

ELDERS & DEACONS

ELDERS

1. *Their Gradual Emergence in the Early Church*

- The 12 Apostles of Jesus led the Jerusalem church → Acts 1:2, 26; 2:37, 42-43; 4:32-37; 5:12; 6:1-4; 8:14; 9:27
- As time passed, elders were chosen from the assembly in Jerusalem to serve alongside the Apostles → Acts 11:1 (subtle addition of “brothers”); 11:30 (first ref to “elders” as leaders in the church); 15:2, 4, 6, 22-23, 33; 16:4 (last ref to “apostles and elders”)
- Eventually, even in the church at Jerusalem, elders were recognized as the official leaders of local churches → Acts 14:23; 20:17; 21:17-18 (“James and all the elders”); Phil 1:1; Titus 1:5

2. *The Spiritual Authority of Elders in the Assembly*

- Evidences → Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 6, 22-23; 16:4; 20:28; 1 Thess 5:12; 1 Tim 5:17
- Spiritual Qualifications → 1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9
- Limitations to Authority
 - The headship of Christ → Col 1:18
 - The ministry of the Apostles → Eph 2:19-22
 - The priesthood of the believer → Acts 15:12, 22; 1 Pet 2:5, 9; 5:3

3. *Their Work of Elders within the Assembly*

- The Nature of Their Work
 - Lead the Flock → 1 Tim 3:4-5; 5:17; Heb 13:17; 1 Pet 5:1-3
 - Feed the Flock → Matt 28:20 (cf John 21:17; 1 Pet 5:1-2); Titus 1:9; 1 Tim 4:13; 5:17-18
 - Defend (Protect) the Flock → Acts 20:17, 28-31a
 - Tend (Care) for the Flock → Jas 5:14; 1 Thess 5:12-13
- The Organization of Their Work
 - The Norm of Plurality → Acts 14:23; 15:22; Titus 1:5; Jas 5:14; 1 Tim 5:17
 - Their Relationship to One Another → 1 Tim 5:17

DEACONS

1. *Biblical Foundations of the Office*

- Acts 6:1-7; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:8-13
- “Deacon” transliterates a Greek word meaning “servant.” The parameters of the office are not carefully defined in the NT, indicating flexibility in the ministry assigned to deacons by local churches.

2. *EBC Filters for Determining Qualified Deacons*

- Filter #1 → Meets Biblical Qualifications (1 Tim 3:8-13) → the man + his wife + his family
- Filter #2 → Faithful Giving to Church → demonstrates spiritual maturity and commitment
- Filter #3 → Regular Attendance at Church Services → the nature of their work demands it
- Filter #4 → Servant’s Heart and Orientation → has the spiritual DNA of John 13:1-17