



Today's Sermons

Morning: What is Right with the Church?

Evening: Who is A Pastor?

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Times of Services:

Sunday

Bible Study:... 10:00am

AM Worship:...11:00am

PM Worship:...6:00pm

2nd Sunday:.....1:30pm

Wednesday

Bible Study:.....7:00pm

Radio Program

Sunday:.....7:30am

"Back to the Bible"

AM 580 WSKS

93.5 FM

**We Extend A
Warm & Cordial
Welcome
To All Our
Visitors!**

"IF A MAN DESIRE THE OFFICE OF A BISHOP"

Roger D. Campbell

It is the Lord's will that there be brothers in the Lord that serve as shepherds of a local congregation (Acts 20:28). In view of this, the Bible records that Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in every church during the course of their first preaching journey (Acts 14:23). These men, who collectively compose the presbytery or eldership (1 Timothy 4:14), are charged with the task of overseeing the spiritual affairs of a local flock of God's people (1 Peter 5:1-3).

In addition to the above-noted passages, there are two more lengthy sections of Scripture that touch on the role and qualifications of those that serve as bishops or pastors: Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Timothy 3:1-7. The text of 1 Timothy 3:1,2,7 reads, *"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office [position, NKJV] of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless . . . Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."*

It is not our intent in this article to examine this passage in detail. Instead, we want to point out four significant matters pertaining to elders that are easily seen in the text of 1 Timothy 3. Should a brother in the Christ be contemplating serving his Lord and his Lord's people as an overseer, then let him be aware of some things that will be required of him. For such a brother, --

Continued Inside

Introducing the Church

The Church about which these charts have been compiled is:

- The church Isaiah prophesied about some 750 years before it was established — (Isaiah 2:2-3)
- The church Micah prophesied about in about 710 B.C. — (Micah 4:1-2)
- The church Daniel foretold about some 600 years before its establishment — (Daniel 2:31-45)
- The church Zechariah said would be established in Jerusalem — (Zechariah 1:16)
- The church Joel prophesied about — (Joel 2:28-32)
- The church Jesus promised He would build — (Matthew 16:18)
- The church Jesus said would be established in Jerusalem during the lifetime of some then present. — (Mark 9:1)
- The church that was established in Jerusalem on May 28, A.D. 30 — (Acts 2)
- The church Jesus added the obedient to — (Acts 2:47)
- The church Saul (Paul) vigorously persecuted — (Galatians 1:13)
- The church Christ gave His life for — (Ephesians 5:2 5)
- The church of which Christ is both its Head and Savior — (Ephesians 5:2 3)
- The church that is the Bride of Christ — (Revelation 21:9)
- The church that is subject to Christ — (Ephesians 5:24)
- The church Paul described to the Ephesians as being: (Ephesians 5:27)
 - "A glorious church"
 - "Without spot"
 - "Without wrinkle"
 - "Holy"
 - "Without blemish"
- The church that Christ will deliver up to the Father. (1 Corinthians 15:24)



Barnes' Bible Charts

Let him understand what his ROLE would be – "*the office/position of a bishop*" (1 Timothy 3:1). Actually, this English expression comes from only one Greek word ("episkope)." *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* says, "In 1 Tim. 3:1, the word 'office,' in the phrase 'the office of a bishop,' has nothing to represent it in the original; the R.V. marg. gives 'overseer' for 'bishop,' and the phrase lit. is 'overseership.'" In a similar fashion, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* says that the word "episkope" refers to "overseership, office, charge . . . spec. the office of a bishop (the overseer or presiding officer of a Christian church)" [pp. 242,243; word no. 1984]. The long and the short of it is this: one that serves as a bishop is an overseer (one of the overseers) of a local congregation. He, coupled with his fellow shepherds, is responsible for seeing to it that the Lord's work is carried out, and that it is carried out properly. This is an awesome duty, one whose importance *far exceeds* the significance of the role played by a chancellor of a university, a chief of police, the President of the United States, or anything else that any human being might do in the secular realm. Make no mistake about it, this matter of overseership is serious business. It is not for little boys, it is not for non-leaders, it is not for those whose first love is anything but the Lord's Cause, and it certainly is not for the faint of heart.

Let him have a proper DESIRE – "*If a man desire the office of a bishop. . .*" (1 Timothy 3:1). In this text, the word "desire" comes from the Greek word "orego," which means "to stretch one's self out in order to touch or to grasp something, to reach after or desire something" [*Thayer's*, p. 452; word no. 3713]. This same Greek word is used in only two other New Testament verses. In Hebrews 11:16 we read that the patriarchs *desired* a better country, that is, heaven. The other reference is 1 Timothy 6:10, where mention is made of those that "*coveted after*" money. If we can understand what it means to long for heaven or to have a craving for money, then we can appreciate what it means to have a desire to serve as an overseer. Two quick thoughts: (1) A brother must not be appointed to serve as an elder against his will, that is, he should serve "*not by constraint, but willingly*" (1 Peter 5:2); (2) A brother's motive for wanting to serve as a shepherd over God's flock must be a proper one. It ought to be out of love for God's church and his conviction that he is confident that he could serve his Lord well in the capacity of a pastor. No man is fit to serve as an elder as long as his motive for doing so is to boss people around, to receive the praises of men, or simply to carry on a family tradition (every brother in his family from his great-grandpa on down has been either an elder or deacon).

Let him be prepared to WORK – ". . . *he desireth a good work*" (1 Timothy 3:1). Brothers whom a local church chooses to serve as its elders must have a readiness to work.

Theirs is a demanding task. It requires diligent, never-ending effort on their part. They are to work as caretakers of God's house (1 Timothy 3:5), overseers/superintendents of every aspect of a congregation's work (Acts 20:28), and shepherds of the flock (1 Peter 5:1-3). Throughout its history, the Lord's church has been blessed with a great number of outstanding elders and elderships. It is also true that many churches have suffered because those men whom they have appointed to serve as pastors have either been unwilling or unable to do their work properly. Is a brother up to the potential emotional, physical, and family stress that this work might involve? If not, then let him wisely "pass" on serving as an overseer. A faithful, sound elder's work may at times go unappreciated by those whom he serves. This is unfortunate, but let him keep working and not grow weary in well-doing (Galatians 6:9). There is "*a crown of glory that fadeth not away*" awaiting every faithful shepherd (1 Peter 5:4).

Let him be QUALIFIED – "*A bishop must then be . . . Moreover he must have . . .*" (1 Timothy 3:2,7). Those qualifications or character traits that the Holy Spirit sets forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 are not optional matters. They are not suggestions, nor are they simply desirable items. They are absolute essentials in the life of each man that serves as a church's overseer and "*the steward of God*" (Titus 1:7). The Bible clearly states that a brother "must" possess the character traits that are enumerated (1 Timothy 3:1; Titus 1:7). Just as a person "must" believe in God in order to please Him (Hebrews 11:6), just as one "must" be born again in order to enter the kingdom (John 3:3,5,7), and just as we "must" all appear before the judgment seat of the Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10), so an elder "must" be the type of person described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. God has spoken in this matter. Let us accept His guidelines.

Brother, have you considered the possibility of one day serving as an elder in God's church? Are you already serving in that capacity? Church, are you contemplating the appointment of overseers? Whatever your particular situation might be, remember: for each brother that serves as a shepherd over God's flock, let him understand his *role*, let him have a proper *desire*, let him be prepared to *work*, and let him be *qualified*. Thank God for those men of God that faithfully serve as elders.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Aug 14 – Preach & Eat – 1:30 Service
- Aug 28 – Song Service
- Please give support money for Chinese orphans to Minnie Kennell