



The Eldership

An Introduction

Elders/Presbyters

- Defined: (*presbuteros*) an old man, an elder (***Vine; Thayer***)
- Used of age (Acts 2:17), rank (Matt. 16:21), and of overseers of the local church (Acts 14:23)
- Elder doesn't describe the work, but the maturity and dignity of the office.
- Is an elder a position or just an older man?
 - Must be *appointed* – Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5
 - Must *meet qualifications* – 1 Tim. 3; 1-7; Titus 1:5-6ff.
- There must be a plurality of elders in a local church – Titus 1:5; Acts 14:23; 20:17

Overseers/Bishops

- Defined: (*episkopos*) an overseer (*Vine*); *an overseer*, one charged with seeing that things done by others are done rightly (*Thayer*)
- Has no secular application in the N.T.
- Used of Christ (I Pet. 2:25), apostles (Acts 1:20), and of an overseer of the local church (I Tim. 3:2)
- **Elders** are to do the **work** of being bishops/overseers of the local church – Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:1-2; Titus 1:5-7
- Because elders and overseers are used interchangeably, they must meet the *same qualifications* and be a *plurality* of overseers/bishops.

Shepherds/Pastors

- Defined: (*poimen*) a shepherd, one who tends herds or flocks (not merely one who feeds them) (**Vine; Thayer**)
- Used of those who herd sheep (Luke 2:8), of Christ as the good Shepherd (1 Pet. 2:24-24), and of those who oversee the local church (I Peter 5:1-2)
- Much confusion exists over this position, with most calling their *preacher* a *pastor*.
 - Preacher – (*kerusso*) to proclaim openly – Rom. 10:17
 - Evangelist (*euaggelistes*) bringer of good tidings, evangelist – Acts 21:8
 - The pastor/preacher distinction is clear – Eph. 4:11-12

Their Work

- Seen in *shepherds* and *overseers*, having spiritual care and protection of the local flock of God – 1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:17
 - Their shepherding/overseeing is limited to the local flock with whom they work and worship – 1 Pet. 5:2
 - They shepherd God's flock and will "give account" – Heb. 13:17
- Must watch themselves, being examples and leaders of the sheep – Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:3; Acts 20:29-31.
- Must be students of the word – Titus 1:9
- Must address the *needy* sheep – Acts 11:29-30