

Defending The Faith

- **1 Peter 3:15** *“but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,”* (ESV)

Paul & Peter Give Instructions For Elders

Acts 20:28 *"Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood." (ESV)*

Why we need elders in every church!

- **The Adversary will try to scatter & devour the sheep**
 - **John 10:11-12** *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them."* (ESV)
 - **Acts 20:28-30** *"Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them."* (ESV)
 - **1Peter 5:8** *"Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."* (ESV)

Roles of Elders in Biblical History:

- Heads of Families/Nations

- **Genesis 50:7** *"So Joseph went up to bury his father. With him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his household, and all the elders of the land of Egypt,"* (ESV)
- **Numbers 22:7** *"So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the fees for divination in their hand. And they came to Balaam and gave him Balak's message."* (ESV)
- **Exodus 12:21** *"Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans, and kill the Passover lamb."* (ESV)

Roles of Elders in Biblical History:

- Heads of Families/Nations
- Spiritual Representatives

- **Exodus 3:16** *"Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, 'I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt,'"* (ESV)
- **Exodus 24:1** *"Then he said to Moses, 'Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar.'" (ESV)*
- **Deut 21:1-9** ~ The elders of a local city made offerings for their city when a murdered body was found near that God would not judge the city guilty of the blood

Roles of Elders in Biblical History:

- Heads of Families/Nations
- Spiritual Representatives
- Rulers

• **Numbers 11:16** *"Then the LORD said to Moses, "Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. And I will come down and talk with you there. And I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone." (ESV)*

Roles of Elders in Biblical History:

- Heads of Families/Nations
- Spiritual Representatives
- Rulers
- Advisors

• **1Kings 12:6** *"Then King Rehoboam took counsel with the old men, who had stood before Solomon his father while he was yet alive, saying, "How do you advise me to answer this people?""* (ESV)

Roles of Elders in Biblical History:

- Heads of Families/Nations
- Spiritual Representatives
- Rulers
- Advisors
- Judges

• **Deut 19:11-13** *““But if anyone hates his neighbor and lies in wait for him and attacks him and strikes him fatally so that he dies, and he flees into one of these cities, then the elders of his city shall send and take him from there, and hand him over to the avenger of blood, so that he may die. Your eye shall not pity him, but you shall purge the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, so that it may be well with you.” (ESV)*

3 Titles with Meaning

- **Acts 20:17, 28** *"¹⁷Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him... ²⁸Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood."* (ESV)
- **1 Peter 5:1–2** *"So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly;"* (ESV)
- **Elder** – word is also translated presbyter
- **Overseer** – word is also translated bishop
- **Shepherd** – word is also translated pastor

Responsibilities of Elders and Church

- **Hebrews 13:7** *“Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.”* (ESV)
- **Hebrews 13:17** *“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.”* (ESV)

Leading without Lording

- **1Peter 5:3** *"not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock."* (ESV)
- **Matt 20:25-28** *"But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.""* (ESV)

Leading without Lording

7 “Be-qualities” of leadership

- Be Diligent ~ Rom 12:8 *“... he who leads, with diligence;”*
- Be Loving ~ 1Jn 3:16 *“By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”*
- Be Just and Fair ~ Col 4:1 *“Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.”*
- Be Holy ~ 1Tim 2:8 *“I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;”*
- Be an Example ~ 1Tim 4:12 *“Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”*
- Be Gentle & Patient ~ 2Tim 2:24 *“And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,”*
- Be Trustworthy ~ 1Cor 4:2 *“Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.”*

Who Makes Them Elders?

- **The Holy Spirit** - By the selection of the church and appointment by, apostles, prophets, evangelists or elders.
- **Acts 20:28** "... in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, ..." (ESV)
- **Acts 6:3** "Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty." (ESV)
- **Acts 14:23** "And when they ^(Paul and Barnabus) had appointed elders for them in every church, ..." (ESV)
- **Titus 1:5** "This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you—" (ESV)
- **1Tim 5:22** "Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor take part in the sins of others; keep yourself pure." (ESV)
- **1Tim 4:14** "Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you." (ESV)
 - **2Tim 1:6** "For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands," (ESV)

Final Thoughts

- God designed the family to function with a mother and father. But, we know that sometimes things happen to prevent both parent's involvement in raising children. However, we should not by choice choose a different arrangement, because even though children can and are raised through difficult circumstances to be productive adults, there is a benefit (so psychology studies have shown) when both can be actively involved.
- So likewise with elders, though churches have often functioned without them (usually poorly and with difficulty) it is not God's desire nor should it be just accepted by us. Because the functioning becomes a conglomeration of human rules (like Roberts' Rules of Order) rather than the leading of a family by older and wiser heads with godly judgment.