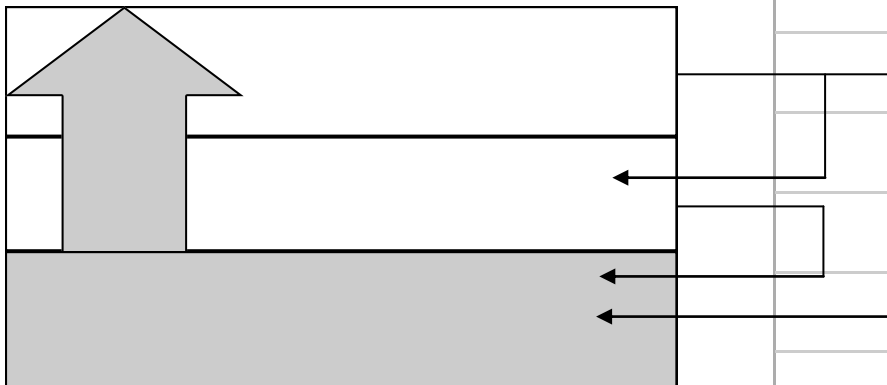


The Local Church - Its Organization & Leadership

- Presbyterian Polity
 - The Presbyterian Church is not . . .

 - Nor is the Presbyterian church

 - Presbyterian Government is . . .



- If a local congregations seeks to be governed bibli-
cally, it must be ruled by a _____ of
elders.

- Within the one "office" of elder there is a difference
of _____.

— 1 Timothy 5:17 — The elders (presbuteros) who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.

“Though the character, qualifications and authority of church officers are laid down in the Holy Scriptures, as well as the proper method of their investiture and institution [i.e., ordination and installation], yet the election of the person to the exercise of this authority, in any particular society, is in that society.”

“Preliminary Principles” of biblical church government, OPC

- It is God who _____ men with spiritual gifts, and the church is called to learn how to _____ those men that are qualified.

- Acts 6:1-8

¹ Now at this time while the disciples were increasing *in number*, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic *Jews* against the *native* Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving *of food*. ² So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables.” ³ “Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.” ⁴ “But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” ⁵ The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch. ⁶ And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them. ⁷ The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith. ⁸ And Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs

- 1 Timothy 3:1

¹ It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office (ἐπίσκοπή) of overseer (ἐπίσκοποι), it is a fine work he desires *to do*.

CHAPTER 8

The Elder

8-1. This office is one of dignity and usefulness. The man who fills it has in Scripture different titles expressive of his various duties. As he has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed *bishop* or *pastor*. As it is his duty to be grave and prudent, an example to the flock, and to govern well in the house and Kingdom of Christ, he is termed *presbyter* or *elder*. As he expounds the Word, and by sound doctrine both exhorts and convinces the gainsayer, he is termed *teacher*. These titles do not indicate different grades of office, but all describe one and the same office. (PCA Book of Church Order)

Recommended Reading and Resources

The Elders of the Church, Lawrence R. Eyres, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing

The Elder and Overseer: One Office in the Early Church (Patristic Studies), Benjamin L. Merkle, Peter Lang Publishing

Biblical Church Government, Don Clements, Metokos Press

Biblical Eldership, Alexander Strauch, Lewis and Roth publishers
