

# The Eldership - 1

## The Place of Elders in God's Chain of Authority in the Church

### Introduction:

- A. The church is not a democracy, but a monarchy.
  - 1. There is no voting authorized on Scriptures.
  - 2. The monarch has all authority (cf. Eph. 1:22-23).
- B. There are two extremes about the authority of elders.
  - 1. Elders have no authority, only rule by example.
  - 2. Elders have near absolute authority, "lords over God's heritage."
- C. The terms for elders give us some hint of the nature of their authority.
  - 1. Elder/Presbyter (presbuteros). (1 Tim. 4:14 kjv, nkjv)
    - a. Emphasizes age, experience, wisdom.
    - b. Non-technical and technical used of word (1 Tim. 5:1-2, 19-20)
  - 2. Bishop/Overseer (episkopos) (Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1).
    - a. Emphasizes rule and authority.
    - b. Same term applied to Jesus (1 Pet. 2:25)
  - 3. Pastor/Shepherd (poimen) (Eph. 4:11)
    - a. Emphasizes care, direction, leadership, and authority.
    - b. Same term applied to Jesus (1 Pet. 2:25)
  - 4. Note the interchangeability these terms. (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Pet. 5:1-2)
- D. This lesson show God's chain of authority and elder's place in it.

### Discussion:

- I. God, the Father, at the Top.**
  - A. Jesus recognized Father's authority over him (John 12:45-50)
  - B. God spoke through his Son (Heb. 1:1-2).
- II. Father Delegated All Authority to Son. (Matt. 28:18).**
  - A. Father placed him about all powers after resurrection.
    - 1. Set him on David's throne (Acts 2:29-36)
    - 2. Set him above all powers and the church (Eph. 1:17-23).
    - 3. Only Father not under Son (1 Cor. 15:27)
  - B. Son to deliver authority back to Father (1 Cor. 15:24-28).
- III. Son Delegated Authority to Apostles (2 Cor 13:10)**
  - A. He made apostles equal in authority (Matt. 20:25-26)
  - B. He exercises authority through apostolic word (John 17:8,18-20; Heb. 2:1-3).
    - 1. Orally and written during their lives.
    - 2. Written after their death.
    - 3. Apostolic writings at foundation of church (Eph. 2:20-3:5)
  - C. Apostolic authority extended to all churches. (2 Cor. 11:28).
    - 1. Wrote commandments of Lord to churches (1 Cor. 14:37)
    - 2. Ordained or appointed things in every church (1 Cor. 7:17)
    - 3. Writings passed among the churches (Col. 4:16).
- IV. Plurality of Elders Delegated Authority in Local Churches.**
  - A. Plurality in each church (Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1; Acts 20:17)
  - B. Not just examples, but authority.
    - 1. Note terms of authority: Oversee, rule, shepherd.
    - 2. Not legislative, executive, but administrative.
  - C. Lead congregation in carrying out authority from above.
    - 1. Can not decide worship, work or structure of church.
    - 2. Can decide matters of expediency for the church.
      - a. Can see God's wisdom in this.
      - b. Local men of wisdom deciding best for that church.

### Conclusion:

- A. Have noticed where elders fit into God's scheme of things.
- B. Some of the things will notice in lessons to come.
  - 1. Qualifications
  - 2. Nature of their work.
  - 3. When to appoint.
  - 4. How to appoint.