

BIBLICAL CHURCH LEADERSHIP
Part 1 – Elders and Deacons

ELDERS: SERVANT LEADERS

Who are they?

Elders are...

- **Among other elders.**

And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed. (Acts 14:23)

And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul. (Acts 11:30)

And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question.

When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them.

The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter. (Acts 15:2, 4, 6)

As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. (Acts 16:4)

Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. (Acts 20:17)

Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. (1 Timothy 4:14)

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. (1 Timothy 5:17)

This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you. (Titus 1:5)

Is anyone among you sick? 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. (James 5:14)

- **Men.**

I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. (1 Timothy 2:12), (Ephesians 5:22-6:4)

- **Men who want to serve as elders.**

The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. (1 Timothy 3:1)

- **Men of character.**

The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. ²Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive,⁵ for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? ⁶He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. ⁷Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil. (1 Timothy 3:1-7)

⁵This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— ⁶if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination.⁷ For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, ⁸but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. ⁹He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. (Titus 1:5-9)

- Above reproach
- Self-controlled
- Gentle
- Not greedy
- A “one-woman man”
- An effective father
- Hospitable
- An established believer

What do they do?

Elders...

- **Pray.** (James 5:14)
But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word. (Acts 6:4)
- **Preach and teach.** (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9)
- **Shepherd.**
Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. (Acts 20:28)

Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly. (1 Peter 5:2)

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Hebrews 13:17)

- **Oversee.**
- **Set a Godly example.**

- **Raise up elders.**

And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. (2 Timothy 2:2)

DEACONS: LEADING SERVANTS

Who are they?

Servants of character...

⁸ Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, ⁹ but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. ¹¹ Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. ¹² Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households. ¹³ For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus. (1 Timothy 3:8-13)

What do they do?

The “duty”

*Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. ² And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. ³ Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this **duty**. ⁴ But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” ⁵ And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. ⁶ These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.*

⁷ And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith. (Acts 6:1-7)

- **Handle church growth**
- **Protect church unity**
- **Meet the needs of the church family**
- **Prioritize the mission of the Church**