

The Work of Elders

1 Tim 3:1; 1 Thess. 5:12-13

Introduction:

- A. Elders have a great and needed work to do.
 - 1. Common sense says *someone* needs to be in charge.
 - 2. Divine wisdom says *elders* need to be in charge – Holy Spirits made overseers.
- B. Elders and members alike need to know the work of elders.
- C. We will notice the scope, nature and abuses of the work of elders:

Discussion:

I. The Scope of the Work of Elders.

- A. They are elders of *the church* (cf. Acts 14:23; 20:17)
 - 1. Oversee church affairs, not homes, businesses, government, etc.
 - 2. As soul watchers, must step in if home life, business practice etc., endanger the soul.
- B. They of elders of the local church – its's members and work (Acts 14:23; 1 Pet. 5:1-5).

II. The Nature of the Work of Elders.

- A. As seen from their titles.
 - 1. "Elder" = Older, then to leading or ruling body of older men.
 - a. Among Gentiles (Gen. 50:17; Num. 22:7)
 - b. Among Jews (Num. 11:16; Duet 27:1; Matt. 16:21; 26:47; Luke 7:3)
 - c. In the church.
 - 2. "Bishop" or "overseer" = Guardian, curator, or superintendent.
 - 3. "Pastor" or "shepherd" (cf. Psalms 23) – to rule (cf. Matt. 2:6; Rev. 12:5).
- B. As seen from New Testament descriptions
 - 1. Guardians of souls and the purity of the church (Acts 20:28-31; Heb. 13:17; Tit. 1:9-10)
 - 2. Rulers (or leaders) and care takers of the house of God (1 Tim. 3:5; 5:17-19).
 - 3. Admonishers of the church (1 Thess. 5:12-13)
- C. As seen from their relationship to Christ.
 - 1. Under shepherds (cf. 1 Pet. 5:4; 2:25)
 - 2. Not lawmakers (Jas. 4:12) nor law changers (Gal. 1:8,9).
 - 3. Lead church in doing God's law effectively – decide matters of judgment.
- D. Not mere business managers.

III. The Abuses of the Work of Elders.

- A. When elders become "lords" (1 Pet. 5:1-5).
- B. When elders are reduced to figure-heads.
 - 1. Their work done by preachers, majority, etc.
 - 2. Their work done by substitute arrangements – "Leaders," voting, permanent business meetings.
- C. When unqualified men appointed to the work.

Conclusion:

- A. Eldership is a work! A good work! A responsible work!
- B. Should be done with joy!