

# ***THE CHURCH'S RELATIONSHIP TO HER ELDERS***

1 Timothy 5:17-25

## **INTRODUCTION**

- 1 Timothy is that it is a very practical book that deals with real life issues, particularly in the setting of the local church.
- In the fifth chapter Paul instructs Timothy with regards to the relationships within the church.
- Paul has already given the qualifications of a bishop in 3:1-7
- Here, he deals with the church's relationship to the elders.

## **I. THE SERVICE OF ELDERS IS TO BE COMMENDED (17-18)**

A. Ministers can and are often mistreated

1. Some deify them
2. Some despise them

B. The elder's primary role here is given

1. To rule the flock (1 Timothy 3:4; Hebrews 13:17)
2. To labour in word and doctrine (Acts 6:4)

C. Faithful ministers are worthy of double honour

1. They are to be respected (1 Thessalonians 5:12,13; Hebrews 13:7,17)
2. They are to be remunerated (Romans 15:27; Galatians 6:6)

- a. Paul quotes Deuteronomy 25:4, Matthew 10:9-10, and Luke 10:7
- b. Note that this verse is important in regards to the inspiration of the New Testament.
- c. Ministers are to be supported by the church's tithes and offerings (1 Corinthians 9:3-14)

## **II. THE SIN OF ELDERS MUST BE CONFRONTED (19-21)**

### **A. Godly leaders are frequently the target of attack**

1. The devil seeks to smite the shepherds (Matthew 26:31)
2. Murmurings against leaders are nothing new (Numbers 14:27)
3. False accusations can cause great harm

e.g. Joseph (Genesis 39:14-15); Naboth (1 Kings 21); Daniel (Daniel 6); Jesus (Matthew 26:61); Paul (Acts 24:5-6)

### **B. Safeguards must be in place against false accusations**

1. Unsubstantiated accusations are to be rejected
2. There must be two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15; John 8:17; 2 Corinthians 13:1)

### **C. Elders who sin must be rebuked**

1. All church members are subject to church discipline (Matthew 18:15-18; Romans 16:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2:6-11; Galatians 6:1-3; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-16; 2 Timothy 2:23-26; Titus 3:10; and 2 John 9-11)
2. This includes pastors

3. Remember that ministers are not sinless, but must be blameless
  4. Any sin that violates the qualifications in 3:1-7 is grounds for public rebuke
  5. Sin in leadership is more serious and must be punished severely (James 3:1; Galatians 2:11-15)
  6. Note that repentance does not always mean restoration to office
  7. Punishment will serve to deter others from sinning (Acts 5:1-11)
- D. It is a solemn duty that every church must observe (21)
1. This is a “charge”, not a suggestion
  2. God, Christ, and the angels are witnesses of church order

### **III. THE SELECTION OF ELDERS REQUIRES CAUTION (22-25)**

- A. Ordination of men must be done with care (22)
1. Laying of hands refers to ordination to ministry (Numbers 27:18; Acts 13:3; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6; Hebrews 6:2)
  2. Men must first be proved before ordination (cf. 1 Timothy 3:10)
  3. Care here will prevent scandal later
  4. The church is responsible for those it ordains
- B. The preacher must attend to his own physical health (23)

1. Some have used this verse to justify drinking alcohol, but it in fact teaches abstinence
  2. Timothy was an abstainer
  3. The use of wine here is for medicinal purposes
  4. The poor water quality and lack of superior medication warranted this advice (Proverbs 31:6)
  5. This must be studied in light of other prohibitions against drinking alcohol (Proverbs 20:1; 23:31-35)
- C. Assessment of pastoral candidates (24-25)
1. Some will be obviously unfit for ordination
  2. Others will require closer examination
  3. It is vitally important that pastoral candidates are carefully examined
  4. Hasty ordinations bring reproach upon the church (2 John 10-11)

## **CONCLUSION**

1. Elders are God's gift to the church (Ephesians 4:11)
2. They deserve the church's honour and support
3. It is vital that churches follow the Biblical guidelines in dealing with erring pastors
4. Remember that at the judgment seat of Christ, every work will be made manifest (1 Corinthians 3:13)