

The Duty, Intention, and Reward of Faithful Church Elders 1 Peter 5:1-4

Introduction: The church is going to need competent and sincere leadership if it is going to persevere through the challenges of religious persecution and injustice.

1. Seeing the reason for Peter's focus on Church Elders, verse 1.

- A. Times of persecution intensify the need for Church solidarity.
The transition from chapter 4 to chapter 5: "therefore".

If the Church is to survive, overcome, and thrive during times of persecution, there must be order in the administration of each local assembly. A significant part of that order will depend on effective church Elders.

- B. The Focus turned to local church Elders.

A plurality of Elders was the leadership structure established by the Apostles and practiced throughout the first century churches: Acts 11:30, Jerusalem; Acts 14:23, wherever Paul planted churches; Acts 20:17, Ephesus; Philippians 1:1, Philippi; Titus 1:5, Crete; James 5:14.

Peter's humble identification with the spiritual leaders he was exhorting: "I am a fellow-elder with you."

2. The Priority Work of Elders--shepherding, verse 2.

What is "shepherding"?

- A. Shepherding means to give "heed" to the sheep--to keep watch over them. *Heeding* means knowing the people in the congregation.

Jesus' method of shepherding his disciples was to form them into a group. CrossWay church uses small groups to follow Jesus' model for shepherding and discipleship.

Heeding means being alert to remove false believers who bring false teaching and Division, Acts 20:28-30.

Heeding rejects the futile idea of spiritual mind reading.

- B. Shepherding means seeing to the "feeding" of the congregation.
Note 1 Peter 1:22-23

Feeding by expository preaching of the Scriptures.
Feeding through small group Bible studies.

- C. Shepherding means *leading* the congregation.

Leading a congregation includes direction and management.

Elders must discern what gatherings are the most efficient use of their time and energy and the congregations'.

Leading means having an eye to the future—the active development of future leaders and the securing of quality Pastoral staff, 1 Timothy 5:17

Leading means anticipating practical needs and making the best possible preparations to meet those needs—especially for ministries and facilities.

3. The proper intentions Elders must have, verse 3.

- A. Elders must desire the work and want to invest in expanding the gospel and discipling the believers.
- B. Elders must be free from any hint of greed.
- C. Elders must not be overbearing toward the people.

Two mindsets that lead to domineering leadership:

- 1) The prideful assumption that your ideas should not be questioned.
- 2) Being afraid to risk sharing authority or control with anyone else.

Caution: there are going to be times when the collective wisdom of the Elders needs to be deferred to even if you disagree.

The unity of the church is of tremendous concern to the Lord.

Even among the Elders there needs to be deference toward those with greater knowledge and spiritual experience.

There is always risk in delegating responsibility to people who are willing to work but need the chance to develop their skills.

4. The Reward for Faithful Elders, verse 4.

The appearing of the chief Shepherd is the second coming of Christ.
Note 1 Peter 1:13, 2:12, 4:13 all refer to this event.

The crown--a special recognition by Christ for your service.

Do not forfeit this recognition by striving for anything except humble faithful shepherding of the believers God has put under your care.

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