

## Church Government: Monarchy, Anarchy, or Democracy?

### The Elder's Call to Ministry

## The Importance of Being Called

- OT prophets: Jer. 23:21, 32
  - 21 "I did not send *these* prophets, But they ran. I did not speak to them, But they prophesied.
  - 32 "Behold, I am against those who have prophesied false dreams," declares the LORD, "and related them and led My people astray by their falsehoods and reckless boasting; yet I did not send them or command them, nor do they furnish this people the slightest benefit," declares the LORD.
  - In addition to their wrong message, Jeremiah said another distinguishing feature of false prophets is that they preach without being sent.
- OT Priests: Num. 18:7
  - "But you and your sons with you shall attend to your priesthood for everything concerning the altar and inside the veil, and you are to perform service. I am giving you the priesthood as a bestowed service, but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death."

## The Importance of Being Called

- The Lord Jesus Christ
  - Matt. 3:16-17 – After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove *and* lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."
  - John 12:28-30 – "Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." So the crowd of people who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, "An angel has spoken to Him." Jesus answered and said, "This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes."

## The Language of the NT

- Called
  - Heb. 5:4 - And no one takes the honor to himself, but *receives it* when he is called by God, even as Aaron was.
- Separated or set apart
  - Acts 13:2 - While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."
  - Rom. 1:1 - Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,
- Sent
  - John 20:21 - So Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."
  - Rom. 10:15 - How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written: "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!"
- Appointed
  - Titus 1:5 - For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you.

## The NT Illustrations of Ministry

- Heralds (Acts 10:42; 2 Tim. 4:2)
- Ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20)
- Stewards (Col. 1:25; Titus 1:7)
- Messengers (Rev. 1:20)

## John Newton on the Call

- 1) Desire
- 2) Competence
- 3) The providence of God.

## The Reformers & the Puritans on the Call

- The internal call
  - Subjective
  - Primarily known within the man
  - Comes directly from the Spirit.
- The external call
  - Objective
  - Obvious outside the man
  - A work of the Spirit confirmed by the church.

## Four Tests of a Man's Call to the Ministry of an Elder

### 1. Craving

- 1 Tim. 3:1 – two words for desire
- 1) “aspires”
  - Thayer = “to stretch oneself out in order to touch something or grasp something; to reach after or desire something”
- 2) “desires”
  - Abbott-Smith = “to set one's heart upon, desire, lust after, crave”

### 2. Character

- An introductory qualification
  - The elder must be male.
    - 1 Tim. 2:9-15
    - 1 Cor. 11:2-16
    - 1 Cor. 14:33-38

### 2. Character

- “Above reproach” (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6)
  - A summary
  - Literally, “not to be taken hold upon”
  - Without handles

### 2. Character

- “Husband of one wife” (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6)
  - A moral qualification
  - Literally, “a one-woman man”
  - Six views

## "A One-Woman Man"

- 1) Excludes all marriage except to the church
- 2) Excludes only polygamy
- 3) Excludes remarried widowers
- 4) Excludes the unmarried
- 5) Excludes the divorced
  - a) divorced ever for any reason
  - b) divorced after conversion for any reason
  - c) divorced after conversion without biblical grounds
  - d) divorced ever for unbiblical grounds
- 6) Excludes post-conversion sexual impurity

## Countryside Bible Church The Elders' Perspective

- God holds the leadership of His church to the highest standard—a standard unequivocally recorded in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. One specific, often-debated requirement is that every elder or deacon be "the husband of one wife", or literally "a one-woman man." This means a married man should be known for a long-standing pattern of fidelity to one spouse. We believe, therefore, that divorce often disqualifies a man from holding either of the leadership offices of the church, but, of course, not from serving in the church.
- However, we will consider a divorced man for leadership as an elder or deacon:
  - If the divorce occurred prior to conversion
  - If a lengthy period of time has passed since the divorce
  - If the man has demonstrated fidelity to his present wife
  - And if we conclude, therefore, that there is no lingering reproach associated with the divorce.

## 2. Character

- "Temperate" (1 Tim. 3:2); "self-controlled" (Titus 1:8)
  - like our English word *sober*
  - can refer to temperance in the use of alcohol or it can mean not given to excess, under control.
  - He is stable, self-controlled, and clear headed.

## 2. Character

- "Prudent" (1 Tim. 3:2); "sensible" (Titus 1:8)
  - Serious—not somber.
  - Having the right spiritual priorities.
- "Respectable" (1 Tim. 3:2)
  - Comes from the word, *kosmos*, or *world*—a well-ordered arrangement.
  - Means to have your life arranged in such an orderly fashion that others respect you.

## 2. Character

- "Hospitable" (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8)
  - Literally, "a lover of strangers."
  - To love people and to open your home to others
- "Not addicted to wine" (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7)
  - Preoccupied with, known for, overindulgent with alcohol.

## 2. Character

- "Not pugnacious" (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7)
  - Greek word comes from a verb that means "to strike."
  - Can refer to physical violence.
  - But it can also refer to the man who is a fighter.
  - Who loves to argue and fight.
  - He's bad tempered, irritable, and generally argumentative—even at times to the point of physical violence.

## 2. Character

- “Gentle” (1 Tim. 3:3)
  - Opposite of pugnacious
  - Strauch suggests “forbearing, kind, gentle, magnanimous, and gracious.”
- “Peacable” (1 Tim. 3:3); “not quick tempered” (Titus 1:7)
  - Uncontentious; not soon angry or quick-tempered
  - Doesn’t promote disunity.

## 2. Character

- “Free from the love of money” (1 Tim. 3:3); “not fond of sordid gain” (Titus 1:7)
  - Not loving money; not greedy
- “Not a new convert” (1 Tim. 3:6)
  - Literally, “newly planted.”
  - It refers to someone who is newly converted.

## 2. Character

- “A good reputation with those outside the church” (1 Tim. 3:7)
- “Not self-willed” (Titus 1:7)
  - Strauch: “a self-willed man wants his own way. He is stubborn, arrogant, and inconsiderate of others’ opinions, feelings, or desires. A self-willed man is headstrong, independent, self-assertive, and ungracious, particularly toward those who have a different opinion.”
- “Loving what is good” (Titus 1:8)
  - One Greek lexicon: “one who willingly and with self-denial does good, or is kind.”
  - William Hendricksen: “ready to do what is beneficial to others.”

## 2. Character

- “Just” (Titus 1:8)
  - Being *fair, equitable* in your dealings with others.
- “Devout” (Titus 1:8)
  - Being resolutely committed to God and to His truth.

## 3. Capacity

- “Able to teach” (1 Tim. 3:2); “able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict” (Titus 1:9)
  - Timothy implies the skill to teach
  - Titus implies a sufficient knowledge of Scripture and doctrine to exhort believers and to refute error and false teaching.

## 3. Capacity

- “Manages his own household well” (1 Tim. 3:4-5)
  - Able to lead and manage
  - MacArthur: “The basic function of the NT leader is overseeing” (112).
  - This is shown by what happens in his home.
  - Paul adds this in Titus: “Having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion” (Titus 1:7).

## Countryside Bible Church On Titus 1:6

- In Paul's epistle to Titus, he lists the qualifications for elders beginning in Titus 1:6. One of those qualifications is: "having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion."
- Recognizing that there are good men on either side of the interpretive issue of "children who believe" versus "children who are faithful," we agree to support the Countryside Bible Church position on this elder qualification as follows:

## Countryside Bible Church On Titus 1:6

- **Concerning children in the home:**
- A man meets this qualification if the children:
  - Are believers in Christ.
  - Have not yet made a profession of faith but are trustworthy in behavior, that is, responsive to the authority of their parents.
- A man does not meet this qualification if there is a child who:
  - Is a professing believer in Christ but not under control
  - Is an unbeliever who openly professes rejection of Christ and/or is given to dissipation or rebellion.

## Countryside Bible Church On Titus 1:6

- **Concerning children no longer in the home:**
- A man meets this qualification if the children:
  - Are believers in Christ.
  - Are unbelievers yet do not bring reproach upon the man.
- A man does not meet this qualification if there is a child who:
  - Is given to dissipation or rebellion.
  - Brings reproach upon the man.
- This qualification, as all others, must be reviewed in the context of the total life and character of the man.

## 4. Confirmation

- Selection by the elders (Titus 1:5)
- Evaluation by the church & the elders (1 Tim. 3:10; 5:22)
  - Cf. 1 Tim. 2:1—3:16 are instructions to the whole church, not just the elders, or to Timothy.
- Recognition by the elders (1 Tim. 4:13-16; 5:22)

## The Four Tests

- 1) Craving
- 2) Character
- 3) Capacity
- 4) Confirmation