

The Nature of an Eldership

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Generally speaking, the first order of business in any study is to define the terms with which one must work.
- B. The study of the nature of an eldership is largely that defining an eldership.
- C. Let us examine what the eldership is and is not.

WHAT THE ELDERSHIP IS NOT

- A. The eldership is not an office which may be ignored and left vacant.
In Acts 14:23, elders were appointed in every church Paul and Barnabas had established during the 1st missionary journey.
- B. The eldership is not an office which may be extended over a plurality of congregations.
- C. The eldership is not an office which may be extended over something else besides a local congregation.
- D. The eldership is not an office vested with authority to alter God's Word. No man can do that. Galatians 1:6-9
- E. The eldership is not an office held jointly with deacons. Elders and deacons have separate functions and responsibilities.
- F. The eldership is not an office to be held independently by one man.
- G. The eldership is not a puppet office to be manipulated by others.
- H. The eldership is not an office with dictatorial powers.
- I. The eldership is not an office without authority.
 - 1. God has given elders authority.
 - 2. That authority should be properly understood.
 - 3. That authority may not be abused.
 - 4. That authority must be carried out for the good of the church.

WHAT THE ELDERSHIP IS

- A. The eldership is a body of spiritually qualified men charged with the oversight of the local community of Christians in a congregation. Acts 20:28 - Therefore

take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

- B. The eldership is a body of spiritually qualified men charged with the task of “feeding the flock” under their oversight.
1. **Acts 20:28** - . . . To feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with His own blood.”
 2. **1 Peter 5:2** – “Feed the flock of God which is among you taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly . . .
- C. The eldership is a body of spiritually qualified men charged with the task of watching out for the souls under their oversight. **Hebrews 13:17** - Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.
- D. The eldership is a body of spiritually qualified men whose duty it is of being proper examples to the saints. **1 Peter 5:3** - Nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.
- E. The eldership is a body of spiritually qualified men whose duty it is to teach, admonish, lead, and rule the congregation under their oversight. Elders are to be “able to teach” so they will teach.
- F. The eldership is a body of spiritually qualified men whose task it is to stop the mouths of false teachers. **Titus 1:9-11** - Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.
- 10 For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers,
 - 11 whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.
- G. The eldership is a body of spirituality qualified men who are charged as watchmen of God with a view to giving account for their charge.
1. **Ezekiel 3:17-21** – “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me:
 - 18 When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand.

19 Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.

20 “Again, when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die; because you did not give him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand.

21 Nevertheless if you warn the righteous man that the righteous should not sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning; also you will have delivered your soul.”

2. **Hebrews 13:17** – Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

CONCLUSION:

A. The nature of the eldership is seen in:

1. The Bible’s description of them.
2. The level of their qualifications
3. The spiritual aspects of their duties and work.

B. **God’s Plan for Man’s Salvation**