

What is Biblical Church Government? Lesson 3 – Shared Leadership – Part 1

Introduction:

- The Bible refers to church Elders using _____ words.
 - The Bible teaches that the church is to be led by _____ Elders.
1. The New Testament uses _____ different words to refer to the office of Elder.

- Each word describes a different _____ that the Elder is to perform.

A. The first word the New Testament uses for the office of Elder is the word:

_____.

- This word emphasizes the _____ required for the office.

***1 Tim 3.6** He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil.*

- The word is used to describe the _____ role of the Elder in the government of the church.

***1 Tim 5.17** Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.*

- It is evident that Elders were the _____ of the churches in the New Testament.

***Acts 14.23** And when they had appointed Elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.*

- Elders had leadership _____ together with the Apostles to make decisions on issues of doctrine and practice.

***Acts 15.22** Then it seemed good to the apostles and the Elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brothers...*

***Acts 16.4** As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and Elders who were in Jerusalem.*

- Church members are commanded to _____ the Elders of the church.

Heb 13.17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

B. The second word the New Testament uses for the office of Elder is the word: _____ or Bishop.

- It's clear that when Paul uses the words Elder or Overseer, he is describing the _____.

Phil 1.1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons.

- The title of “_____” is simply an old English word translated from the same Greek word for “Overseer”, which is just another word for church Elder.
- The _____ required of overseers are the same as those for Elders.

Titus 1.6-7 if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. 7 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.

1 Tim 3.2-3 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money,

- This word is used in the New Testament to describe someone who _____ others in order to care for their well-being.
- Peter says that Elders are to exercise humble _____ to God's people.

1 Pet 5.1-3 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: 2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock

- Paul says that Elders are to oversee the church in order to _____ for it.

Acts 20.17 Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the Elders of the church to come to him.

Acts 20.28 *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.*

- Elders can follow the example of other godly Elders, but they must first look to the example of _____, the Overseer of our souls.

1 Pet 2.24-25 *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. 24 For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*

- Following Christ's example, church Elders must faithfully:
 - Watch over the _____ of those entrusted to their care.
 - _____ the church from the dangers of false teaching and sin's deceit.
 - _____ the church with the Word of God.
 - _____ the church to glorify Christ in everything.

C. The third word the New Testament uses for the office of Elder is the word: _____.

- The meaning of the Greek word for Pastor is: "_____."

1 Pet 5.2 *...shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly...*

- The _____ task of the Elder is to shepherd the souls of God's people through overseeing them, leading them, and feeding them.

Eph 4.11-12 *And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,*

- In the Greek New Testament, the words "shepherds" and "teachers" can be translated as "_____ shepherds".

John 21.15b *"Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs."*

1 Tim 5.17 *Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.*

2 Tim 4.2 *preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and **teaching**.*

D. The New Testament uses the words “Overseer” and “Elder” and “Pastor” interchangeably, because they refer to the _____.

2. The New Testament provides strong evidence that each congregation in the early church was led by _____ Elders.

- There is no example of a church in the New Testament being led by _____ man.
- Jesus Himself established the _____ for multiple leaders over the church.

Matt 10.1 *And he called to him his **twelve disciples** and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction.*

A. There were multiple Elders in the churches of _____.

Acts 11.29–30 *So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to **the brothers living in Judea**. 30 And they did so, **sending it to the elders** by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.*

B. Paul appointed multiple Elders in _____ of the churches he had planted in Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch.

Acts 14.20b–21 *...he went on with Barnabas to **Derbe**. 21 When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to **Lystra** and to **Iconium** and to **Antioch**,*

Acts 14.23 *And when they had **appointed elders for them in every church**, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.*

C. There were multiple Elders in the _____ church.

Acts 15.2 *And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed **to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the Elders** about this question.*

Acts 15.4 *When they came to Jerusalem, **they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the Elders**, and they declared all that God had done with them.*

Acts 16.4 *As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance **the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and Elders who were in Jerusalem**.*

D. There were multiple Elders in the church of _____.

Acts 20.17 Now from Miletus **he sent to Ephesus and called the Elders of the church to come to him.**

E. There were multiple Elders in the church of _____:

Phil 1.1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at **Philippi, with the overseers and deacons**

F. Paul instructed Titus to appoint multiple Elders in the churches on the island of _____.

Titus 1.5 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.

G. Peter wrote to _____ Christians throughout the ancient world, and knew that they were all part of various churches that were led by multiple Elders.

1 Pet 1.1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect **exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,**

1 Pet 5.1 So I exhort the **Elders among you**, as a fellow Elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed

H. The book of Hebrews gives strong evidence for multiple Elders in the church of _____.

Heb 13.17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

I. There is evidence that there were multiple Elders in the church of _____.

1 Thess 5.12 We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.

J. James mentions multiple Elders in the churches to which he wrote.

James 5.14 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.

3. There is great _____ in following the Biblical pattern of having multiple Elders lead the church, because no single leader possesses all the gifts and skills that are necessary for leading a church effectively.

A. God has gifted each Elder differently, so that by leading the church _____ they can lead more effectively.

1 Cor 12.4–7 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. 7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

1 Cor 12.12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

- Every Elder has weaknesses that are supported by the _____ of other Elders.
- B. Having multiple Elders provides greater _____ for the church.
- Having multiple Elders provides greater _____ to the leaders when they need help.
 - Having multiple Elders provides greater _____ for the Elders.
 - Having multiple Elders watching over the flock reduces the risk of _____ to the flock from within and without.
 - Having multiple Elders reduces the temptation for one man to exercise _____ authority.
 - The number of Elders a church should have depends on the _____ of the church, and the number of qualified men.

Conclusion:

- The Bible refers to church Elders using _____ words.
- The Bible teaches that the church is to be led by _____ Elders.