

The Elders Who Are Among You

Introduction

1. That God's will includes qualified men to serve in an official capacity of leadership for the spiritual well-being of each congregation is apparent – **Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5**
2. When looking to appoint men who are believed to be qualified, it is extremely important to:
 - a. Consider and understand the importance of God's pattern of church organization which includes the eldership.
 - b. Understand the work of the eldership – function, duties, purpose.
 - c. Understand the qualifications given by God for those who are appointed to the office – within the context of their work.
 - d. Understand the relationship and responsibility the congregation has to **"the elders who are among you" (1 Peter 5:1).**
- I. Elders in the Will of God
 - A. The Pattern of Church Organization
 - a. All things according to the pattern – **Hebrews 8:4-5** – speaking of Jesus as High Priest, but not according to the copy or shadow – tabernacle a representation of the real in heaven, Moses had to make it exactly according to the heavenly instruction – so it is with the church (**cf. 2 Timothy 1:13**).
 - b. Christ's church – **Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:22-23** – as builder, purchaser, and head He dictates structure/organization/function.
 - i. Christ left gifts for the edification of the church – **Ephesians 4:7-12** – **"pastors"**
 - c. Localized organization – **Romans 16:16; Philippians 1:1; 1 Peter 5:4** – Chief Shepherd, bishops and deacons.
 - i. **Chief Shepherd** – *archipoiḗn* – "a head shepherd" (STRONG); "literally, as one who directs other shepherds chief shepherd; metaphorically, of Christ as in charge of leaders of Christian communities" (Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament)
 1. Their authority is given by Christ, thus, subject to Christ.
 2. They do not make the Law. (**cf. James 4:12**)
 - ii. **1 Peter 5:2** – local, autonomous, among you. (EX: 7 churches of Asia stood independent of one another, not examined together, but as separate churches.)
 - d. Paul writing to Timothy concerning proper conduct in the church (in Ephesus) – **1 Timothy 3:14-15** – (**vv. 1-13**) – concerning the organization of bishops and deacons – qualifications.
 - i. **Acts 14:23** – appointed elders in every church (1st missionary journey)
 - ii. **Titus 1:5** – left Titus in Crete to appoint elders – implication: a church without elders is lacking.

- e. This is not left up to the choice of each congregation, but is a command to be obeyed – **Colossians 3:17**
- B. The Possible Forms of Organization
 - a. **Scripturally Organized** – A church with qualified elders according to God’s pattern – **Philippians 1:1**
 - b. **Scripturally Unorganized** – A church without elders due to a lack of qualified men according to God’s pattern.
 - i. **1 Timothy 3:2** – “*must be*”
 - ii. **Titus 1:6** – “*if*”
 - iii. End does not justify the means – cannot appoint unqualified men to have leadership.
 - iv. **Recognizes God’s pattern, and aspires to have elders, but will not compromise to get them.**
 - c. **Unscripturally Organized** – A church with unqualified elders contrary to God’s pattern.
 - i. Same reasoning as above...
 - ii. All qualifications must be accounted for. They are intentionally revealed and must not be discounted.
 - iii. **Sees God’s intentions for a church, but is either ignorant of, or indifferent to at least some of the qualifications** – perhaps thinks a man can have a trial appointment and prove himself along the way.
 - d. **Unscripturally Unorganized** – A church with men qualified to be elders according to God’s pattern that refuses to appoint elders.
 - i. In rebellion.
 - ii. The appointment of elders is not optional. It is God’s command.
 - iii. **At least neglecting to obey God in this area, perhaps due to some not willing to submit to another, and unwilling to give up any perceived power they have.**

II. Scriptural Titles

- A. Three titles used for the same position/office:
 - a. **1 Peter 5:1-4** – Elder (**v. 1**), Shepherd (**v. 2** – verb; **v. 4** – compound word with noun form corresponds to lower shepherds), overseers (**v. 2**).
 - b. **Acts 20:17-38** – Elder (**v. 17**), Overseers (**v. 28**), Shepherd (**v. 28** – verb).
 - c. These names or titles concerning the position serve to demonstrate the work – **1 Timothy 3:1** – it is a good work.
- B. Elder
 - a. **Presbyteros** (adj) – “the comparative degree of *presbus*, ‘an old man, an elder’” (VINE); “pert. to being relatively advanced in age, older, old” (BDAG)
 - i. “an official (cp. Lat. senator), elder, presbyter” (BDAG)
 - ii. **1 Timothy 4:14** – “*eldership*” (noun) – *presbyterion* – “an administrative group concerned with the interests of a specific community” (BDAG)

1. **“council of the elders” (Acts 22:5, Jewish).**
 - iii. Context determines whether it is referring to the official sense, or simply an older individual.
 - b. **Titus 1:5, 7** – elders (in the official sense) are bishops (overseers – authority)
 - i. **1 Timothy 5:17** – they rule – *proistēmi* – “to preside rule,” (VINE); “to exercise a position of leadership” (BDAG)
 - c. Such a position of authority requires age (experience):
 - i. I.e. not just age for the sake of age, but age with proven character and experience.
 1. “The term ‘elder’ indicates the mature spiritual experience and understanding of those so described; the term ‘bishop,’ or ‘overseer,’ indicates the character of the work undertaken.” (VINE)
 - ii. **1 Timothy 3:6** – **“not a novice”** – therefore knowledgeable/wise, and not as prone to pride in holding such a position.
 - iii. **1 Peter 5:3** – being examples (**cf. Hebrews 13:7** – whose faith can be followed).
 - d. NOTE: Elder/older is a relative description without a specificity of age – they are older men, which some of the domestic qualifications inherently require, and all others demand for the sake of growth, and proven character.
- C. Bishop/Overseer
- a. *Episkopos* – “lit., an overseer” (*epi*, “over,” *skopeo*, “to look or watch”)” (VINE)
 - i. “one who has the responsibility of safeguarding or seeing to it that someth. is done in the correct way, guardian” (BDAG) – **1 Peter 2:25** – Christ (NOTE: **“going astray”** – and returning to the Overseer ensures proper guidance.)
 1. “The term was taken over in Christian communities in ref. to one who served as overseer or supervisor, with special interest in guarding the apostolic tradition” (BDAG)
 - ii. “a superintendent” (STRONG)
 - iii. “(1) an overseer (1A) a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly, any curator, guardian or superintendent (1B) the superintendent, elder, or overseer of a Christian church” (THAYER)
 - b. Denotes Ruling authority, although delegated, thus, limited, and not abused for personal gain – **1 Peter 5:2-4** – **“serving as overseers”**
 - i. **(v. 2)** – willing, yet not through eagerness to serve self.
 - ii. **(v. 3)** – not **“lording it over” (NASB, verb)**, but being examples.
 - iii. **(v. 4)** – you will answer to One greater – the One who has granted you this authority.

- iv. **Lording it over VS being examples** – this does not mean their only authority is in providing an example.
 - 1. Their government and oversight in ensuring the word of God is followed is not just something they enforce, but show themselves.
 - 2. Effective and Biblical leaders lead from the front.
- v. **“being lords over”** – *katakryrieuō* – “to lord against, i.e. control, subjugate” (STRONG); “of exercising dominion for one’s own advantage lord it over, rule over, domineer over” (Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament)
 - 1. **Acts 19:16** – to overpower another. (Demon’s toward Jewish exorcists)
 - 2. **Matthew 20:25; Mark 10:42** – apostles’ positions of authority, and contention about who is greater.
 - a. **Rulers of the Gentiles** – **Romans 13:1; John 19:11** – authority granted by God.
 - b. **“lord it over them”** – i.e. are domineering for their own advantage.
 - i. Contrast – **Matthew 20:26-28; Mark 10:43-45** – but your authority is used in service of other for their advantage, just as Jesus.
 - ii. What the rulers of the Gentiles should have been doing – **Romans 13:4** – **“God’s minister to you for good”** (Context shows they still have legitimate authority.)
 - 3. Example – **3 John 9-10** – perhaps Diotrephes was in the position of oversight.
- vi. They do have real, and practical authority which must be submitted to, but it is in service of the well-being of the flock among them – **Hebrews 13:17**
- c. **Oversight to ensure:**
 - i. Adherence to the pattern in everything – **2 Timothy 1:13**
 - ii. Decent and orderly worship – **1 Corinthians 14:40** (scriptural worship – **John 4:24**)
 - iii. Edifying worship – **1 Corinthians 14:26**
 - iv. Faithful members – **1 Thessalonians 5:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15** – they would oversee these things, and be instrumental in carrying them out. (“with special interest in guarding the apostolic tradition,” BDAG)
- D. Pastor/Shepherd
 - a. *Poimēn* – “a shepherd (literally or figuratively)” (STRONG)
 - i. “(1) a herdsman, esp. a shepherd; (2) metaph. (2A) the presiding officer, manager, director, of any assembly: so of Christ the Head

of the church (2A1) of the overseers of the Christian assemblies”
(THAYER)

- ii. “(1) one who herds sheep; (2) one who serves as guardian or leader” (BDAG)
- b. **Verb** – *poimainō* – “to tend as a shepherd of (figuratively, supervisor)” (STRONG)
 - i. “metaphorically, of administrative and protective activity in relation to a community of believers; guide, care for, look after (AC 20.28); with emphasis on the governing aspects of administration rule (RV 2.27)” (Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament)
 - ii. “(1) to feed, to tend a flock, keep sheep; (1A) to rule, govern; (1A2) to furnish pasture for food; (1A5) to supply the requisites for the soul's need” (THAYER)
- c. **Still an overlap with “overseer” regarding governing authority, and administrative activity, but BRINGS TO THE OFFICE THE TONE OF TENDER AND WATCHFUL CARE, PROVISION, AND PROTECTION.**
- d. **Ephesians 4:11-14** – “**pastors**” are given for “**edifying**” and growth, but also effectively through such as a preventative measure against spiritual danger/error (**v. 14**).
- e. **Acts 20:28-31** – Shepherd the church knowing that false teachers will seek to draw disciples away with error.
- f. **Titus 1:9-14** – they must hold to the sound doctrine with the ability to “**exhort and convict those who contradict.**”
 - i. Must know the word enough to detect error – even that which is insidious, being subtle.
 - ii. Must know the word enough and be skilled with it to combat the error.
 - iii. Must have the character, and love for truth and brethren, to take action against such danger. (Contrast – **John 10:11-13** – Jesus)

E. NOTE: Given the importance of the work, and the great need for it which is palpable by the honest disciple, and demonstrable by God’s revealed will, THE APPOINTMENT OF ELDERS DUE TO THE PRESENCE OF QUALIFIED MEN SHOULD BE AN OCCASION FOR JOY, AND NOT STRIFE AND CONTENTION.

III. Qualifications in Context of the Work

A. The Nature of the Qualifications

- a. “Qualification” is a word we supply to describe the contextual purpose of the lists in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. It accurately describes what purpose these items in the list serve.
 - i. **Qualification** – a quality or accomplishment that makes someone suitable for a particular job or activity. (New Oxford American Dictionary)
 - ii. **1 Timothy 3:2** – “**A bishop then MUST BE...**”

1. **Must** – *dei* – “(1) it is necessary, there is need of, it behooves, is right and proper; (1C) necessity in reference to what is required to attain some end” (THAYER)
 2. **Be** – *einai* – “to exist” (STRONG) – **Present, Active**
 3. I.e. these qualities and circumstances listed are NECESSARY to exist PRESENTLY within the man to make him fit to TAKE ON the office and work of an elder/overseer/shepherd.
- iii. **NOTE: The very nature of the term “qualification” requires our consideration of the items in the list in the context of the work for which they qualify the man. (Especially important when considering the domestic qualifications)**
- b. **Acts 20:28 – “the Holy Spirit has made you overseers”**
- i. **Holy Spirit** – a Divine Person (God) – through the instrument of the word (**cf. Ephesians 6:17**).
 - ii. By divinely revealing the qualifications of elders, the Holy Spirit makes them – also, through the transformation of His power in the word (**cf. Galatians 5:22, 25**)
 1. Authority of Christ – **John 16:14**
- B. The Nature of the Appointment of Qualified Men
- a. **Acts 14:23 – “appointed”** – *cheirotoneō* – ““to stretch forth the hands” (*cheir*, “the hand,” *teino*, “to stretch”)” (VINE)
 - i. “(1) to elect or choose someone for definite offices or tasks; (2) On the other hand, elders (πρεσβύτεροι) in Lycaonia and Pisidia were not chosen by the congregations, but it is said of Paul and Barnabas χειροτονήσαντες αὐτοῖς κατ’ ἐκκλησίαν πρεσβυτέρους Ac 14:23. Cp. Tit 1:9 v.l. and subscr.; 2 Ti subscr. This does not involve a choice by the group; here the word means *appoint, install*, w. the apostles as subj.” (BDAG)
 - ii. “Acts 14:23, RV, “had appointed,” i.e., by the recognition of those who had been manifesting themselves as gifted of God to discharge the functions of elders” (VINE)
 - b. **Acts 20:28 – “made”** – *tithēmi* – “(5) to cause to undergo a change in experience/condition, make, consign; (5b) mid. w. a double acc. make someone someth.” (BDAG)
 - i. The Holy Spirit made them such and consigned them to the work of oversight.
 - c. **Titus 1:5 – “appoint”** – *kathistēmi* – “(1) to set, place, put; (1B) to appoint one to administer an office” (THAYER).
 - i. **“AS I commanded you” – “as”** – *hōs* – “a comparative particle, marking the manner in which someth. Proceeds” (BDAG)
 - ii. **What is the manner?** – His commands, which follows with the listed qualification – (**vv. 6-9**)
 - iii. As an apostle inspired by the Holy Spirit – **1 Timothy 1:1; Titus 1:1**

- d. **The Holy Spirit appoints, sets, or makes an elder through the qualifications He listed in the word, which we observe, study, know, and OBSERVE IN OTHERS, THUS DETERMINING THEIR BEING QUALIFIED FOR THE OFFICE OF AN ELDER.**
- i. **EX: Acts 6:1-6** (men chosen to solve problems in daily distribution of benevolence) – inspired apostles set qualifications, the disciples observed them in others, and the inspired men appointed them.
- C. The Qualifications
- a. Character:
 - i. **Desire for the office** (1 Timothy) – not with selfish-ambition, but knowing it is an important, needed, and good work.
 1. Not by compulsion – **1 Peter 5:2**
 - ii. **Holy** (Titus) – *hosios* – “undefiled by sin, free from wickedness, religiously observing every moral obligation, pure holy, pious” (THAYER)
 1. Set apart from sin, consecrated to God’s service/will.
 - iii. **Just** (Titus) – *dikaios* – “equitable (in character or act); by implication, innocent, holy (absolutely or relatively)” (STRONG)
 1. Strong – generally before God. (covered with Holy)
 2. Toward man – “rendering to each his due and that in a judicial sense, passing just judgment on others, whether expressed in words or shown by the manner of dealing with them” (THAYER)
 - iv. **Gentle** (1 Timothy) – *epieikēs* – “(1) seemingly, suitable (2) equitable, fair, mild, gentle” (THAYER)
 1. “it expresses that considerateness that looks ‘humanely and reasonably at the facts of a case’” (VINE)
 2. “yielding, gentle, kind, courteous, tolerant” (BDAG)
 3. Would involve compassion as one would look on a situation and circumstance of another, and evaluate as to the proper judgment and action to take. (**cf. Jude 22-23**)
 - v. **Of good behavior** (1 Timothy) – *kosmios* – “orderly, modest,” (VINE)
 1. “The well-ordering is not of dress and demeanor only, but of the inner life, uttering indeed and expressing itself in the outward conversation.” (R.C. Trench)
 - vi. **Hospitable** (1 Timothy, Titus) – *philoxenos* – *Philos* (Fond), *xenos* (strangers, guests) – “hospitable, generous to guests” (THAYER)
 - vii. **A lover of what is good** (Titus) – *philagathos* – “fond to good, i.e. a promoter of virtue” (STRONG)
 1. See – **“does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth” (1 Corinthians 13:6).**

- viii. **Temperate** (1 Timothy) – *nēphalios* – “strictly holding no wine, without wine; of persons sober, temperate, abstinent” (Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament)
 - 1. “(2) pert. to being restrained in conduct, self-controlled, level-headed” (BDAG)
 - 2. “sober, i.e. (figuratively) circumspect” (STRONG)
 - ix. **Self-controlled** (Titus) – *egkratēs* – “pert. to having one’s emotions, impulses, or desires under control, self-controlled, disciplined” (BDAG)
 - x. **Not given to wine** (1 Timothy, Titus) – *mē* (not) *paroinos* – (not) *para* (at, near) *oinos* (wine) – “staying near wine” (STRONG)
 - 1. Not in the vicinity of wine.
 - 2. “not addicted to wine” (NASB)
 - 3. Negative qualification. (Temperate – positive)
 - xi. **Not quick-tempered** (Titus) – *mē* (not) *orgilos* – (not) “inclined to anger, quick-tempered” (BDAG).
 - 1. Quoting Aristotle – “quick-tempered persons lose no time being angry, and do so with those they ought not, over things they ought not, and far more than they ought” (BDAG)
 - xii. **Not self-willed** (Titus) – *mē* (not) *authadēs* – (not) “*autos*, ‘self,’ *hedomai*, ‘to please’” (VINE)
 - 1. “denotes one who, dominated by self-interest, and inconsiderate of others, arrogantly asserts his own will” (VINE)
 - 2. Abuse of authority that is given for the service of God, and the flock.
 - xiii. **Sober-minded** (1 Timothy, Titus) – *sōphrōn* – “strictly having a sound or healthy mind; as having ability to curb desires and impulses so as to produce a measured and orderly life self-controlled, sensible” (Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament)
- b. Reputation:
- i. **Blameless** (1 Timothy) – *anepilēptos* – “lit., ‘that cannot be laid hold of,’ hence, ‘not open to censure, irreproachable’” (VINE)
 - 1. Not perfect, but nothing of which for men to accuse him.
 - 2. “that cannot be reprehended, not open to censure, irreproachable” (THAYER)
 - 3. No accusation can be proven. (due to no evidence)
 - ii. **Blameless, as a steward** (Titus) – *aneglētōs* – (synonym) “that cannot be called into to account, unproveable, unaccused, blameless” (THAYER)

1. **“as a steward of God”** – “no charge of misconduct can be sustained against him in matters where trustworthiness is demanded” (Patton, 266)
- iii. **A good testimony among those who are outside** (1 Timothy) – **“testimony”** – *martyria* – “attestation of character or behavior, testimony, statement of approval” (BDAG)
 1. **“those who are outside”** – i.e. those who are not Christians.
 2. There must not be anything that could be legitimately attested to that would tarnish his reputation, and that of the church – regarding what we stand for pertaining to God’s will.
 3. Reason – **“lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil”** – i.e. so the devil cannot take advantage of such to further his own purposes.
- iv. **Not quarrelsome** (1 Timothy) – *amachos* – “peaceable” (STRONG).
- v. **Not greedy for money** – *mē* (not) *aischrokerdēs* – (not) “shamelessly greedy for money, avaricious, fond of dishonest gain” (BDAG)
 1. “eager for base gain, greedy for money” (THAYER)
 2. METHOD
- vi. **Not covetous** (1 Timothy) – *aphilargyros* – “not loving money, not avaricious” (THAYER)
 1. ATTITUDE, LOVE
- vii. **Not violent** (1 Timothy, Titus) – *plēktēs* – “a smiter, i.e. pugnacious (quarrelsome)” (STRONG)
 1. “bruiser, ready for a blow” (THAYER)
- c. Domestic Relations:
 - i. **NOTE: Must leave our discussion at what the text says. Opinions and speculations have no place. Just wanting to “be safe” does not permit speaking where the bible does not speak, or binding where the bible does not bind.**
 - ii. **Husband of one wife** (1 Timothy, Titus) – literally, man of one woman.
 1. Must be a man.
 2. Must be married to a (one) woman.
 3. Precludes bigamy (two wives) polygamy (multiple wives).
 4. Precludes one being a bachelor.
 5. Precludes adultery (an adulterous marriage).
 - iii. **Rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence** (1 Timothy):
 1. **“one who rules”** – *proistēmi* – “to exercise a position of leadership, rule, direct, be at the head (of)” (BDAG)

2. **“his own house”** – i.e. those under his rule, within his household.
 - a. Marriage leads to the leaving of father and mother (**cf. Genesis 2:24**).
 - b. This pertains only to the limitation of children in the home under his authority.
 3. **“well”** – effectively, with success.
 - a. **Children in submission** – i.e. to his authority, obedience.
 - b. **With all reverence** – *semnotēs* – “as serious and worthy conduct that earns reverence and respect dignity, seriousness, propriety” (Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament)
 - i. **“He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive” (ESV)** – i.e. the reverence is that possessed by the father.
 4. Reason – **“{for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?}”**
 - a. **This qualification demonstrates that he is capable of spiritual leadership.**
- iv. **Faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination** (Titus):
1. **Faithful** – *pistos* – used throughout NT in reference to Christians, i.e. believers, disciples of Christ.
 - a. **“having children that believe” (ASV)**
 - b. REMEMBER CONTEXT OF QUALIFICATIONS – proving ground for spiritual leadership – he has shown to be able to lead others to Christ, and in Christ. (**cf. Ephesians 6:4**)
 2. NOT ACCUSED OF:
 - a. **Dissipation** – *asōtia* – “the act of one who has abandoned himself to reckless immoral behavior debauchery, dissipation, incorrigibility” (Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament)
 - b. **Insubordination** – *anypotaktos* – “that cannot be subjected to control, disobedient, unruly, refractory” (THAYER)
- d. Teaching Aptitude:
- i. **Able to teach** (1 Timothy) – *didaktikos* – “apt and skilful in teaching” (THAYER)
 1. Relative – does not necessitate being the best teacher, but able to convey the meaning of scripture effectively.

2. Shepherd – feed the flock spiritually – cannot function in this way without this ability.
 - ii. **Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught** (Titus) – **“holding fast”** – *antechomai* – “to hold firmly to, cleave to,” (VINE)
 1. **“Therefore take heed to yourselves” (Acts 20:28); “Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine” (1 Timothy 4:16); “in doctrine showing integrity” (Titus 2:7).**
 2. **Able to exhort** – *parakaleō* – “to admonish, exhort, to urge one to pursue some course of conduct” (VINE)
 3. **Able to convict** – *elegchō* – “to convict, refute, confute” (THAYER)
 4. **“those who contradict”** – i.e. the word of God – **cf. Titus 1:10-14**
 - iii. **Not a novice** (1 Timothy) – *neophytos* – “newly planted, i.e. (figuratively) a young convert (“neophyte”)” (STRONG).
 1. Reason – **“lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil”**
 2. If a new convert was put in a position of such authority he would be prone to pride, and would be condemned as the devil.
- IV. The Flock Which Is Among Them – Attitudes and Responsibilities
- A. There is a flock among them which they are responsible for, but that flock has responsibilities toward the elders – **1 Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28**
 - B. Humility
 - a. **1 Peter 5:5** – the submission to the elders who have authority requires humility.
 - i. **Elders** – immediately preceding context shows it to likely refer to the office.
 1. **“younger people”** – contrast of age leads some to believe it is only talking about age.
 2. However, younger people would be more prone to insubordination – respect their age, experience, and authority in office.
 - ii. **(v. 5b)** – extends to all – even the elders – Humility is required by all for the service of each other.
 - b. Without humility we will not be able to fulfill our God-given responsibilities before the elders.
 - C. Honor Them
 - a. **1 Thessalonians 5:12-13** – recognizing those **“over you”** – those with the position of oversight, elders – we are to **“esteem them highly.”**
 - i. **“Esteem”** – *hegeomai* – “primarily, ‘to lead the way’; hence, ‘to lead before the mind, account,’” (VINE)
 1. “to consider, deem, account, think” (THAYER)

2. “to engage in an intellectual process, think, consider, regard” (BDAG)
 - ii. **“Highly”** – i.e. lead them before your mind, consider them, regard them, think of them HIGHLY.
 - iii. **“for their work’s sake”** – this thinking highly of them is in direct consideration of the importance and value of their work – GOD/HOLY SPIRIT APPOINTED SPIRITUAL WORK IN LEADING, PROVIDING FOR, AND PROTECTING SOULS.
 - b. **1 Timothy 5:17-18** – worthy of double honor.
 - i. **Honor** – *timē* – “a value, i.e. money paid, or (concretely and collectively) valuables; by analogy, esteem (especially of the highest degree), or the dignity itself” (STRONG)
 1. **(v. 18)** – shows the literal to be scriptural – paid.
 - ii. **Double** – they are worthy of the utmost esteem and honor.
 - iii. **(vv. 19-20)** – which would lead us to be very careful about receiving an accusation against them.
 1. The nature of the office demands a very serious approach to such.
 2. IT NEEDS TO BE CERTAIN, AND WITHOUT THIS IN PLACE IT MUST NOT BE ENTERTAINED IN THE SLIGHTEST.
- D. Know Them
- a. **1 Thessalonians 5:12** – you cannot be led by those you do not know; you cannot follow the example of one you do not know; you cannot seek help from one you do not know.
 - i. NOTE: This puts the onus on the members. Do not shrug it off as if it is all left up to them. We must put forth an effort to get to know these men, and become comfortable enough to seek their counsel.
 - b. **John 10:4** – the sheep know the shepherd.
- E. Imitate Them
- a. **Hebrews 13:7** – we must follow their faith. (This sets the standard as the word, and Christ, but learning from examples is scriptural.)
 - b. Qualifications – show them to be ideal Christians – mature believers, and Christ-like men.
- F. Be Submissive and Obey
- a. **Hebrews 13:17** – They are to be submitted to and obeyed.
 - i. They are not just figureheads – they have real authority, and to disobey them is tantamount to rebelling against Christ.
 - ii. **“for they watch out for your souls”** – this should be our attitude toward their rule – it is for our good, and these men have proven themselves to be selfless, and doing for the best spiritual interest of others.
- G. Avoid Making Their Work Grievous

- a. **Hebrews 13:17** – Their work is important, and stressful, but should be rewarding – as the lead souls to grow to be like Christ, and draw nearer to heaven, they should be able to rejoice.
 - i. Insubordinate members will bring grief.
 - ii. **Philippians 2:14** – complaining and disputing makes their job more difficult.
 - b. **1 Thessalonians 5:13** – as the elders are to promote peace and unity in the congregation, seeking such with others yourselves will help avoid much grief and many problems.
- H. Call On Them
- a. **James 5:14** – as righteous men, the elders’ prayers are invaluable.
 - b. They are those who are involved in a work of service toward Christ and the flock for the betterment of God’s people – WE SHOULD BE WILLING TO SEEK HELP FROM THEM, AND SSEEK THEIR COUNSEL.

Conclusion

1. In His eternal will, God designed the local church to have qualified officers to serve as spiritual leaders with functional authority to ensure the scriptural order and activity of the congregation.
2. We are given the great responsibility to know the qualifications of such leaders, be aware to observe them within members of our congregation and appoint men whom the Holy Spirit has qualified.
3. This is a joyous occasion of spiritual progress within any congregation.