

Scriptural Elders and Deacons

THE NEED FOR ELDERS

Lesson One

Rules For This Study:

- Why lessons on this subject?
 - Part of the whole counsel of God,
 - Planned by the elders,
 - To protect the future of this church.
- What do I expect of you?
 - To listen with open minds and open Bibles,
 - To search the scriptures between lessons,
 - To obey what God says; to do the right thing.
- What can you expect of me?
 - To preach all relevant NT doctrine on this matter,
 - To preach only NT doctrine on this matter.

Scriptural Elders and Deacons

- Lessons:
 - The Need for Elders
 - The Work and Authority of Elders
 - The Qualifications of Elders
 - Lesson on the Work and Qualifications of Deacons, the Work and Qualifications of Elders' and Deacons' Wives, and Plans and Procedures for Appointing Elders and Deacons

The Need For Elders Is Seen In The Duties They Perform

- Feeding the flock.
 - *Acts 20:28 - “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to 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.”*
 - To feed - “poimaino: to pasture, feed, or tend a flock as a shepherd” (Strong's 4165)
 - *1Peter 5:2 - “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly.”*

The Need For Elders Is Seen In The Duties They Perform

- Guarding the flock by watching for false teachers from without and false brethren from within.
 - *Acts 20:29-30 - “For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.”*
- Watching for straying souls.
 - *Heb. 13:17 - “Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.”*

The Need For Elders Is Seen In The Duties They Perform

- Rule well.
 - *1Tim. 5:17 - “Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.”*
- Lead diligently.
 - *Rom. 12:8 - “He who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”*
 - Not with enforced inaction but by being pro-active.

The Need For Elders Is Seen In The Command To Have Them

- Command
 - *Titus 1:5* - “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you.”
- Example
 - *Acts 14:23* - “So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”
- Divine implication
 - *1Tim. 3:1-7* - By giving qualifications, God implies that he wants qualified men to fill this office.

The Need For Elders Is Seen In The Dangers Of The Alternative

- Voting in doctrinal matters is unscriptural.
 - Jesus Christ has all authority.
 - *Matt. 28:18 - “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”*
 - *Col. 1:18 - “And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.”*

The Need For Elders Is Seen In The Dangers Of The Alternative

- Our responsibilities as Christ's subjects:
 - To accept His authority
 - *Col. 3:17 - "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."*
 - To obey Him in all things
 - *2Cor. 5:10 - "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."*

The Need For Elders Is Seen In The Dangers Of The Alternative

- In the local church, Christ has given some authority to the elders.
 - To oversee the congregation.
 - *1Peter 5:2 - “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly.”*
 - But not to act as lords.
 - *1Peter 5:3 - “Nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.”*
 - The congregation's duty to the elders is submit to them.
 - *Heb. 13:7,17*

The Need For Elders Is Seen In The Dangers Of The Alternative

- The dangers of deciding any church matter by majority vote are many:
 - It makes the church subject to unqualified men.
 - It fails to distinguish experience and inexperience among members.
 - It encourages preachers to cater to the wishes of the majority.

The Need For Elders Is Seen In The Dangers Of The Alternative

- The Lord does not want men-pleasers as a preachers or elders.
 - *Gal. 1:10 - “For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.”*
 - *John 10:11-15 - “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. 12 But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. 13 The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. 15 As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.”*

The Need For Elders Is Seen In The Dangers Of The Alternative

- The dangers of deciding any church matter by majority vote are many:
 - It provides occasion for politics and electioneering, resulting in division.
 - It breeds anarchy and bitterness in the church.

"But What If We Don't Have Qualified Men!?"

- The churches in the New Testament ordained elders within a few years of their beginning as churches.
- There are reasons why some churches do not have elders or find it difficult to appoint more.
 - Some people do not want to be in subjection to elders.
 - Some hobbyists elevate the qualifications above Divine intent.
 - Qualified men are too lazy or fearful to take up the task.

"But What If We Don't Have Qualified Men!?"

- The only scripturally organized churches are churches with elders and deacons.
 - Churches without qualified men to serve as elders and deacons but use the business meeting system as a temporary measure are scripturally unorganized.
 - Churches with unqualified men serving as elders and deacons are unscripturally organized.
 - Churches with qualified men to serve as elders but choose to use the business meeting system in perpetuity are unscripturally unorganized.
- We will do New Testament things for New Testament reasons in New Testament ways.