

Biblical Eldership

We live in days when it is crucial to possess a Biblical understanding of and hold a Biblical commitment to leadership as lined out in the word of God. We live in an age in which leadership is constantly being undermined by men and their congregations who seek to define it outside of Biblical parameters. Understanding the purpose and intention for which Christ has given the gift of leadership through godly men to the church, is crucial to recovering in our age a Biblical pattern of God honoring church life. When we seek to define leadership outside of the Biblical revelation we open ourselves up for the world to creep into the church at the highest levels.

We here at Faith Community Baptist Church are committed to putting forth, by faithful study of the word of God and implementation of that word, a Biblical view of church leadership. We believe that Biblical leadership is a gift of Christ to His church for her encouragement in the word, care and protection. As the Apostle Paul instructed the church in Ephesus:

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "when he ascended on high, he led captive a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (Now this expression, "he ascended," what does it mean except that he also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is himself also he who ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) and he gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ (NAB Eph 4:7-12)

Christ is the one who won the right to give gifts to men by triumphing over death and the grave. John MacArthur in his commentary on Ephesians says the phrase "he gave" emphasizes the sovereign choice and authority given to Christ because of His perfect fulfillment of the Father's will." This cannot be overemphasized. Those appointed to leadership in the church are not only men of God...they are God's men.

Not simply spiritual and qualified for the office. . .but set apart by God for it specifically. The offices and the men who are to fill them are established by sovereign design. Thus leadership is not a concession or a choice, it is a calling and a command!!!

All too often the church especially in recent years has viewed the calling of a Pastor as something they do. This has led to much pride and subsequent sorrow. The late Martyn Lloyd-Jones, pastor of the Westminster Chapel in London, England earlier in this century made the following striking statement about the church and how she often chooses her leaders. He writes

Generally speaking, men have not been called to these high offices because of their spirituality or understanding of truth, but rather because of their natural birth, their natural ability or secular learning. The Christian church is constantly in danger of forgetting the teaching of the apostles, the foundation on which we are built, with the result that the world does not even look at the church but ignores her. The world sees the worldliness in the church, sees the office-seeking, the rivalries and scheming and manipulating with which it is so familiar in its own sphere, and it says that it is therefore not interested in the church. In other words, one of the most urgent needs of the hour is that we should demonstrate to the world that the church is still the body of Christ, that she is still spiritual, that everything about her, and especially these offices, is determined by the Lord.

Thus, these men, who are called by Christ to shepherd His church do so under a divine commission. Furthermore, under this divine commission, they function under a divine authority. They are to serve the church of Jesus Christ not under compulsion, but voluntarily, not for sordid gain, but eagerly, and not as lords, but as examples. As the Apostle Peter so aptly stated,

Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD,

BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. (NAB 1 Peter 5:1-5).

They must be ever vigilant in their duty, ever watchful at their post. They are to, by way of Biblical direction, to

Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. "Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified (NAB Acts 20:28-32).

The pastors of Faith Community has been called and appointed by the Lord for the feeding, guarding, and caring of the flock of God. They serve as a plural body of men exercising oversight of the flock for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry. (See Eze 34 and Eph 4)