

1 **Elders**

Shepherds of the Household of God

2 **Elders: Who and What?**

◇ Elders/overseers/pastors are God-ordained shepherds of local churches, primarily responsible for guarding and promoting the spiritual health, teaching and macro-level leadership of the church. (Acts 20:28-35; Pet. 5:1-5)

- Steward finances (Acts 11:29-30)
- Judge theological issues (Acts 15:1-6)
- Provide counsel/resolve conflict (Acts 21:18-25)
- Teach and guard the doctrine of the church (1 Tim. 5:17; Tit. 1:9)
- Encourage and help the weak (Acts 20:35)
- Manage and administrate the activity of the church at a macro-level (1 Tim. 3:4-5; 5:17)

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3 **Elders: Who and What?**

◇ The norm we see in the New Testament is that a plurality of elders work together to oversee individual local churches.

- In Acts 15, the apostles partnered with the *elders* of the Jerusalem church to decide what to do in light of the Gentiles.
- James urges those who are sick to call on the *elders* of the church for anointing with oil and prayer (Jas. 5:14)
- Paul sees to it that *elders* are appointed in every church founded as the result of his first missionary journey (Acts 14:23)
 - Notice that *elders* are appointed after the church is founded. Despite not having yet reached completeness or full maturity, these churches are still considered genuine churches *prior to having elders*.

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4 **Elders: Who and What?**

◇ Paul meets with the *elders* of the church at Ephesus (Acts 20:17), and later instructs Timothy (in Ephesus) about the elders who rule and teach there (1 Tim. 5:17)

- ◇ Paul greets the *overseers* and deacons at the church at Philippi (Phil. 1:1)
- ◇ Titus is instructed to appoint *elders* in every city in/around Crete (Tit. 1:5)
- ◇ When writing to churches scattered throughout five Roman provinces (1 Pet. 1:1), Peter exhorts the *elders* to shepherd the flock of God (1 Pet. 5:1)

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5 **Elders: Who and What?**

- ◇ Qualifications
 - ◇ 1 Tim. 3; Tit. 1

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◇ "The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own

household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil." 1 Tim. 3:1-7

◆ "This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are [faithful/believers] and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it." Titus 1:5-9

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◆ "And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will." 2 Tim. 2:24-25

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