
INTERNATIONAL TRAINING AND EQUIPPING MINISTRIES
Institute in the Foundations of Church Leadership
ITEM Ministries

PAUL'S ADVICE TO ELDERS (PASTORS)

Intro:

- A. In 1 Pet. 5:1-2, and here in Acts 20:17, 28 it is clear that pastors, elders, and bishops are the same person.
- B. In Acts 20:28-35 Paul gives us an outline of the priorities for elders in this Scripture.
- C. We will use this Scripture as a base for amplifying these priorities in the following outline.

I. To Keep Right With God (Acts 20:28)

- Eph. 2:10; 2 Tim. 2:19-22

 - A. God requires only two things of the believer:
 - 1. To be filled with the Spirit
 - Eph. 5:18b – be filled
 - 1 Thes. 5:19 – don't quench
 - Eph. 4:30 – do not grieve
 - Gal. 5:16, 22, 23 – walk in the Spirit

 - 2. To grow in the knowledge of God's will by studying, and applying His Word.
 - 2 Tim. 2:15 – be diligent, rightly divide
 - 1 Tim. 4:16 – pay close attention to your teaching
 - 1 Cor. 9:26, 27 – I beat my body daily
 - Eph. 4:22-29 – lay aside your old self
- Note: Maturity is a matter of degree, but spirituality is an absolute.

II. To Feed and Lead the Flock Acts 20:28

- A. God has given the leadership, care, and feeding of His flock to the elders (pastors)...the very flock for which He paid with His own blood.
 - 1. This is a grave and high responsibility
 - 2. Demands dedication to study, and spirituality for the purpose of perfecting the saints, which in turn glorifies Christ.

- John 21:15-17
- Col. 1:28

- B. Oversight (v. 28) emphasizes the authority aspect of the elder's (pastor's) role.
 - 1 Pet. 5:1-3

- C. For faithful leaders there is reward. (1 Tim. 5:17, 18)

- D. For unfaithful leaders there is chastisement. (1 Tim. 5:19, 20; James 3:1)

III. To Watch, Warn, and Protect the Flock (Acts 20:29-31)

- A. Elders are to watch and warn believers that Satan invades every church.
- B. They are to be continually sensitive to the presence of false teachers, and teach the members of the flock to recognize their false doctrine.
- C. Satan's victims will be the immature ones, the spiritual children, the ones who are not spiritually mature. (Eph. 4:14; 1 John 2:13, 14)
- D. If your church has membership. One of the surest ways for the elders to protect the flock is to screen member candidates very thoroughly before accepting anyone into church membership.
 - The genuineness of their faith should be tested carefully and in depth. (1 John 4: 1, 2, 3)
- E. Another serious responsibility of elders is to discipline the members of the flock in order to purify the body, and keep its witness for Christ above reproach.
 - The negative behavior of one member of the Body reflects on the whole. By immediate and thorough discipline, the elders will keep closing potential entrances for Satan into the Body. (cf. 1 Tim. 1:10; 1 Cor. 5:10; Col. 1:27b, 28; Matt. 18: 15-17)
- F. Discipline is essential for keeping the Body pure, and for making the truth of Christ credible to both the congregation and to the community.
 - Therefore, the Elders are to warn or admonish (Lit. "to put into one's mind", to counsel with a view toward judgment if something does not cease and/or change) with love. (Gal. 6:1; 1 Cor. 16: 13, 14 (NAS(
- G. The object of the discipline is to correct – not expel. (2 Thes. 3:14-15)
- H. Satan attacks from two directions.
 - 1. From the outside
 - He actually sows false believers in the midst of a true and growing Body of believers. (Matt. 13:24, 25; 2 Cor. 11:12-15)
 - Note: If a church is not being invaded then it is a sign that it may be weak, without impact and unworthy of Satan's concern and attention.
 - 2. From the inside.
 - Satan also attacks from the inside by leading weak and immature believers into counterfeit doctrines thus bringing about the possibility of dissension and division within the Body, drawing or forcing people away. (1 Tim. 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 2:16,17)

IV. To Pray and Study (Acts 20:32)

- A. Pray: Elders are to have a consistent relationship with God through prayer (Acts 6:4; 1 Thes. 5:17-20; James 4:8)

- Note: One of the highlights of the New Testament is the prayers of Paul for his people. (cf. Eph. 1:15-23; 3:13-21; Phil. 1:4,5; Col. 1:9-14)

B. Study: Elders are to grow constantly in the Word. It is the Word that makes and keeps a man pure and mature. (1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17)

V. To Be Free From Self-Interest (Acts 20: 33, 35)

A. The elders are responsible for setting the pattern (for the flock) of a rightly oriented life

1. A life which has only one goal, THE GLORY OF CHRIST.
2. The elders must keep their own motives pure. (1 Cor. 10:31)

B. Elders are to also be an example for giving, in that Christ laid down the principle of selflessness in “it is more blessed to give than to receive.” (1 Pet. 5:2)

C. The emphasis and the example of New Testament giving is that giving is not a legal obligation to God, but that giving cheerfully, and ungrudgingly, and sacrificially brings blessings to the giver.

- Giving is not for God’s need, for He has none. But giving is to bless the soul of the faithful believer. (Phil. 4:15-19)

D. You can’t divide your allegiance between Christ and money.

1. Jesus said you can’t serve God AND money (Matt. 6:24).
2. The servant of the Lord (pastoral - elder) is not to demand or expect anything, but to graciously accept what is given, never wanting more, always content. (Lev. 19:13; 2 Cor. 9:6, 7)

V. To Be Free From Self-Interest

“Every minister of the Gospel, when he comes to lie down to die, will desire to be able to make this appeal, and to leave a solemn testimony there, that it was not for gold or ease or fame, that he toiled...(how fruitless is the man) “who has been worldly minded; who has sought to become rich; and the only memorial of whose life are that he sought ‘the fleece, not the flock,’ and that he was gained the property, not the souls of men.”

Albert Barnes, Notes on the Acts of the Apostles