



The Eldership

An Introduction

Elders

- Defined: (*presbuteros*) an old man, an elder (***Vine; Thayer***)
- Used of...
 - Age – Lk. 15:25; Acts 2:17
 - Rank or position of responsibility – Matt. 16:21
 - Overseers of the local church – Acts 14:23
- Elder indicates one of older age, maturity.
 - Not just an older Christian man
 - Elder is an **appointed position** based on **qualifications** – Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5-7ff.
- Command and example show there must be a **plurality of elders** in a local church – Titus 1:5; Acts 14:23; 20:17

Overseers

- **Defined:** (*episkopos*) overseer; guardian, superintendent, elders, overseers of a Christian church – Tit. 1:5-7 (***Vine, Thayer, Mounces***)
- Always used of spiritual oversight – 1 Pet. 2:25; Acts 1:20; 1 Tim. 3:1; Phil. 1:1
- Only elders are to be the overseers of a local church – Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Pet. 5:1-2
- Necessary conclusions:
 - Because elder/overseer are interchangeable, same qualification apply to both – Titus 1:5-7ff.
 - Because there must be a plurality elders, there must be a plurality of overseers.

Shepherds

- Defined: (*poimen*) a shepherd, one who tends herds or flocks; herdsman (***Vine; Thayer***)
- Used of...
 - Those who herd sheep – Luke 2:8
 - Jesus – 1 Pet. 2:25
 - Those who oversee the local church – 1 Peter 5:1-2
- Many mistakenly call their *preacher* their *pastor*, or *shepherd*
 - Elders are the only one instructed to be the shepherds of the local church – 1 Pet. 5:1-2; Acts 20:28
 - Evangelists and preachers are proclaimers, or heralds, of the message of Christ.
 - Shepherding or pastoring is the work of the elders.

The Work of Elders

- Described in being **overseers** and **shepherds**.
- **Protect** the spiritual condition of the local flock – Acts 20:28-31
- **Rule** the local church – 1 Tim. 5:17-18; Heb. 13:17
- Be **examples** to the sheep – 1 Pet. 5:1-3
- Tend to the **needs** of the sheep – Acts 11:29-30
- Performed within the **confines of the local church** – 1 Pet. 5:2