

Spread The Word . . . About Church Leadership

Titus 1:5-9

In past weeks looked at spreading the word by serving God

Next few weeks as go back to Titus, look at what God says about leading the church

So we can Spread the Word about church leadership

Why would I even think about leadership? It doesn't matter to me (Mickey Mouse)

The fact is, it does

Church leadership matters (to YOU!)

5 reasons for that

1. Leaders provide vision (guidance)

Prov 29:18 – *Where there is no prophetic vision, the people cast off restraint*

Without guidance, we tend to indulge in sin that leads to our destruction

Prov 11:14 – *Where there is no guidance, a people falls . . .*

Your leaders will determine the vision and direction for ministry

Types of ministry available; Extent of ministry; Depth and breadth of discipleship

2. Leaders provide protection

Prov 11:14b – . . . *but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.*

They protect you from doctrinal error, worldly ways, shallow thinking

From divisive people, destructive patterns in your life and in our church

3. Leaders provide instruction

Hosea 4:6 – *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge*

Instruction leads to spiritual maturity

Without it, we are subject to every wind of doctrine, human cunning, and deceitful schemes (Eph 4:14)

4. Leaders provide an example

As leaders go, so go the people (Hosea 4:9); What the leaders are, the people become

5. Leaders provide a standard

Luke 6:40 – *Everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher*

People will rarely rise above the spiritual level of their leadership

For all those reasons, church leadership should matter to you

Not to mention the fact that what *God* cares about, *you* should care about

Read Titus 1:5-9 – This week, focus on the role of church leadership; next week – qual's

The NT pattern is that . . .

Elders are the main leaders in the church

Appoint elders in every town (5)

Didn't say, go make it up as you go along

Have this kind of board here, or that kind there; Or just have the pastor take care of it

Do whatever the culture dictates; Take a poll in the church

Formally choose and publicly recognize those whom God has given the right and responsibility to rule, govern, and determine the affairs of the church

Elders are referred to 3 different ways in NT – Elders, Overseers (Bishops), Pastors

Know that all 3 refer to the same role, because of the 1st century meaning of each title, and the similar description of responsibilities for each

In other words, they refer to different aspects of the same position

Pastor – shepherding, feeding, teaching, and maturity

Overseer – administration, protection, and oversight

Elder – leadership and authority

Putting all those together leads to the conclusion that elders are to be the main leaders in the church

The NT pattern is that . . .

Churches are led by a group of elders

Appoint *elders* (5) – plural

Almost every time elders are spoken of in Scripture in connection with a church, the word is plural, indicating a group/plurality that leads

Acts 14:23 – *they had appointed elders for them in every church*

Titus 1:5 – *appoint elders in every town*

Acts 20:17 – [Paul] *sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church*

Acts 21:18 – [Paul met with] *James, and all the elders were present*

One-man show is not in line with the NT pattern

Church leadership is intended to be a team effort

With a team approach . . .

Wisdom is increased – if they are qualified, gifted, and God-ordained as leaders

Success is more likely – with many advisers plans succeed (Prov 15:22)

Responsibility is shared – the weight of decisions are spread across many shoulders

Early on I felt alone with the weight of ministry

There was much communication with GE in the early days, but they couldn't bear the weight like someone here

So I started praying that God would raise up and bring to the forefront godly, capable men to help shoulder the responsibility of our church

Duties are delegated – you can accomplish more as a team than as a single person

Accountability is more likely

Self-disclosure and the moral purity that goes along with it, always depends on the heart of the person leading

But a team approach lends itself to accountability more than any other

Prevents self-serving decisions; Guards against moral failure; Increases godliness

Team approach doesn't mean all elders have the same *influence*

Their position and level of responsibility is the *same*, but their *influence* may vary according to their gifts, knowledge, or experience

That's why the Senior Pastor is so often deferred to on the elder board

Not only is he considered first among equals due to his role and calling . . .

But his 24/7 involvement in ministry *naturally* lends itself to a greater influence

However, it doesn't mean that his word is *law* – it's not

Or that every idea is *his* – shouldn't be; Or that all his ideas are *good* ones

The NT pattern is that churches are led by a group of elders, some having more influence than others, but all having *equal* authority and responsibility

The NT pattern is that . . .

Elders are appointed by other elders

Appoint elders (5)

Paul and Barnabas did that in the churches they started, as elders themselves

Titus did that – presumably as an elder – as Paul directed him (5)

The NT pattern is that current elders chose and appoint other elders as God leads

That has happened just recently in 2 other Harvest church plants – **emails**
God has raised up and identified qualified men who are being appointed and installed as elders, by other elders
They're not just filling a position or grabbing the first warm body who's willing to lead
In fact, the implication of v6 – *If anyone is* [qualified], then appoint them as elders
If not, if no one is qualified, gifted, and desiring to lead, then don't appoint them
Go with what you have

Filling the position with a body is a recipe for disaster, and contrary to Paul's warning that we should *not be hasty in laying on of hands* (1 Tim 5:22)
We shouldn't rush into appointing elders
That's why we've take a year to pray, identify, and meet with potential elders –
It's a big deal, and we want to get it right

The NT pattern is that . . .

Elders are responsible for all aspects of the church

Turn to **1 Pet 5:1-3**

Shepherd the flock of God among you . . . *exercising oversight* – lead, direct, manage
Oversee all aspects of the church

This leadership and oversight by the elders can be summed up with 3 D's

Doctrine, Direction, Discipline

Establish and protect *doctrine* – what is taught, believed, practiced (the pillars)

Provide *direction* – direction for major decisions as a church – budgeting
allocations, ministry emphasis, staff additions, building/land, timing, etc.

Carry out *discipline* – ensuring the moral purity of the body; confronting sin per
Mt 18:15-17; making judgment calls in difficult situations

At Harvest, we do that by consensus, not by vote

If all the elders are filled by the HS, then the hesitancy of even one elder is significant
That means that if one person objects to a decision, there's a reason for it, and we don't
move forward – there's either consensus, or there's not

That doesn't mean that everyone has to feel equally strong about every issue

But it does mean that each elder can and will wholeheartedly support the decision
of the group

Elders are responsible for all aspects of the church, exercising oversight in doctrine,
direction, and discipline

The NT pattern is that . . .

Local elders shepherd local churches

Shepherd the flock of God *that is among you* (1 Pet 5:2)

Shepherd those in your church, not the church in the next town over

Indicator of local autonomy – that churches are to be self-governed and self-directed

That's the NT pattern, further supported by the fact that Titus was to appoint elders in
every town (5)

If elders were to govern and direct multiple churches, they wouldn't have had to be
appointed in every town

Don't miss the shepherding part

Elders aren't autocratic, unapproachable despots – they are shepherds . . .

They are here for your benefit –

To lead, guide, provide, protect, love on, encourage, bind up brokenness, aid in
healing

God intends for local elders to *shepherd* local churches

Will you pray for our future elders? *Please*

We're in the process with the elders of GE, of evaluating and scrutinizing 3 men in our
church that we hope to install as elders within the next couple of months

They have filled out extensive applications, opened themselves to many questions, been
faithful and eager to meet and pray, and will go before the GE elders for an interview
in the next several weeks

So please pray for *me* as I lead them through this process

Pray for *them* as they prepare for these next steps and the role that follows

And pray for continued grace and humility on all our part

Let's do that now

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