

“What Does the Bible Say?”
Elders, Deacons, Evangelists, Members

A. Explore/Describe the roles and qualities of elders/deacons/evangelists, their responsibilities to the flock, to each other, and our duties/responsibilities to them.

1. What is the purpose of an elder/eldership?

A. First: To faithfully perform the job, work, tasks, duties of the office to which they have been “appointed” (Eng. Def: To name or assign officially) (Fr. Strong’s Grk. Translation of the word in **NAS Tit. 1:5** (Kathistemi))

Definition

- 1. to set, place, put
 - a. to set one over a thing (in charge of it)
 - b. to appoint one to administer an office

B. See **Acts 20:17-32, Eph. 4:11** (Pastors is same Gr. word (Poimen) and means the same as Shepherd).

The New Testament Greek Lexicon

Strong’s Number: 4166	poimh/n
Original Word	Word Origin
poimh/n	of uncertain affinity
Transliterated Word	Phonetic Spelling
Poimen	poy-mane' ◄
Parts of Speech	TDNT
Noun Masculine	6:485,901

Definition

- 1. a herdsman, esp. a shepherd
 - a. in the parable, he to whose care and control others have committed themselves, and

- whose precepts they follow
2. metaph.
 - a. the presiding officer, manager, director, of any assembly: so of Christ the Head of the church
 1. of the overseers of the Christian assemblies
 2. of kings and princes

The tasks of a Near Eastern shepherd were:
- to watch for enemies trying to attack the sheep - to defend the sheep from attackers - to heal the wounded and sick sheep - to find and save lost or trapped sheep - to love them, sharing their lives and so earning their trust.

Translated Words

KJV (18) - Shepherd, 2; pastor, 1; shepherd, 15;

NAS (18) - pastors, 1; shepherd, 13; shepherds, 4;

- C. **As a biblically patterned Shepherd and Overseer/Steward or Guardian—much like a loving parent, for a loving shepherd, everything that they do is motivated out of love and concern for the flock, for which they seek only what is in the flock’s best interest. They avoid doing, or allowing any harm or being a “bad” shepherd, and try to pattern themselves like Christ, the “Good/Chief Shepherd” (1 Pet. 5:1-4).**

D. **Some areas of Care and Concern:**

1. PROTECT (WATCH OUT FOR)
2. FEED (PREACHING & TEACHING)
3. NURTURE/GUIDE/DIRECT
4. STRENGTHEN AND ENCOURAGE
5. DISCIPLINE/TRAIN/EDUCATE
6. HELP TO GROW/MATURE/BUILD UP/ EQUIP
7. BE GOOD EXAMPLE/ROLE MODEL

E. Requires much and constant awareness (observation), evaluation and decision making for the congregation, in order to accomplish these important responsibilities and tasks.

F. Of course see **1 Tim. 3:1-7, Tit.1:5-9.**

2. **What does an elder/eldership do?**

A. Faithfully performs the above duties/work.

B. Continually works at keeping themselves prepared and ready to ably do the above work of an elder (study, pray, observe, get to know the sheep well, their needs and weaknesses). See **Acts 11:30** (control money), **Acts 20:28-31** (watch & protect), **Eph. 4** (work of service to build up body), **Heb. 13:17** (keep watch), **James 5:14** (pray).

C. Although I agree that most of Wesley's slide/scripture examples discussed in past classes can be applicable to all Christians, obviously including elders, we can't forget that elders are held to a higher level of responsibility and are held **uniquely accountable**, not only for themselves, but for those they shepherd/oversee.

3. **What type of character/qualities must an elder have?**

- A. The qualities of character that are conducive to, and necessary for, his being able to faithfully and effectively fulfill/carry out the duties of the office of an elder (see **Acts 20, 1 Tim. 3 and Tit 1**).

4. **Why are these qualities important?**

- A. **Because of a very basic reason that we often forget or minimize.**
- B. **Because God says so!** They are absolutely necessary and vital for a man to be scripturally able and fit to do the job, because God's word says so.
- C. We need to always remember the following **inspired** scriptures and remember that they all relate to how we (man) should view and consider God's word in all our study of the Bible (in this case, in regards to our study of elders).

Prov. 14:12

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; But the end thereof are the ways of death.

Jer. 10:23

I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not in himself, Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps.

Ro 15:4

For whatsoever things were written aforetime **were written for our learning**, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

1 Cor. 14:33

for God is not {a God} of **confusion** but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

1Co 14:40 (ASV)

But let all things be done decently and in order.

2 Tim. 3:16/17 (NKJV)

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, **17** that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Peter 1:19-21

19 {So} we have the prophetic word {made} more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. **20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is {a matter} of one's own interpretation, 21** for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

John 12:48 - 50

48 "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. 49 "For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment {as to} what to say and what to speak. **50** "I know that His commandment is eternal life; **therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me."**

- D. We can never forget that the scriptures are God's Words, from the Father, spoken by His Spirit, through His Son, His Apostles and other inspired writers. They provide His direction, His instruction, His commands, His examples, His requirements.
- E. We can't forget that the qualities of character (qualifications if you will) that are found in 1 Tim. 3: 1-13 & Tit. 1:5-9 are His qualities/qualifications that He requires, and they are not subject to man's desires, opinions or whims, as to whether or not they apply. These are not man's/Paul's lists of required qualities, but the Holy Spirit's lists of required qualities. We cannot demean, diminish or ignore that fact. We do so at our own peril.
- F. Each/all of these qualities of character/qualifications have **necessary significance** to God (the HS), for an elder to effectively and faithfully shepherd a congregation as an effective and faithful Steward in leading and overseeing God's people. We/man may not fully understand the significance of each quality, but we must accept that God has a reason. Each is vitally important and necessary.
- G. Without possessing **all** of the qualities of character (any of them), a man will not be able to faithfully and effectively fulfill or accomplish the duties and work of an elder.
- H. **Without each of them, he will not be able to gain and maintain, within the congregation, the necessary level of love, respect, honor and influence that an elder must have to be able to lead and shepherd effectively.**
1 Thes. 5:12-13, 1 Tim. 3, Tit. 1, Heb. 13:17 and 1 Pet. 5:1-4
- I. If a man lacks these qualities (any of them) he will ultimately do a poor job and fail as an elder.
- J. That is why these commonly referred to "qualities" in **1 Tim. 3 and Tit. 1** are not common at all, but absolutely vital and necessary requirements or qualifications (**MUST**

BES as the bible says) for a man who desires or aspires to the office of an overseer/elder/bishop/shepherd.

- K. Remember, God said it, not me.
- L. And finally, we need to remember the reason/purpose why Paul, following the Holy Spirit's inspiration, commissioned Timothy and Titus to appoint elders **READ 1 Tim. 1: 18-19, 3:14-15 and Tit. 1:5, as they explain the purpose and reason for the 1 Timothy and Titus letters for the churches then, and as inspired scripture/instruction, for the church now and until the Lord comes.** Also see
- M. **1 Tim 4:14 and 2 Tim 1:6**
- 1 Tim 4:14 Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, **which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance** with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.
- 2 Tim 1:6 For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh **the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.**
- N. The above scriptures remind us that it was through Paul's inspired teaching ("prophetic utterance") through both his letters, and even more so, in his long time personal mentoring, teaching and inspired instruction of Timothy (which is not recorded), and the laying on of Paul's hands and the passing on of a special measure of the Holy Spirit, that Timothy was able to faithfully complete the tasks for which Paul had commissioned him in teaching and instructing the church/congregations in Ephesus and elsewhere. Paul's inspired teaching and the passing on of spiritual gifts made it possible for Timothy to identify/know spiritual men in the various congregations who possessed **all** the qualities of character and other attributes necessary to be appointed as elders and whose

leadership and oversight each congregation would be willing to follow.

- O. Although we do not read of a similar account of the laying on of Paul's hands on Titus, we might reasonably assume that he did so for the same purpose as Timothy. We are told, and do know that much like with Timothy, Paul had a very close mentoring personal relationship with Titus (he referred to both of them as his "true sons in the faith"). And we are certainly aware of his inspired personal writing, teaching and instructions to Titus, who therefore, through the same inspiration of the Holy Spirit through Paul, was like Timothy, able to faithfully complete the tasks for which Paul had commissioned him in teaching and instructing the church/congregations in the area of Crete and in identifying/knowing of spiritual men in the various congregations around Crete who likewise possessed **all** the qualities of character and other attributes necessary to be appointed as elders and whose leadership and oversight each congregation would be willing to follow.

- P. I emphasize all of these points of scripture so that we might see and understand that the process by which Timothy and Titus were commissioned to teach and appoint elders in the various congregations in the areas of Ephesus and Crete was only indirectly done through the direction and inspiration of the Apostle Paul. The work of Timothy and Titus was actually accomplished through the direction and inspiration of God (the Holy Spirit). We need to understand that it was the Holy Spirit, knowing the hearts and qualifications of these men, as well as the willingness of the members of the congregations involved to follow their leadership and oversight, that led Timothy and Titus in choosing those whom they appointed as elders. God's direct involvement/inspiration in this process cannot be over emphasized.

- Q. A note of reminder: Since congregations of the Lord's church have not had Apostles and or other inspired men since the first century, to directly guide (through the Holy

Spirit) our selections of godly men **qualified** to be elders, as Timothy and Titus did, it is imperative that we follow the only inspired guidance and direction that we do have in making such determinations, the Bible, more specifically, the New Testament inspired writings (1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1) that do provide us with the Holy Spirit's compilation of character qualities that are needed and necessary for a godly man to be qualified to be a shepherd, steward, and overseer (an elder) for a congregation of the Lord's church.

- R. Read **Acts 20:25-32** again and consider Paul's warning and commitment to God of the Ephesian elders and similar warning following Elder qualifications in Tit. 1:10-16 to see the terrible outcome that will befall the church if we select unqualified elders or our elders do not faithfully fulfill the responsibilities that God has given them. Many congregations, including ours, already struggle with some of these problems and issues.

5. **What type of relationship should exist between a congregation and its elders?**

A. On the part of both:

1. A Mutual Loving relationship
2. A Mutual Respectful relationship
3. A Mutual Trusting Relationship

B. On the part of the congregation/members:

1. A relationship that honors our elders.
2. A relationship that displays a willingness, desire and trust on the part of the congregation to obey and follow the leadership of our eldership.

3. A relationship that displays our confidence in them and their leadership because of the biblical qualities of character that they possess/display.

C. On the part of the elders:

1. A loving and caring relationship much like that of a parent for their children or a Biblical Shepherd for his sheep.
2. A relationship that displays a strong desire, as men wanting to be Good Stewards, to protect, feed, nurture, direct, strengthen and grow/mature the sheep under their oversight and stewardship.
3. A relationship as Shepherds, knowing that they are uniquely accountable for our souls (**Heb. 13:17**) and should want, more than anything, to lead us to lie down in green pastures, that is, to lead us to heaven.
4. A relationship in which they, as our elders (Shepherds), should strive to be what a biblical shepherd was; someone for whom every decision was focused on the benefit of the flock, what was best for them, what would provide the best outcome for them, what would help them (us) get to heaven.

*** A study by Mike Davila

Unless noted otherwise, all scriptures are taken from the NAS.
Greek translations from Strong's Greek translations & NAS.