership and church discipline are blatantly defying the God who has given us the inerrant Word! And honestly, all of their boasts about believing in biblical authority are empty bluster. Furthermore, their neglect is rebellion against God and spiritual abuse of those members who remain on their rolls but receive no practical love and care.

I have read more stories by abuse victims that have come out in the aftermath of the Chronicle's article. In my 40 years of pastoring, I have also dealt with more cases of sexual abuse & immorality than I ever wanted to know about. I have counseled, pled with, rebuked, warned and reported other pastors and congregations who were determined to sweep abuse cases under the rug. Churches must take practical steps to protect their members from abusers and sexual predators. They must

be extra-vigilant when it comes to the most vulnerable among them.

### **Spiritual Abuse**

As I have reflected on the recent stories and reports, my heart, like that of everyone who has any compassion at all, has grieved at what I have read. But I have also been provoked to think of the even greater spiritual abuse that is taking place in Southern Baptist churches week-by-week. This abuse has been going on not merely for the last 20 years but at least for the last 70 years and, as I've already said, is the breeding ground for all other kinds of abuse—including sexual abuse.

Here is the reality: If Southern Baptist pastors don't care enough about their members' souls to watch over them, how can we expect them to care about their sexual safety? If a pastor is satisfied to neglect clear biblical commands and allow members to go to hell unhindered, it should not surprise us if he looks the other way when they suffer hell on earth at the hands of abusers.

I wonder what would happen if we could somehow get the pictures and testimonies of the millions of Southern Baptists who have gone to hell with their names on a church membership roll. Would there be the same kind of visceral response that we are seeing with the revelation of tragic abuse cases within SBC churches? Would the SBC President appoint a special task force to look into what can be done to encourage churches to quit defying God so blatantly? Would there be any sustained lament, brokenness and repentance over the spiritual abuse that



such lax shepherding promotes? Would there be calls for the removal of churches who practice such spiritual abuse —the kind that not only wounds emotionally but damns eternally?

Perhaps. But, sadly, I have my doubts. Why? Because anyone who really believes the inerrant Word of God and is not a mere hearer of it (no matter how loudly he may boast about it) doesn't need pictures and testimonies of the damned to pursue obedience to the Lord. Such a person already takes God at His Word and, out of devotion to Jesus Christ who has redeemed him, is willing to believe what it teaches and follow where it leads. As for others? Well, as Jesus put it in Luke 16:19-31, if they will not believe the written Scriptures, then neither will they be convinced even if someone comes back from hell to testify to them.

In other words, if you refuse to submit to God's written Word when it clearly speaks, then you will not be convinced to do what is right even by the testimony of a resident of hell.

Yes, churches need to take action to protect members from sexual abuse. However, if a church will not commit to guarding its membership and lovingly practicing discipline the Bible commands, then whatever steps it takes and however loudly it laments are little more than moral signaling and posturing. What we need is deep repentance and thorough reformation that puts off spiritual apathy and returns to a humble, honest submission to Jesus Christ as Lord.

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