Leadership in the New Testament Church

What do people think of when they hear the word elder?

Why do we believe that the local church should be governed by a plurality of qualified elders?

1) Any group's government should be a reflection of the nature or character of that group.

2) One of the hindrances to the spread of the Gospel and fulfillment of the Great Commission is an unbiblical leadership structure.

3) The New Testament clearly teaches elder leadership.

- Acts 11:29,30 It was the elders who received gifts from the church in Antioch.
- Acts 14:23 Paul appointed elders in every church.
- Acts 15:2,4,6,22. The counsel at Jerusalem was made up of the apostles & elders.
- Acts 20: 17, 28 Paul called to him the elders who are raised up by the Holy Spirit to shepherd the church of God.

3) The New Testament clearly teaches elder leadership.

- Philippians 1:1 Paul wrote to the saints, including the overseers (elders) and deacons.
- 1Tim.3:1-7 & Titus 1:6-9 give the qualifications for a church overseer.
- 1Tim. 5:17 refers to elders “who rule well.”
- Titus 1:5 According to this verse a church was not complete until it had recognized elders.

4) One man rule is dangerous:

a. He or she may become a dictator like Diotrephes (3John 9-11)

b. If he is competent and popular then who becomes the center of attention?

c. In times of persecution, usually the first person targeted for arrest is ‘the pastor’.

d. There are fewer checks and balances.

e. Because of a high incidence of “burn-out”

5) Biblical Eldership better insures a correct view of Christ's headship of His church.

- There is one flock and He is the Chief Shepherd. John 10:16
- There is one body and He is the head.

  Col. 1:18
- There is one building and He is the Chief Cornerstone 1Peter 2:5-8
- There is one priesthood and He is our Great High Priest Heb. 4:14

6) The clerical system contradicts the priesthood of all believers. 1Peter 2:5,9

- Randy Amos “It is not the concept of clergy which the New Testament has a problem, but laity.
- All believers are clergy, priests, not by seminary training, or ordination but by Christ’s blood.”

7) Peter's teaching 1Peter 5:1-4

a. According to Peter who are the leaders of the local church? (5:1)

b. How did Peter refer to himself? (5:1)

c. How did Peter tell elders not to lead? (5:3)

d. How did Peter tell elders to lead? (5:3)

8) Eldership allows better use of spiritual gifts in leadership than a one man rule. 1Cor. 12

9) We should use the right terms.

- The word pastor is only used once in regard to church leaders in Eph. 4:11, where it is referred to as a gift.
- Matt. 23:7-12 The Lord condemned the use of high sounding titles.

10) World-wide, Biblical eldership is the most adaptable and practical approach to church leadership.

Raul Tante & Family



“Shared leadership requires a great deal of patience, persevering prayer, wisdom, self-control, humility, trust, love and genuine respect for the gifts and perspective of others in the body of Christ.” Alex Strauch