

And if the bugler doesn't sound a clear sound, how will the soldiers know they are being called to battle?

1st Corinthians 14:8 NLV

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First Love Ministries, Inc.

Prayer Study # 149

ELDERS

Is any sick among you? 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; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and, if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

James 5:14-15

MUCH OF THE FOLLOWING IS BASED ON TEACHINGS FOUND IN Kevin Conner's *The Church in the New Testament*-an excellent book that is almost a necessity for anyone who is involved in teaching ministry, Bill Gothard's *Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts*, and Jack Deere's *Who Can Serve as an Elder?* Deere is one of America's most outstanding, balanced and brilliant Biblical teachers. Deere's presentation was given at Morningstar's Kingdom Leadership Conference; Kevin Conner is an authority on scripture, especially as it pertains to the New Testament Church, and a prolific author. Gothard is one of the great Bible teachers of our time and has given deep insights in the Bible teachings on authority, rights and responsibilities, and purpose in life among other topics.

Church Authority

Obey them that have rule (guide) over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as them that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Hebrews 13:17

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially them who labor in the word and doctrine...and, the laborer is worthy of his reward. 1st Timothy 5:17,18

The elders which are among you I exhort...Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 1st Peter 5:1-3

And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you and to esteem them very highly in love for their works sake. 1st Thessalonians 5:12, 13

Qualification of Elders

1. Elders must be born again. *Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." John 3:5*
2. Elders should be baptized. *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned. Mark 16:16*
3. Elders should be filled with the Spirit. *And be not drunk with wine in which is excess but be filled with the Spirit. Ephesians 5:18*
4. Elders should be made an overseer by the Holy Spirit. People will recognize this, and the Spirit will confirm it. *Take heed therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Acts 20:28*
5. An elder must be blameless. *...and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee, if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of profligacy or unruly. Titus 1:6*
6. An elder must be of good behavior. *A bishop (elder) must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient, not a brawler, nor covetous, one that ruleth his children in subjection with all gravity;(for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must have a good report of them who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. 1st Timothy 3:2-7*
7. An elder must be vigilant. 1st Timothy 3:2
8. An elder must be temperate. *But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober-minded, just, holy, temperate. Titus 1:8*
9. An elder must be sober. Titus 1:8
10. An elder must be just. Titus 1:8
11. An elder must be holy. Titus 1:8
12. An elder must be a lover of good. Titus 1:8
13. An elder must be hospitable. Titus 1:8. 1st Timothy 3:2
14. An elder must be patient. 1st Timothy 3:3

15. An elder must not be a brawler (argumentative). 1st Timothy 3:3
16. An elder must not be soon angry. *For a bishop (elder) must be blameless, as the steward of God, not self-willed, not violent, not given to filthy lucre...* Titus 1:7
17. An elder must not be a striker (given to physical violence). 1st Timothy 3:3
18. An elder must not be greedy of filthy lucre (after money). 1st Timothy 3:3
19. An elder must not be covetous (greedy for money, position, power, sex). 1st Timothy 3:3
20. An elder must not be self-willed (unwilling to submit to authority). Titus 1:7
21. An elder must not be given to wine. 1st Timothy 3:3
22. An elder must be of good report (have a good reputation). 1st Timothy 3:7
23. An elder must be grave (honorable and honest). 1st Timothy 3:8
24. An elder must not be doubled-tongued (two faced, hypocritical, double minded, talking behind the back). 1st Timothy 3:8
25. An elder must not be a slanderer (one who lies about another, scandalizer). 1st Timothy 3:11
26. An elder must be faithful in all things (reliable, honest). 1st Timothy 3:11
27. An elder must be a steward (manager of a household) of God. Titus 1:7
28. An elder must desire this office. *This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop (elder), he desireth a good work.* 1st Timothy 3:1
29. An elder must not be lord (domineering, dictatorial, controlling, overbearing) over God's people. *The elders who are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the suffering of Christ and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed; feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight of it, not by constraint but willingly; not for filthy lucre but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock.* 1st Peter 5:1-3
30. An elder must be an example to the flock of God. 1st Peter 5:3
31. An elder must be able to rule his own house well (in finances, cleanliness, material possessions, orderliness, harmony). 1st Timothy 3:4

32. An elder must be the husband of one wife (This does not mean that an elder necessarily has to be married, but, if he is, he should be the husband of one wife and not be involved in fornication or adultery or immoral behavior). 1st Timothy 3:3
33. An elder's wife must be grave (honest, honorable, serious and not silly). 1st Timothy 3:8 & 11
34. An elder's wife must not be slanderous (gossipy, lying). 1st Timothy 3:8
35. An elder's wife must be sober (discrete and sensible, not given to emotional outburst). 1st Timothy 3:2
36. An elder's wife must be faithful (dependable, reliable, trustworthy) in all things. 1st Timothy 3:2
37. An elder's children must be in subjection (obedient). 1st Timothy 3:4-5
38. An elder's children must have gravity (serious, reverent, respectful). 1st Timothy 3:4-5
39. An elder's children must be faithful. *If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of profligacy, or unruly.* Titus 1:6
40. An elder's children should not be accused of riot (wild, loose morals, disturbing the peace). Titus 1:6
41. An elder's children must not be unruly. Titus 1:6
42. An elder must be called by the Holy Spirit. *Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.* Acts 20:28
43. An elder must hold fast the faithful Word as he has been taught. *Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to confute the opposers.* Titus 1:9
44. An elder must be able to teach. 1st Timothy 3:2
45. An elder must be able to exhort and convince. Titus 1:9
46. An elder must not be a novice (a beginner, a probationer, a new convert, a young convert). 1st Timothy 3:7
47. An elder must be able to shepherd the flock of God. *Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit, hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.* Acts 20:28

Term of Office

Elders serve for life unless they resign, die, or become scripturally unqualified. They are not voted in and out of office as in a democracy. Ministry is not democracy. Even if they are unable to be active, they remain as elders and are still called on for their wisdom.

Bishops

According to the Prophet's Dictionary by Dr. Paula White, the New Testament word in the Greek for *bishop* is somewhat synonymous for *elder* with a bishop being the highest elder in a church. Apostles are automatically bishops, but bishops are not necessarily apostles. (1st Timothy 3:1-2; Titus 1:7; 1st Peter 2:25) *Strong's* tells us that the Greek word for *elder* is *presbyteros* and refers to an official leader of the Jewish community in the Gospels and in Acts. By extension it means a leader in the Christian church and modern conferences often have laying on of hands and prophetic ministry by the presbytery.

Ordination of Elders

Ordination means the public setting apart of a man to the ministry or the solemn ceremony by the church to show that one has been placed into a pastoral or five fold ministry office by the leadership of the local pastor and others designated to help in this ceremony. The first step in ordination, however, is ALWAYS the recognition by others that the call of God is on a man, and GOD HIMSELF has set aside that one for service. Without the initial and evident call of God, any ordination is null and void. Subsequent man made ordinations are recognitions by men of what God has already done.

Ordination Service

1. Charge
2. Fasting and Prayer
3. Laying on of Hands by Apostles and Ordained

Purpose of Laying on of Hands in Scripture

1. Blessing of Children: Genesis 48-49, Matthew 19:13-15
2. Blessing of Sacrifices: Leviticus 1-7
3. Ordination to Ministry: Exodus 29, Leviticus 8, Numbers 18
4. Marking of Guilty in Capital Punishment Cases: Leviticus 24:14

5. Appointing of Successor (ex. Moses appointed Joshua by Laying on of Hands): Numbers 27
6. Healing of the Sick: Matthew 9, Acts 5:12
7. Signaling of the infilling of the Spirit: Acts 8:17-19; 9:17: 19:6
8. Appointment of Deacons: Acts 6:6
9. Stirring, Impartation and Activation of Spiritual Gifts: 1st Timothy 4:14, 2nd Timothy 1:5
10. Ordination of Elders: Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5

Function of Elders in the Church

1. Ruling the flock of God (Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24; 1st Timothy 3:4 & 5; 1st Timothy 5:17; Romans 12:8; 1st Thessalonians 5:12-14; 1st Peter 5:2,3)
2. Teaching the Body (Hebrews 13:7; 1st Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:9; 1st Timothy 2:2; 1st Corinthians 16:16; 1st Thessalonians 5:12)
3. Shepherding the flock of God (Acts 20:17; Acts 20:28; 1st Peter 5:2; John 21:15-17)
4. Overseeing the flock of God. To oversee means to watch for wolves from outside, to watch out for the “Diotrephes” spirit from among the elders; to give direction and leadership: (Acts 20:28; Titus 1:7; 1st Peter 5:2 & 3)
5. Caring for the Body: (James 5:14-15; Ezekiel 34; Jeremiah 23:1-5) this includes healing, caring for bruise and wounded sheep, going after lost and straying.
6. Governing the Body: (1st Timothy 5:17; 1st Corinthians 12:28; Isaiah 9:6; 2nd Peter 2:10) This includes seeing that God’s house is well-governed and that divisionary things are resolved or removed (Romans 16:17-18; Colossians 2:8. 18: 1st Corinthians 1:10-16; Acts 15:22-31)
7. Laying down your life for the sheep. An elder is not a hireling. He is in the position as a calling. (John 10: Ezekiel 34; Jeremiah 23:1-5)
8. Safeguarding the flock of God from false ministries: (Acts 15: Revelation 2:2; Acts 2:42; 16:4; 1st Timothy 4:1)

A STERN WARNING CONCERNING ELDERS -1ST TIMOTHY 5:1
Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father, and the younger men as brethren. KJV