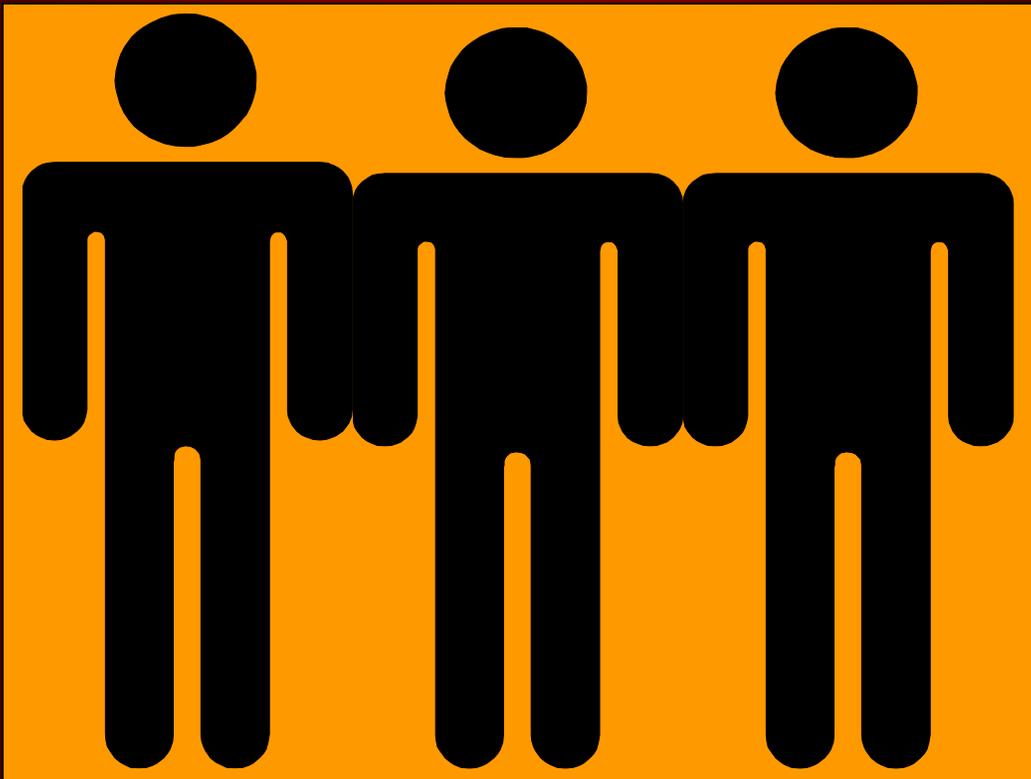


Leadership Training

Preparing Men to be

ELDERS
&
DEACONS

13 LESSONS



Prepared by: Paul E. Cantrell
2008

Training for Life and Eternity Series

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**Elders
&
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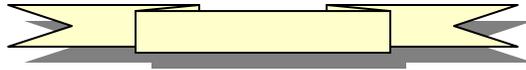
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2008

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Lesson One

"God's Plan for Leadership"

"Why should I or anyone else want to be a leader in the church?" It has its headaches and heartaches. They have to deal with a lot of trouble, divisiveness, and strife. It takes a lot of extra time. We believe the answer is simple:

- a) God has planned for there to be proper leadership in the church.
- b) If good, spiritual men do not offer to lead, then those unqualified will take the position of leadership and cause problems.

Therefore, before any one takes on a demanding, sacrificing, and often unappreciated leadership role; he really ought to see the vital need for such proper leadership and have some very valid reasons for wanting to serve. In this study we want to look at God's Plan for Leadership in the church.

**God's
Leadership**

Christ
as Supreme Head

Elders
Who Oversee Congregation

Deacons
*Who Have Special Job
Assignment*

Evangelists
*Who Proclaim the Word
of God to Both
Sinner & Saint*

Teachers
*Who Teach, Exhort, Rebuke,
and Encourage God's
People*

Leadership Roles in the Church: Christ

Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God is the supreme head of the church as designed by God (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18).

1. What does this mean? _____

2. How does He exert His Headship?

a) The Means:
(Matt. 28:18-19) _____

(Matt. 4:4) _____

b) The Attitude:
(Matt. 20:20-28) _____

(Phil. 2:5-8) _____

c) The Motivation:
(Lk. 19:10) _____

(Lk. 6:46) _____

Those who reject Jesus' headship give up a Redeemer (John 8:21), reject the love of God (John 3:16), and condemn themselves unto everlasting destruction (Matt. 25:46).

Leadership Roles in the Church

God has designed leadership roles for the church that are specifically mentioned. The following are those people:

- a) Eph. 4:11 _____
- b) Phil. 1:1 _____
- c) Acts 14:23 _____
- d) 1 Tim. 3:1, 3:8 _____
- e) Rom. 16:1 _____
- f) James 3:1 _____
- g) 1 Tim. 5:9, 10 _____
- h) Titus 2:3-4 _____
- i) 1 Cor. 12:1-11 _____

Leadership in the early church was somewhat different than after the first century. The miraculous element made a big difference in what was done and by whom. These gifts did not last, but the benefits of the miraculous still helps us today to have complete faith in the Inspired and Revealed Word of God that has been confirmed by miracles, wonders, and signs (Mark 16:19-20; Heb. 2:1-4; 1 Cor. 13:8-13). The Work of Apostles and Prophets have given us the Word of God by which our lives are to be governed just the same as when first spoken and written down by these miraculously endowed people.

- a) There was the role of the **Apostles & Prophets** (Eph. 3:1-7).
- b) There was the role of the **miraculously endowed people** in the church (1 Cor. 14).
- c) There were the **7 men appointed** to a special task (Acts 6:1-8).

Permanent leadership in the church would be the following:

- a) **Elders** (also called Overseers or Shepherds)—These are older men with experience to see after the church as a whole.
- b) Deacons (also called Servants)—They were given special tasks to see after under the Elders' Oversight.
- c) **Preachers** (also called Evangelists or Ministers)—They would preach to both sinners and saints.
- d) **Teachers** (also called Masters or Encouragers)—they would teach and strive to help mature the saints. Women were forbidden to teach over the man, but were encouraged to teach younger women (1 Tim. 2:11-14; Tit. 2:3-5).

We will look at the role of Elders and Deacons in the remainder of these Lessons.

Leadership Without Elders

But what do you do when you do not have Elders and Deacons? In some instances a church may go for years without appointing elders. In some cases, this may be true because they do not have anyone qualified to be appointed—and in other cases, there are men running the church who would not qualify to be an elder. Elders should be appointed, but only when they are sufficiently qualified **according to God's standard!**

When a new congregation is established, there has to be some kind of leadership in the group until Elders can be appointed. It is obvious that the Evangelist (Preacher) will be the one to

help the church to become organized in order to function as a group. The Preacher is not the "head of the church" nor is he "over" the church. Their job is to help the church to develop to the point where elders and deacons can be appointed. In some instances this was done within a year's time or less—in the early church (Acts 14:23). However, it usually takes longer in our society today. Please notice and keep well in mind that there was to be no "one man rule" in the church! While an Evangelist or a Preacher may help to get the church started, they should immediately do two things:

- a) Start teaching the need for "God-Ordained Leadership!"
- b) Help the church to get organized into some kind of committee structure so that the business of the church can get done quickly and correctly! The "Authority" for the group should be handled by a "business meeting" of all the men.

The closest thing in Scripture that could give credence to the above concept is as following:

- a) There is no indication that the church at Corinth had Elders and Deacons.
- b) Paul rebukes them for their carnal divisiveness (1 Cor. 3:1-9). They needed to work together!
- c) The church was to come together "*to deliver such a one unto Satan*" because he would not repent (1 Cor. 5:1-5). This shows "group action!"
- d) Their worship was disorderly and needed to be planned out so it could be beneficial to all (1 Cor. 14). Someone was needed in order to help keep things orderly.
- e) They were to function as a body together—which requires some kind of orderly appointments (1 Cor. 12:14-26).

It would also seem obvious that some kind of orderly arrangements have to be made (plain common sense) in order to get things done, but someone has to keep things in check. In the absence of Elders, the men's business meeting seems to be the obvious approach—which helps to keep down the "one man rule!" The group can ask different men to feel responsible for separate areas of responsibility, with others helping them to see that the work is done. They carry out their responsibilities according to the instructions of the "business meeting."

Concluding Thoughts

There is no question that "leadership" is needed for any group to work together effectively. Until a congregation is blessed to have spiritually qualified Elders and Deacons, it is important that they function as a group with whatever leadership they have—and strive to keep down the desire on the part of one or more men to want to be "lords" over the church (3 John 9-10). As the men work together, it should become obvious which ones are the possible future Elders and Deacons within the congregation.

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. Every one should want to be a "leader" in the church.
- _____ 2. Unqualified men get into leadership roles because the "better qualified" are unwilling to serve.
- _____ 3. There are no leadership roles "spelled out" in the New Testament.
- _____ 4. Jesus is the "supreme authority" in the church.
- _____ 5. Rejecting Jesus' authority can bring on disastrous results.
- _____ 6. Leadership in the early church was somewhat different than after the first century.
- _____ 7. The miraculously endowed people in the "early church" were a necessity in order to get the church started correctly.
- _____ 8. Elders, Deacons, Preachers, Teachers are the only permanent "spelled-out" leaders in the church for today.
- _____ 9. A church cannot be acceptable to God without having Elders and Deacons.
- _____ 10. The "Men's Business Meeting" is a good way to keep down a "one-man-rule" in the church.
- _____ 11. There is no Bible Authority for the "Men's Business Meeting" approach to leadership.
- _____ 12. "Common Sense" demands some kind of leadership in the church.
- _____ 13. "Leadership" is needed in order for any group to work together effectively.

"The Place of Elders"

Old Testament Leaders

Jer. 5:30-31—"An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule on their own authority; and My people love it so! But what will you do at the end of it?"

Jer. 23:14—"Also among the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen a horrible thing: the committing of adultery and walking in falsehood; and they strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one has turned back from his wickedness. All of them have become to Me like Sodom, and her inhabitants like Gomorrah."

Ezek. 22:6—"Behold, the rulers of Israel, each according to his power, have been in you for the purpose of shedding blood."

Hosea 4:6—"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children."

Micah 3:11—"Her leaders pronounce judgment for a bribe, her priests instruct for a price and her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the Lord saying, 'Is not the Lord in our midst? Calamity will not come upon us.'"

ETC.

Someone needs to be concerned about God's people:

- a) Who cares if they remain faithful to God or fall away;
- b) Who cares if they go to Heaven or Hell;
- c) Who cares if they accomplish their mission or purpose for existence!

The Priests and the Prophets were the ones that God ordained to be those caring leaders of the Nation of Israel (under the Old Covenant)! But they continually failed to care as they should have. God, Himself, had to intervene at times in order to preserve the Nation. At the time that these prophets were writing, it was a critical time for His chosen Nation! The outcome was:

- a) The Northern Kingdom was carried away into captivity by the Assyrians.
- b) The Southern Kingdom was carried away into Babylonian captivity.

Today, we need the kind of leaders who do care—not only to be and do what is right and just, but who guard, protect, and lead the flock of God in the work He has designed for them. If we compromise on those who are appointed to lead, the church will suffer the consequences!

God has appointed four basic kinds of leaders for His Church—Elders, Deacons, Preachers, and Teachers. Out of these four, the Elders are the ones who have been given the primary job of overseeing the church. In this lesson, we want to see the **place** of Elders in the Lord's Church.

Greek Terms That Identify These Leaders (Elders)

Πρεσβυτερος --Presbuteros

This Greek word appears in the following passages and is generally translated "Elder" in most versions: Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4; 20:17, 18; 1 Tim. 5:1, 17, 19; Tit. 1:5; Jas. 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1. This term is a carry over from the Jewish usage and practice more than likely (Matt. 21:23). When referring to a group of Elders (council of the Jewish people), it is referred to as the Presbytery. As you might guess, this is where the Presbyterian Church gets its name. The term generally denotes men of age and wisdom.

Ποιμεν—Poimen

This Greek word occurs several times in the New Testament—Matt. 9:36; 25:32; 26:31; Mk. 6:34; 14:27; Lk. 2:8, 15, 18, 20; Jn. 10:2, 11, 12, 14, 16; Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4. This was a very familiar term to the Jewish people who had sheep and shepherds. Most of the above passages refer to such. Jesus compares Himself to the loving shepherd who cares for His sheep. This word is translated "pastor" one time, but "shepherds" the other 17 times (KJV). Most Versions use "shepherd." Only a few of the above references are connected with the concept of leadership in the church.

- 1) 1 Pet. 5:4—Jesus is referred to as the "*Chief Shepherd.*"
- 2) 1 Pet. 5:1-2—Elders are told to "*Shepherd the flock of God which is among you.*"
- 3) Eph. 4:11—The KJV uses "*Pastors,*" but most versions use "*Shepherds.*" In this context it is obviously referring to "Elders."
- 4) Acts 20:28—In this verse, the Apostle Paul is addressing the "Elders" in the church at Ephesus (Acts 20:17) and tells them they are not only to take heed to themselves but also to the flock of God—they were to "Shepherd" the church. The KJV translates this "to feed," which is obviously incorrect. Feeding is only a part of their responsibility.

Επισκοπος—Episkopos

This Greek word occurs about six times with reference to the Elders of the church. An ecclesiastical term (Bishop) is used to "translate" the Greek word. The actual meaning of the term would be "to be an overseer or a superintendent" or to "oversee" a situation or group of people. The NKJV translates this word "Overseer" three times (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:2). In all three places, "Overseer" is tied together with "shepherd" and "elder." Acts 20:17-28 illustrates this idea:

- 1) "*From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders (Presbuteros) of the church*" (20:17)
- 2) "*The Holy Spirit made you Overseers*"(Episkopos) (Acts 20:28)
- 3) "*To Shepherd (Poimen) the Church of God*" (Acts 20:28)

The Place of "Elders"

1. Why has God ordained that there be "Elders" in every church? (Acts 14:23) _____

2. How do the Greek terms identify their place in the church?

a) Acts 14:23 _____

b) Acts 20:28 _____

c) 1 Pet. 5:1-4 _____

3. How does Heb. 13:7, 17 indicate the place of Elders? _____

4. How does 1 Thess. 5:12-13 indicate the place of Elders? _____

5. What does 1 Tim. 5:17-20 indicate about the place of Elders? _____

Concluding Thoughts

The Scriptures indicate that the Elders play a major role in the leadership of the church. It must therefore be important that properly qualified men be appointed to this place of responsibility—men who have had adequate experiences in life and have proven themselves to be qualified or ready for such an important role in the church. The following lessons will look at the qualities needed by such men and what their responsibilities would require of them.

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. The Priests and Prophets were those whom God desired to use to help guide and care for His chosen people.
- _____ 2. God blamed only the Priests for His chosen people being carried away captive by the Assyrians and the Babylonians.
- _____ 3. Compromising on choosing leaders for the church will bring its just due.
- _____ 4. Only Elders have been given the primary job of overseeing God's people.
- _____ 5. Three different Greek terms are used to identify those who will be expected to oversee God's people.
- _____ 6. "Poimen" is miss-translated "pastor." by the KJV.
- _____ 7. The Episcopal Church gets its name from a Greek word dealing with leadership.
- _____ 8. If Jesus is the Chief Shepherd, then Elders must be the Under Shepherd.
- _____ 9. Only the Holy Spirit can appoint "Overseers."
- _____ 10. There must be a plurality of Elders in each church.
- _____ 11. "Rule" is an improper translation in Heb. 13:7, 17.
- _____ 12. An "Elder" can also be an "Evangelist."
- _____ 13. Honor is to be given to those who deserve it by their godly life.
- _____ 14. A man is placed in an "office" when he is qualified to be an Elder.

"Qualities of Elders"

Indications of Spiritual Maturity

1 Timothy 3:1-7

"Blameless"
"Husband of One Wife"
"Temperate"
"Sober-Minded"
"Of Good Behavior"
"Hospitable"
"Able to Teach"
"Not given to wine"
"Not violent"
"Not greedy for money"
"Gentle"
"Not Quarrelsome"
"Not Covetous"
"Who rules his own house well"
"Having his children in
submission with all reverence"
"Not a novice"
"A good testimony from those
who are outside"

Titus 1:5-9

"Blameless"
"Husband of one wife"
"Having Faithful children not
accused of dissipation or
insubordination"
"Not self-willed"
"Not Quick-Tempered"
"Not given to wine"
"Not violent"
"Not Greedy for Money"
"Hospitable"
"A Lover of what is good"
"Sober-Minded"
"Just"
"Holy"
"Self-controlled"
"Holding fast the Faithful Word"

God desires spiritually mature men to oversee His people! He is not as much concerned about the outward appearance of a man as He is the **heart** of those who will be the Shepherds of His Flock! Look at how Jeremiah expressed it:

"Thus says the LORD, 'Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,' declares the LORD."

A good indicator of the spiritual condition of a congregation can be seen in the spiritual condition of its leaders. Spiritual leaders encourage and motivate the congregation to be more spiritual in their outlook and lives.

Let's take a quick look at the kind of persons God is calling on His people to be—especially those who lead as Elders.

I. He is a Christian!

He has been redeemed—bought by the blood of Jesus! He has made a diligent effort to grow, learn, and mature in Christ. He will always need to do this! But he is mature enough to be an EXAMPLE before the church!

1 Pet. 5:3 _____

He obviously is not a novice (a new convert). His life sets the pace for the rest of God's people to follow.

Heb. 13:7 _____

He can say with the Apostle Paul: ***"Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ."*** (1 Cor. 11:1).

II. He Strives to be blameless

He strives to live a life beyond reproach. His life shows good behavior and holiness. He is not a violent man nor quarrelsome, but gentle towards all. He is in control of him-

self as well as in what he eats and drinks. His primary interest is in God and His Kingdom—not in things or possessions or money. He shows that he has moral and spiritual ethics to govern his life. He strives to live by the Golden Rule. He deals with his weaknesses to keep them in control. His life is respected both in the church and outside the church.

Matt. 5:13-14 _____

III. He has a good attitude and spirit!

He is a lover of all that is good. He is just in his attitudes and actions towards others. He has the right outlook on life and others. He is not stubborn or arrogant or overbearing, but he is easy to approach and is willing to listen.

Jas. 1:19 _____

IV. He is older and more mature than the average member.

The term “elder” denotes age, wisdom, and experience in dealing with life’s challenges. This wisdom will help him to offer good counsel. He will have the experience to know how to deal with problem situations. He has had an opportunity to prove himself in marriage. He has chosen wisely and lived wisely with his mate. He has raised children who respect him & conduct themselves wisely. They function well as a family.

1 Pet. 3:7 _____

V. He is actively working as a Christian.

He shows his concern for his brothers & sisters in Christ. He shows his concern for the church as a brotherhood.

1 Pet. 2:17 _____

He shows his concern for the poor and needy.

Matt. 25:31-46 _____

He shows his concern for the lost.

Matt. 28:18-20 _____

Such men will be esteemed and highly loved for their work's sake! (1 Thess. 5:12-13).

Concluding Thoughts

Leaders whose lives measure up to these qualities should make the best spiritual leaders for the church. Even though these qualities will challenge the best within a person and will be hard to reach; yet, to compromise and accept less than these qualities for leaders will be reflected in the effectiveness of their spiritual impact upon the group. We need to encourage leaders to reach up to meet the challenges rather than be satisfied with the mediocre. And the church needs to show gratitude and respect for those who aspire to such heights of leadership qualities.

Questions for Discussion

True or false

- _____ 1. God is concerned about the outward appearance, as well as, the heart of those who lead in His Church.
- _____ 2. Self-Control is a desired quality, but not a necessary one for a spiritual leader.
- _____ 3. To be able to teach well demonstrates one's mental qualities.
- _____ 4. Wise and just decisions are necessary to keep the respect of those who are being led.
- _____ 5. One's view of money will determine his effectiveness as a spiritual leader.
- _____ 6. A good and desirable social quality is to be hospitable.
- _____ 7. A spiritually-minded leader is one who is gravely concerned about what the Holy Spirit teaches in His Word.
- _____ 8. A spiritual life is a holy life.
- _____ 9. A leader's domestic situation (home life) helps to show his ability as a spiritual leader.
- _____ 10. Disciplining, training and teaching of children cannot be ignored by one who desires to be an effective leader in the church.
- _____ 11. One who has been unconcerned for his families' physical well-being can still make a good leader.
- _____ 12. Maturity deals only with how much one knows.
- _____ 13. The spiritual condition of a congregation can be seen in the spiritual condition of its leaders.
- _____ 14. A good leader will strive to live a life beyond reproach.
- _____ 15. God's qualities for men who will be appointed as Elders can be easily reached for all men who will put forth the effort.

"The Work of Elders"

"Unto whom much is given, much will be required!" (Luke 12:48)

Just to have the privilege to have heard the Gospel and become a Christian is in itself a great privilege—and **requires much of us!** But to be appointed to a role of responsibility among God's people is not only a great privilege, but **also requires much of us!** There is no greater service for any man than to be a servant of the King of Kings! And there is no greater challenge than to become a leader of redeemed souls in our journey to Eternity! God has not only designed for us to work for our living, but also to work in His Kingdom!

2 Thess. 3:10-12 _____

Phil. 2:12-13 _____

A Call to Work!

To be appointed an Elder in the Church of our Lord is a work also! Paul said that it is a good work to be desired (1 Tim. 3:1). Such will call for sacrifice and hardship at times. *"The church is not a play house for men with no sense of stewardship, but a field of labor."* The need for excellence in leading God's people is exceedingly great. To accept the title in name only is to deceive ourselves and cheat the church of what is rightfully expected. The Apostle Peter warned against men wanting to be "Lords" rather than "Servants" in the Church (1 Pet. 5:1-4). There is also the danger of "pride" that will lead to "Lording it over the flock." (3 John 9-10).

Matt. 20:26-27 _____

John 10:11 _____

Greatness in the church is not found in:

- 1) Attaining to a position of authority over people;
- 2) Having power or dominion over people;
- 3) Having the privilege of getting things done my way in the church;
- 4) Regimenting and whipping people into line.....

But Greatness is found in being a servant! You have to care about people in order to serve them. Such will have no desire to drive people, but to lead them into paths of righteousness! They will not be self-serving, but self-denying servants. Such people have broken out of self, and are willing to get involved in the welfare of others.

Phil. 2:1-4 _____

The "Duties" of Elders

One of the approaches that can be taken in getting an understanding of what can be expected of Elders is to analyze the terms used of these men:

- 1) **Πρεσβυτερος**--This term identifies these men as older men with experience and wisdom. The natural thing to do when you want good counsel is to go to older people with experience. They have learned by trial and error over a period of time what to do and what not to do. Such men (as a group) should be the ones that we would expect to make these important "judgment" decisions for the church. Someone has to and logically it would seem to be the older and wiser men among us.

1 Cor. 6:1-5 _____

- 2) **Ποιμεν**--This term is translated Shepherd. He is one who tends to the needs of the flock. He sees after their food, water, safety, and whatever else that needs to be done. Jesus shows that these men should be "loving Shepherds!"

John 10:11-14 _____

- 3) **Επισκοπος**--This term is translated "overseer" or "superintendent." He is the person that is put in charge of another man's possessions and is expected to care for them as though they were his own. He will give an accounting at the proper time of how he has handled his responsibility of taking care of the owner's property.

Luke 16:1-2 _____

Elders are entrusted with the souls of those under their oversight and will some day give an accounting of how they have handled their job!

Heb. 13:17 _____

- 4) **Προισταμενος**--This term is translated "to rule over" or "to lead." This term is used in the following passages: (Rom. 12:8; 1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 3:4, 5, 12). It should be obvious to all, that to give responsibility to a person also gives him the authority to do the work. The words chosen to describe their work indicate things about their work. These men are not just given a title to make them feel good about themselves, but they have been given **WORK** to be done. They are, like the rest of the church, to be involved in working in the Lord's Vineyard! They are not just hearers only, but doers (Jas. 1:22). And they, too, will be blessed in their deeds (Jas. 1:25).

Titus 3:8 _____

Titus 3:14 _____

The Respect Shown to Elders

We, as a congregation, are told to respect (esteem) those who labor among us and are over us in the Lord (1 Thess. 5:12-13). Please notice! We are not told to esteem them for their "position," nor their "office," but for their **WORK!** This esteem is to be *"very highly in love."* This esteem is shown by our willingness to listen to and follow their teaching of the Word of God (as well as their example of faith) (Heb. 13:7). It is also shown by "obeying" or submitting to their rule or leadership (Heb. 13:17).

In the church, we have all stages of spiritual growth! Some are babes in Christ; some are teenagers in Christ; and some are adults in Christ. As we grow and develop towards full maturity in Christ:

- 1) We should have greater spiritual understanding;
- 2) We should be stronger and more stable;
- 3) We should have greater knowledge and grasp of truth;
- 4) We should be better servants.

It is great that we can see this growth in the lives, actions, and words of those in the church. We respect them for this growth! We want these to take the lead among us because of that growth. We want to follow in their steps that we may grow as well. BUT AT NO TIME will any of us reach a place of perfection—or no further possibility of growth! To be appointed as an Elder does not automatically say—**you have arrived!** (Acts 20:28). Which also means that Elders will not be perfect people, make perfect decisions every time, and give perfect advice and counseling every time. To expect such of them will make it very hard for us to show the proper respect that is due them.

Concluding Thoughts

When we appoint Elders according to the instructions of the Holy Spirit, it is sobering and serious business. Great things are at stake. Much work needs to be done, and these are the men who will lead us in these great works of righteousness. Lives need to be affected and changed by the Gospel. Talents and abilities need to be developed and used in the Kingdom of God. Great good needs to be done by dedicated servants of God.

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. Responsibility automatically goes along with privilege.
- _____ 2. The church is not a "play house" with no sense of Stewardship.
- _____ 3. To accept the title of Elder and not the work is hypocrisy.
- _____ 4. One cannot be a servant to others without having some authority.
- _____ 5. One has to care about people before he can serve them.
- _____ 6. A willing servant is one who has broken out of self and reaches out to do good to others.
- _____ 7. Elders are to be appointed from among the oldest men in the church.
- _____ 8. A true shepherd is a loving shepherd.
- _____ 9. A person cannot rule over people without having authority to be lords over them.
- _____ 10. Elders will give an account for those who become unfaithful under their leadership.
- _____ 11. Elders have to work in the church just like everyone else.
- _____ 12. The church is to show respect for Elders because of their position in the church.
- _____ 13. We are to follow decisions of Elders even if it goes against the teaching of Scripture.
- _____ 14. To expect Elders to be perfect in their lives, decisions, and counseling will bring great difficulty in allowing them to lead us.
- _____ 15. Appointing men to serve as Elders should not be overstressed as being a great event.

"The Teaching and Example of Elders"

God has designed for the church to have leaders. He has even specified who those leaders should be, what qualities they should have, and what their specific work will be in the congregation. It should be obvious to all of us that:

- a) Some persons are natural leaders—they just take over if allowed by the people around them. They can make good leaders or bad leaders—depending on several factors.
- b) Some persons have to be developed into being leaders—they are given responsibility and are expected to carry such out. These also can be good or bad leaders depending on different factors.

But whether they are natural or developed leaders is not the real issue. God wants them to be "**Spiritual Leaders!**" They are to be measured and appointed according to God's standard. In this lesson we want to look at two primary factors about Elders—their **Teaching** and their **Example**. But at the same time we want to offer encouragement to these men because their work is **Necessary, Demanding, Trying, and Important!** However, we might add...and often their work is an unappreciated one! Also, they will experience:

- a) Envy from the carnally-minded because they think about power!
- b) The self-seeking person will attempt to overthrow their influence and authority because they want it for themselves!
- c) They will be treated indifferently by the unconcerned!
- d) But thankfully, they will be praised and respected by the spiritually-minded!

The Teaching Role of Elders

The following are the Scriptures that emphasize this activity of Elders:

Acts 20:28 _____

Acts 20:31-32 _____

1 Thess. 5:12 _____

1 Tim. 3:2 _____

1 Tim. 5:17 _____

Tit. 1:9-11 _____

Heb. 13:7 _____

1 Pet. 5:2-3 _____

Comments or observations on the above Scriptures:

1. Elders need to teach and supervise the teaching program of the church. They are not the only teachers in the leadership of the church. They are to be sure that only truth is taught! The church needs to be kept **doctrinally pure, morally pure, and spiritually strong and alert!** They need to be able to refute false teachers—stopping their mouths mouths!
2. Elders need to be thoroughly trained and skilled in the use of the Word of God. They need to be able to protect the flock from the wolves who would lead them astray.
3. Elders need to have a backbone—they cannot sit idly by and allow the church to be mistaught and led astray.
4. Elders need to stand for truth in love and keep worldliness out of the church.
5. Elders are not to act like a "hireling," but be concerned shepherds over the flock of God. They are not a board of directors to be isolated and separated from the church. They work, teach, visit, encourage, admonish, and pray with the church.

The Examples of Elders

The following are the Scriptures that emphasize this role of Elders:

Acts 20:28 _____

1 Thess. 5:12 _____

Heb. 13:7 _____

1 Pet. 5:3 _____

Comments or Observations from the above Scriptures:

1. The very fact that Elders are instructed by God to take heed to themselves shows how important their example is before others.
2. Elders need to admonish God's people to be faithful, fruitful, steadfast, etc. But they must also show such by their actions.
3. Elders speak the Word of God, but also set an example before others of their obedient faith as well. The reason is given as to why to follow their example of faith—look at the outcome of such conduct.
4. Elders are not "lords" but "examples" to be followed. They cannot force people to do right, but they can exert a strong influence upon them by their own godly actions.
5. They persuade not only by their teaching, but by their example as well.

Serving with the Proper Spirit

Elders can teach and carry out some of the administrative activities; but if they do it with the wrong spirit or attitude, they will invalidate their example before others. The right spirit or attitude is critical to the effectiveness of the example of Elders.

Negative spirit:

1. They should not serve with a desire to dominate over or lord it over people (Matt. 20:25-28; 1 Pet. 5:3).
2. They should not serve with a hypocritical spirit (Matt. 23:3).
3. They should not be seeking a title or a high place in the church (Matt. 23:4-11).
4. They should not serve with a proud or haughty spirit (1 Tim. 3:6).
5. They should not serve with a spirit of: *"I have arrived....I do not make mistakes."* (1 Tim. 5:19-20).
6. They should not serve if they have to be coerced into serving (1 Tim. 3:1; 1 Pet. 5:2).
7. They should not serve to see they can get out of it (1 Pet. 5:2)

Positive spirit:

1. They should serve with a loving concern for people and the church (Acts 20:28).
2. They should serve with a desire to teach and persuade people to do right (Tit. 1:9).
3. They should serve with a desire to be a servant to God's people (Matt. 20:28).
4. They should serve with a spirit of humility (Jas. 4:8-10).
5. They should serve with a spirit of continual self-examination (2 Cor. 13:5).

Concluding Thoughts

We all live in a materialistically-minded world! It is not easy to live in the midst of such and not be affected by it—especially when we spend 5 to 6 days a week in the mist of it! Materialism, Sovereignty over people, selfishness fills our world. For that not to affect us adversely, we have to be constantly vigilant, prayer often, study the Word, have a lot of Christian fellowship, and to let Jesus be in control of our lives. It is very important that we keep such out of the church and out of the leadership of the church. We believe that proper attitudes of our leaders are critical to the success of the church.

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. A natural leader is always preferable over a developed leader.
- _____ 2. Setting the proper example before the church is more important than the teaching role of Elders.
- _____ 3. A self-seeking person will seek to overthrow the influence and authority of the Eldership.
- _____ 4. Elders are to be the only Teachers in the church.
- _____ 5. To "feed the flock" is a very limited translation of the Greek in Acts 20:28.
- _____ 6. Seeing that only truth is taught to the church is a primary duty of the Elders.
- _____ 7. Elders without a backbone make very poor Shepherds of the flock.
- _____ 8. Elders are not to be just a "Board of Directors."
- _____ 9. Elders cannot force people to live right, but they can persuade by their teaching and their Godly example.
- _____ 10. A right spirit is necessary to the effectiveness of an Elders example.
- _____ 11. Elders must be willing to be governed by the wishes of the congregation.
- _____ 12. Materialism and selfishness in Elders can affect the whole church.

"The Self-Evaluation of Elders"

The need for quality leadership is evident all about us in all areas of life! Politically, sometimes, we get in desperate straights for even decent leadership. In the Business World, we see constant efforts to develop proper and quality leadership. Community Colleges have night classes with the idea of helping to develop people for greater service and better jobs. If the world about us can see the need for developing quality leaders, why can't the church see the same need? Oh yes, we try to train our preachers, but what about all the others in the church?

I believe a lot of people in the church can see the need for developing quality leadership and they want such. The problem often times is that we may not have the person or persons that can help to teach and train people for greater service in the church. We can do something about this matter and we ought to! God's people have the greatest of challenges—**ON TO PERFECTION** (Matt. 5:48). God wants us to reach our highest potential so that He can use it to accomplish greater things to the saving of souls and to His glory!

If leaders in the church are to reach their highest potential of service, it will probably require constant efforts of "self-evaluation" along with positive and motivating evaluation from others. In this lesson we want to look at why leaders fail to improve and some of the areas where improvement is called for.

God's Call for Evaluation

God not only wants His leaders in the church to evaluate themselves, but He wants all of His sons and daughters to do so. Look at the following admonitions to this end:

Acts 20:28 _____

Rom. 12:3 _____

Rom. 15:14 _____

1 Cor. 10:12 _____

2 Cor. 13:5 _____

Gal. 3:3-6 _____

Gal. 6:7-9 _____

Eph. 4:1-3 _____

The passages are endless (almost) in the way of challenging us to evaluate our thinking, our desires, and our actions. But at the same time, there are many passages that call upon each of us

to challenge one another on.....to higher ground! We all have greater potential that we can reach if we are motivated sufficiently.

4 Reasons for Leaders Failure to Improve

I am sure that many reasons might be given for leaders failing to improve, but we will only look at the following four potential reasons for such.

1. **A Feeling of Self-Satisfaction**—It is to have the attitude that since we are a leader we have arrived—we don't need improvement. It is sort of like young people getting a college education—*"I have arrived....I don't need anymore schooling!"* Old preachers often illustrate this concept. They stop studying and learning and keeping their mind and life active—and they are also put on the shelf!
2. **Finding it easy to coast**—The first growth as a Christian is often rapid because there is much to learn. As we get older in the faith, growth comes harder, more tedious, and we have to be more determined. After we get the basics, it is much easier to coast! Leaders get in and find it too hard to improve and just coast.
3. **They find themselves getting too involved with others**—Involvement is a way of growth and improvement! However, sometimes it is too much and becomes a drain. Moses was in this situation as recorded in Numbers 11:10-12. Sometimes it is good to get away, to be refreshed, to be renewed, and to be re-determined to meet the challenge to grow.
4. **Do not conceive of the kind of Leadership needed in the church:**
 - a) It is a failure to see the need of a well-qualified leadership—in their lives, in their beliefs, and in their works.
 - b) Sometimes, it is a failure to see the need for a well-organized leadership. One that knows the membership and are capable of motivating the church to work together.
 - c) It may be a failure to see the need for real dedication on the part of leadership. Who will put first things first; who are devoted to God and to His Truth all the way. Who are not ashamed to live the Christian Life in all places. Who are not afraid to lead out with courage. Who have a real concern for God's people and God's cause. Who love the Lord and His church and not the pre-eminence.
 - d) It may also be a failure to see the need for visionary and vital leadership. Who know where they are and where they need to go and how they are going to get there. To be able to deal with unbelief, complacency, lack of love for God and a lack of being spiritually-minded.

The church does not need Leaders who fail to improve themselves. We need men and women who can honestly look into the Word of God and see themselves as God sees them and do something about it!

James 1:23-25 _____

3 Areas to Grow in!

While there are many areas that could be mentioned, we will look at only three areas that would seem to be very critical to improvement.

- 1. Our faith continually needs to be strengthened!** (Heb. 3:12-13). Israel's leadership failed God's people because they could not see their weakened faith and do something about it. All of us must prepare ourselves for problems, trials, temptations, etc., that will come into our lives; but for leaders, it is vital that their faith stay strong! We must have a faith that can either deal with these things effectively or get sucked under by them. It would be a shame to work so well for so long and then fall away!
- 2. They need to improve in their ability to get the job done well!** Mediocrity is not the goal for the Christian nor their leaders! (Matt. 5:48; Heb. 5:12-6:3). Sometimes, it is necessary to secure new ideas or new approaches; and the willingness to listen to others, and to keep trying until something gets the job done right! Leaders can either lead God's people into the ditch or to the mountain tops (Matt. 15:14). It may be necessary to get rid of some pride possibly, but we can get the job done better!
- 3. They need to enlarge their Vision!** How many leaders can see how limited they are in what they are doing in comparison to what they could really do? In the words of God's Prophet: *"Lift up your eyes unto the hills....."* We need to catch a glimpse of what needs to be done and what can be done and get rid of our "grasshopper complex" and think big! We need a vision that will challenge us to:
 - a) Fill our area with the true Gospel message;
 - b) Fill our country with the true Gospel message;
 - c) And fill the world with the true Gospel message!We need a vision and a determination to press the battle against sin and wickedness!

Concluding Thoughts

We need to find answers to how that we can bring about improvement on the part of every Christian, but more in particular, on the part of our leaders. It may require specialized person to come in ever so often in different areas to help enlarge our understanding and challenge their leadership in these areas. But one thing for sure, nothing can take the place of our own private study of God's truth and will continually help us to examine ourselves and enlarge our vision of service to God (2 Pet. 3:18).

To use our abilities and opportunities is an unending challenge we all face! Studies about human potential indicate that the potential of the human mind is virtually infinite. So, possibly, we have only begun to use the abilities that we have and we need to be challenged and to challenge ourselves to new goals that demand improvement in all of our lives!

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. The church does not try to train people for leadership roles.
- _____ 2. God is satisfied with mediocrity in His people.
- _____ 3. Only Elders are told to "take heed to themselves."
- _____ 4. To "examine" one's self is the same as self-examination.
- _____ 5. The Bible does not challenge us to encourage one another.
- _____ 6. Self-Satisfaction can be a deterrent to growth.
- _____ 7. "Coasting" as a Christian could be compared to traveling the broad way that leads to destruction.
- _____ 8. Involvement with people can be a deterrent to growth.
- _____ 9. A lack of vision of what makes a great leader can be a deterrent to growth.
- _____ 10. James challenges us to look into the "mirror" of God's Word and being a doer of what it says.
- _____ 11. A strong faith is a "must" for dedicated leaders.
- _____ 12. The leader who is always looking for a better way to get the job done will be able to challenge more people.
- _____ 13. The "grasshopper complex" can destroy us like it did the Israelite Nation.
- _____ 14. Nothing can take the place of our own private study of the Word of God.
- _____ 15. Research indicates that the capacity of the human mind is infinite.

Lesson Seven

"Appointing Elders"

We need to see clearly and specifically that God wanted "Elders" appointed in every church (Acts 14:23). This was done among the Galatians churches within 1-2 years at most. How they were able to do this in that short of time is hard to explain, but they did it! It should be evident that Elders are God's Way of leading His Church! We have substituted the "Business Meeting" for such with no specific Scripture to back it up. It becomes an expedient that should only be temporary, but in some instances it will last for 5, 10, 15 years or more. I don't believe that God wants another system to substitute for "Elders!" They are God's way and we need to follow such.

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS!

1. *Are we looking at the qualifications wrong?*
2. *Are we expecting perfection?*
3. *Do Elders have any room to grow or Mature?*
4. *How can we get away from going for years before getting Elders?*

A Possible Solution!

Pick the best men in the congregation! Pick those who come the closest to having the desired qualities that God has given. Pick those who have the right attitudes about the Church, the Bible, God, and Brethren. Wait! Wait! Hold on! Don't stop listening just yet!

Ideally, we would like to see all Elders perfect! Unfortunately, no church will have men this far developed. So, we are choosing imperfect men to be Elders. If you were to compare Elders in the Northeast to Elders in the South or West.....they probably would not be chosen. The reason is obvious—they haven't had the time or experience to develop as their counterparts in the South or West. But Elders are appointed in local congregational situations. Which means.....we are dealing with relative situations in appointing Elders. We get the best men in each individual congregation. We do not measure them by another congregation that may be far more mature as a group. You go with what you have! Then, you encourage them to **grow, lead the church, and work together**. This way, you get the more spiritually-minded men to stand before the church as examples, make critical decisions, and set the tone and spirit for the group. You have this in contrast to allowing novices to do these things or allow the carnally-minded men in the "Business Meeting" to do these things.

Objections Considered

If you are reading this, I know you have some reservations or even some strong objections! But, bear with me a little longer! Let's look at some objections.

"But such men are not fully qualified!" But neither are the men in the "Business Meeting fully qualified and they make critical decisions! They are leading the church and are doing basically what Elders are to do, but they are not called "Elders!"

"You won't have 'spiritual leadership' needed from men who don't measure up completely to the qualifications in Timothy and Titus!" That may be right! And it is obvious that the success or failure of most undertakings depend upon the quality of leadership. This is abundantly illustrated by the Israelite Nation. They had Kings and Priests....and even Prophets that were either faithful or unfaithful to God. The Prophet Hosea observed: *"Like people, like priests."* (4:9). The Apostle Paul emphasized to the Elders at Ephesus that the quality of their leadership will determine the faithfulness or apostasy of the church (Acts 20:28-32). All new churches are unstable until sufficient time has past to produce seasoned leaders. But God's way is to have Elders overseeing the flock in that direction! Someone is going to do it, if it is done. Why not appoint or choose the best in their midst to oversee the church. For sure, all the men in the "Business Meeting" do not qualify! And.....sometimes, the more vocal ones are not those who are spiritually-minded! Most "Business Meetings" reflect Carnality, not Spirituality!

"We just don't have men that I can respect!" What would they have to be in order to get your respect—be perfect? Is that what we demand of others whom we do respect? Can't we respect them because they are willing to do the best they can, and they are willing to shoulder this great burden, and they have the right attitude about the things that really matter. Can't we respect them in spite of their imperfections!

"You are advocating putting just anyone in as an Elder!" No! We are trying to say that you will not find perfection! We must realize that qualifications generally are relative. Two or three of them could be considered an "either/or" matter, but the rest are relative. How apt to teach are these men? Some are obviously better at teaching than others in every eldership that I have seen. I could disqualify every eldership if you push the qualifications too far. You are choosing the best men in the congregation who come the closest to meeting the qualifications. They have some experience, they have proven themselves, they are concerned, and they show that they are honestly trying to measure up to Christ. In fact, every Christian should be striving to measure up to these qualities.

Warning! Warning!

"Women looking for perfect husbands invite old maidhood"

"Churches will never have Elders looking for perfect specimen"

"Self-Righteousness comes from forgetting that we too are human and do err."

"It is not healthy to think of one's self as being overmuch righteous, nor to demand it of others."

We also need to rid our minds of the idea that....**"Men with faults and human weaknesses are unfitted for the service of God."** God adapted His service to and for weak men liable to err. A ruthless pressing of a perfect standard will eliminate all!

The Proper Attitude in Approaching the Appointment of Elders

1. We certainly need to use good judgment!
2. We need to assume a compassionate, practical, lenient, and working attitude.
3. We need to choose the best, most mature, ones who most nearly come up to the perfect standard.
4. We need to let men in the congregation know that this will be our approach.
5. We need to encourage their willingness to serve and grow together.
6. The men should not go in thinking they are next to God in perfection.
7. They need to see that they go in as Elders as sinful, frail men, but men who are willing to serve and be used of God to oversee His people.

Upon what other basis can the appointment of men as Elders be justified? Also, how can we explain the appointing of men so soon after the church was started (Acts 14:23)? And how can we explain the differences in Elders as pointed out in 1 Tim. 5:17?

The Value of Appointing Men as Elders

1. You will have the kind of leadership God wants and not man's substitute!
2. Humble men can take the leadership with God's approval as well as the church's approval!
3. It encourages the more mature men to keep growing in the right direction!
4. It gets men out of the limelight who shouldn't be there that are carnally-minded!
5. It gives UNITY to leadership that offers a united front to the church!
6. It helps to solve differences among leading men!
7. It helps to solve striving for power in the church!
8. It deals with doctrinal problems more effectively!
9. It gets decisions made quickly as needed, and when needed!
10. It gives more security to the flock of God!

Concluding Thoughts

Jeremiah illustrates the importance of godly leadership in Jere. 5:1-4! The Jewish Nation was on the verge of a complete apostasy and was going to be taken captive by the Babylonians. Jeremiah's warnings were to no avail. Religion was only a pious formality. They were idolatrous, adulterous, and they had forsaken justice, truth, and mercy. How simple was their salvation—**repent and turn to God!** If they had had the right kind of leadership, God could have spared them; but, Jeremiah said that such a man could not be found (Jere. 5:1; Ezek. 22:30-31).

The world has always needed such men! The story of civilization has not been that of the mob and masses, but of the great men with great ideas, great courage, great conviction, and a willingness to be used for the common good. The story of the Bible is a story of such great men dedicated and used by God. The need is still evident today—are you willing to be that man?

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. In choosing Elders, it is necessary to choose imperfect men.
- _____ 2. God does not want another system to substitute for Elders being appointed.
- _____ 3. Choosing of Elders has to be done in the local congregational situation.
- _____ 4. It is necessary for Elders to grow even after they are appointed as overseers.
- _____ 5. All new churches are unstable until sufficient time has past to produce seasoned leaders.
- _____ 6. Men in the "Business Meeting" are not fully qualified—yet, they make critical decisions for the group.
- _____ 7. Most "Business Meetings" reflect Carnality, not Spirituality!
- _____ 8. A man must be perfect (fully qualified) before he can be appointed an Elder.
- _____ 9. God's qualifications for Elders must be taken as relative in most cases.
- _____ 10. Men with faults and human weaknesses are unfitted for the service of God.
- _____ 11. Churches will never have Elders looking for perfect specimen.
- _____ 12. Good judgment needs to be used when appointing Elders.
- _____ 13. Elders are sinful, frail men, but men who are willing to serve and be used of God to oversee His people.
- _____ 14. All Elders that are appointed should be the same in qualifications.
- _____ 15. Jeremiah illustrated the importance of godly leadership.

"The Place of Deacons"

"Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—for the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Matt. 20:26-28)

ΔΙΑΚΟΝΙΑ

This Greek word (in its general usage) carries with it the idea of one who serves or ministers to others. The King James Version uses at least 9 different words to translate this Greek word.

To Administer—5
To minister—47
Ministry—16
Ministration—6
To serve—11
Service—2
Servant—7
Office—1
Relief—1

When this Greek word is used in its "general sense," it can have reference to the following:

Jesus—Matt. 20:28
The Apostles—Acts 1:17
Christians—1 Cor. 16:15-16
The Holy Spirit—2 Cor. 3:8
Preaching the Gospel—Acts 20:24
Angels—Heb. 1:14
Old & New Covenant Systems—
2 Cor. 3:9

When this word is used with reference to a special group of "qualified" men, it is not translated, but transliterated—that is, it is still the Greek word carried over into English letters and changed slightly to appear to be an English word. Notice below:

**ΔΙΑΚΟΝΟΣ—Diakonos or
Deacon**

As was pointed out in our second lesson in this study, God has appointed four basic leaders in His Church to carry out the job of seeing after and caring for God's people—Elders, Deacons, Preachers, Teachers. In the remainder of these lessons we will be looking at Deacons in the Lord's Church.

Greek Term that Identifies These Men

ΔΙΑΚΟΝΟΣ carries with it the idea of serving or being a servant to others. While Elders are not designated by this term, they are servants to the church. Just as Jesus emphasized that He came to serve lost mankind, so Elders are to serve the congregation as Shepherds or Overseers. Deacons serve the congregation as "special" servants who are appointed to "oversee" special responsibilities in the congregation.

This transliteration of the Greek word is used in the following places in the New Testament with reference to "qualified" men to be appointed in the congregation:

Phil. 1:1—Overseers & Deacons

1 Tim. 3:8—Deacons

1 Tim. 3:10—Deacons

1 Tim. 3:12—Deacons

1 Tim. 3:13—Deacons

In each of the above, it seems to be used in an "official" sense—as we do in this country. Such people are usually appointed to serve in some special way.

The Place of "Deacons"

1. Why is it important to test a man before he is appointed a "Deacon" (1 Tim. 3:10)? _____

2. Can a person be given a responsibility to do without being a "Deacon?" (Explain your answer) _____

3. What identifies a person as being a leader in the Church as a Deacon? _____

4. How can "Deacons" serve well in the Church? (1 Tim. 3:13) _____

5. Do "Deacons" have any authority in the Church? _____

6. Why use different terms to identify "Elders" and "Deacons" since they are both servants in the church? _____

While both the Elders and Deacons in the Church are servants; yet, they serve in different "roles." It is like the concept of Husband and Wife who are joined together as "one," but they each have their special "role" to fulfill. They should be a servant to each other, but special responsibilities are given to each. Deacons are not the Overseers or Shepherds of the flock, but that does not keep them from being concerned for the flock of God and to want things to go well with everyone in the Church.

The Seven Men in Acts 6

Before there were "Elders" appointed in the Church at Jerusalem, a problem arose over the issue of the "Grecian Widows" being neglected in the daily distribution of food. The Apostles took the lead to deal with this problem. They called upon the Church to *"seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business."* (6:3). Let's see what your answers will be to the following questions:

1. Did these men need to be qualified in some way to serve in this special situation? _____

2. Were they referred to "officially" as "Deacons?" _____
3. Is the word "serve" used in this situation to describe what these men would be appointed to do? _____

Challenges to Deacons

1. To realize an important principle: *"Unto whom much is given, much will be required!"*

If God has blessed you with abilities and opportunities to be used in His service—God also can expect greater service out of you!

2. To realize another important principle: *"Whoever wants to be great, let him be a servant!"*

Man's pride can be his downfall! The desire to be great in the eyes of others constantly makes its appeal to us. We need to know who truly is great!

3. To be the right kind of example before the Church.

Jesus has set the perfect example before us all. If we will follow Him, we should set the right example before others in the Church.

4. To cooperate fully with other leaders in the Church.

Deacons are not an "island" unto themselves. They are expected to work well with others. The unity of the "Body of Christ" is very important and all leaders play a big role in maintaining that unity.

5. To gain the "respect" of the Church.

Not because Deacons have a "title," but because of their qualified lives and the work that they are willing to do.

Concluding Thoughts

"Deacons" are necessary, indispensable, and a blessing in every congregation when they serve well. And there is no Greater Service that can be given, no Great Cause to be committed to, and no greater example to follow than that of our Lord Jesus Christ. Deacons who serve well with the right spirit should have the cooperation of the congregation in their area of service. An excellent and needed challenge of the Deacons is to hopefully involve every member of the church in helping to carry out the over-all work of the church. May God bless us with such men!

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. Jesus was advocating "slavery" for His people in Matthew 20!
- _____ 2. The Greek word, Διᾰκονοσ, can only be translated "Deacon."
- _____ 3. Jesus, the Apostles, the Holy Spirit, Elders, Preachers, Angels, and Teachers are all called Διᾰκονοσ.
- _____ 4. There is usually a good reason for Transliterated words.
- _____ 5. Deacons are overseers in a different way than Elders.
- _____ 6. The "official" use of the transliterated word, Deacon, is only used 5 times in the New Testament to a group of qualified and appointed men.
- _____ 7. Men should be "tested" or "proven" before being appointed a "Deacon."
- _____ 8. Since all are to be servants in the church, there should be no group of persons given the title of "Deacon."
- _____ 9. Deacons should be given no "authority" in the Church.
- _____ 10. Deacons are not shepherds of the flock, but they can still be concerned about the flock of God.
- _____ 11. A Deacon who is not given a special job to see after is only a Deacon in name only.
- _____ 12. One of the reasons for appointing "spiritually qualified" men as Deacons is the example they will set before the Church.
- _____ 13. Deacons should be training others to be Deacons.
- _____ 14. The word, Deacon, is a title that should describe what a man is doing.
- _____ 15. The seven men appointed in Acts 6 were "Deacons."

"The Qualities of Deacons"

QUALITIES OF DEACONS
1 Timothy 3:8-13
"Reverent"
"Not Double-Tongue"
"Not Given to Much Wine"
"Not Greedy for Money"
"Holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience"
"First be tested"
"Blameless"
"Husbands of one wife"
"Ruling their children and their own houses well"

When comparing the qualities that God gives for Elders and Deacons to meet, it becomes obvious that God expects more out of those appointed Elders. And yet, Deacons need to come up to a standard which makes them a "cut" above many in the congregation.

A congregation is generally no better than its leadership—especially in regards to carrying out the work that God has given to the Church. A Church becomes a great church because it has desired and helped to encourage great leadership in its midst. A great leadership will be a qualified leadership.

Why is Qualified Leadership so Important?

1. Unqualified leadership can lead away from God!

Matt. 15:11 _____

Matt. 15:9 _____

The monarchical episcopate because the chief office in the local church with one single official being superior to the Elders and Deacons. This eventually led to Bishops over several churches, Arch-Bishops over large segments of Christianity and finally to the "Pope" over the whole church.

2. Unqualified leadership can be used to satisfy men's pride!

III John 1-10 _____

2 Thess. 2:3-4 _____

James 4:6 _____

Men can become more concerned with their pride than God's Church, His Truth, and His Work! Some seek leadership position to satisfy their ego, rather than desiring to serve. They desire prestige, authority and power over others. Some will even corrupt God's Plan in order to retain or make a place for themselves.

III. A congregation is usually as good or bad as its leaders.

1 Tim. 3:2a _____

1 Tim. 3:10b _____

The Holy Spirit gave basic qualifications for leaders in the Church because they not only represent the church to the community, affect the membership as well, and usually determine the direction the Church will go. The term "blameless" is a very good over-all term that shows what kind of leaders need to be appointed.

IV. The unqualified cannot do the God-given work.

1 Tim. 3:5 _____

1 Tim. 3:13 _____

The very purpose of the qualities listed is to secure men who are able to do the work assigned to them by the Holy Spirit. Lack of growth and work in the Church usually shows poor quality leaders. Where there is trouble in the church unattended to definitely shows poor quality leadership.

Four Basic Areas to be Qualified

ATTITUDES

A Deacon needs to be sincere, honest, and motivated by Truth (Phil. 1:9). He needs to be humble and willing to be a servant, constantly keeping his pride in check (Phil. 2:5). He needs to be unselfish, concerned for others, and not self-centered (Rom. 12:9-11)

RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

His relationship with God must be right and strong. He shows full confidence, trust, and reliance on God (Phil. 4:13). Christianity is a way of life with him. He must be convicted that what is being done is right and must be done to please God. He continues to study, grow, and mature in this relationship. He believes that God will work with and through him to accomplish good. Everyone knows who he places first in his life.

UNIMPEACHABLE MORAL CHARACTER

He is highly regarded in and out of the Church. He has a good reputation among men. His home life is very desirable (1 Tim. 5:8). He is "blameless" in the sense that he strives to make things

right with both God and his fellow-man so that no man can find fault with him.

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP ABILITIES

It is important that he shows maturity in his life, words, and judgments (Prov. 10:8, 20-21, 31; 15:1-2). He needs to be a zealous and hard worker. He is able to exercise self-control and is discrete in dealing with others. He has the ability to organize, co-ordinate, direct, and guide activities and people. He is able to see things through. He is one who can envision, plan, and dream.

Concluding Thoughts

Qualified leadership cannot be had by wishful thinking. It is something that must be desired, planned for, worked at, and encouraged. Men must be willing to be trained, educated, and time given to the task. Every congregation can have qualified leadership if the congregation really sees the need, the value, and the rightness of God's arrangement. The future of any congregation will depend to a great degree on its leadership—the kind it encourages, the kind they are willing to follow, and the kind they appoint. If Jesus could take rough, unpolished men in the first century and make great leaders of them; why can't He do it today when men are willing to yield themselves to the Master teacher? Obviously the great question is—do we have men who will so yield themselves and reach out to the greatest of all challenges?

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. The standard for both Elders and Deacons is the same.
- _____ 2. A great Church is great, usually, because of its great leadership.
- _____ 3. The Monarchial Episcopate helped to lead the church away from God.
- _____ 4. Unqualified men want leadership positions in order to satisfy their pride.
- _____ 5. Unqualified leaders will find it hard to carry out God's work as He wants it.
- _____ 6. A sincere, humble servant usually has his pride in check.
- _____ 7. A lack of a good relationship with God indicates a poor leader for the Church.
- _____ 8. An unimpeachable moral character is not all that necessary in order to be a leader.
- _____ 9. Maturity is an important aspect of good leadership.
- _____ 10. The future of the Church depends greatly upon its leaders.

Lesson Ten

"The Work of Deacons"

As with becoming an Elder, so it is with becoming a Deacon—it means work! It is not just a title to puff up our pride; it is a responsibility that requires dedication, time, energy, thinking, and activity! As we have already suggested, the very term "Deacon" carries with it the idea of serving which means work!

Deacons are not only "willing servants," but they are what could be called "special" servants! Two things that show this clearly:

(1) They have to be qualified in life (1 Tim. 3:8-13);

(2) They have been proven to be dependable (1 Tim. 3:10).

This is probably the reason why the translators did not translate this word because it took on a special significance because of the above two things and also how it is used in Philippians 1:1.

The Value of Acts 6:1-6

While it is evident that these seven men who were appointed to a special task were not called "Deacons;" they do give us some good insight to why Deacons are so necessary in the church. The church had a problem to be solved, and it was taken care of quickly by the Apostles' leadership. It may be possible that they were not called "Deacons" because "Elders" had not been appointed in Jerusalem at this time. Elders were appointed later on (Acts 11:30). Several things were done in the process of solving this problem that we can profit by:

- 1—The Apostles called the church together and asked them to find "qualified" men who could be appointed "*over this business!*" (6:3). They were given the responsibility of seeing that the problem was solved. They were in charge. We do not know if they were given any guide-lines to go by or not, but it is certainly a possibility.
- 2—The church chose the 7 men, whom the Apostles appointed. (6:5-6). The idea of making it "official."
- 3—It does not tell us just how these seven men did the work or how they supervised the work to be done. A good guess would be that others were involved in the over-all process, and the seven helped to take the lead in the matter.
- 4—When the church was persecuted and scattered, the special job no longer remained to be done. So, we find both Stephen and Philip going out preaching. Nothing is said of the other men.
- 5—Small jobs may only need one person, but bigger jobs will required quite a few people. This must have been a bigger job, since seven men, at the least, were involved.

Since the New Testament does not give much in the way of detail descriptions of the work of Deacons, it is left up to the local church to use their judgment as to much of what needs to be done in this regard.

Inferred Concepts Concerning the Work of Deacons

We often use the expression: "*that is just common sense!*" When a command is given, but no detailed instructions on the "how" to carry it out, it is left up to the judgment of those carrying out the command. There are things that are just inferred in connection with getting the job done. We believe that this is true of the work of Deacons, as we suggest below:

Organizational Ability is needed!

Usually, most jobs required some thinking and planning in order to organize the efforts of those who will be getting the job done. Mediocre efforts, sloppy efforts, or "helter-skelter" efforts do not fit the picture of one who will get the job done right. The emphasis of Scripture to the Christian is to be diligent in our efforts (Phil. 2:12; 2 Pet. 1:5, 10, etc.).

Ability to Work with Others!

The person who likes to be by himself or work alone may do a good job at what he is doing, but he may not make a good Deacon. If such a person is put in charge of a responsible area of work and it requires the working together of several people, he would have a struggle dealing with people. You want the person in charge to be able to work well with others. A strong emphasis is made in 1 Corinthians 12:14-27 to compare the working together of the church with the functioning of the human body.

Ability to Motivate Others to be involved!

The person in charge of an area of responsibility needs help to get the job done. He needs to be able to motivate others to want to get involved and help carry on God's work. Without the help of others, the Deacon has to do the job all by himself—not something that altogether desirable at times. There are good reasons for the admonition: "*Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*" (Gal. 6:2).

Ability to Spend Money Wisely!

It is important to get a job done, but not at the "higher" expense than what it ought to cost! God doesn't want us to be stingy with the money He blesses us with, but neither does He want us to be wasteful (Prov. 6:6-11; 10:4-5; 21:5, 20, etc.).

Ability to set up the Means of Continuing the Job!

Most responsibilities in the Church are ongoing and will need to have someone in charge and one or more helpers. If a Deacon is good at setting up the "machinery" that will continually get the job done well, he will then have time to set up and get another job under way. It is easy to let a job slide after a while—we grow weary of it. But Scripture admonishes us: "*do not grow weary in doing good.*" (2 Thess. 2:13).

Questions about Deacons

1. Why should a Deacon be well-grounded in the faith? (1 Tim. 3:9) _____

2. What will cause Deacons to be highly respected? (1 Tim. 3:13) _____

3. Is there authority in connection with the work of Deacons? _____

4. What are some things that can hinder the work of a Deacon? _____

5. What are some determining factors that need to be taken into consideration when a man is given certain responsibilities? _____

6. What is the difference between giving a job to just anyone and giving a job to a Deacon? _____

Concluding Thoughts

Men and Women who are willing to work and serve the Lord are badly needed in the Church. At times, these jobs will require sacrifice and hardship. Usually, only the highly motivated persons will be willing to serve in these situations. But the church needs excellence in its leadership which will also require some time and sacrifice in order to be better trained to serve. God has called us to serve in His Kingdom. Let's be willing to not only serve, but to do it the very best that we can. God promises to reward such: *"His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'"* (Matt. 25:23).

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. Inferred in the title, "Deacon," is the idea of work....serving others.
- _____ 2. There are at least two things that make "Deacons" special servants.
- _____ 3. The seven men appointed by the Apostles to a special task were called "Deacons."
- _____ 4. These seven men were appointed to be over the business that needed to be done.
- _____ 5. The Church choice the seven men, but the Apostles had to appoint them to make it "official."
- _____ 6. The New Testament gives us detailed descriptions of the work of Deacons.
- _____ 7. A Deacon has to be able to work well with other people.
- _____ 8. A Deacon should be able to involve other people in the Lord's Work.
- _____ 9. It is important that a Deacon be stable and grounded in the Faith.
- _____ 10. Jesus indicated that it is the "good and faithful servant" that is rewarded.

"The Leadership of Deacons"

What is Leadership?

"The ability to influence others by our words and actions."

"Helping a group of people to plan and accomplish their goals with the minimum of time and effort."

"The ability to get people to follow—one who inspires others."

"Giving proper direction and motivation to others."

"Inspiring people to work together to achieve a desired objective."

"Willingness to invest one's life in guiding and encouraging people towards given goals or ideals or accomplishments."

We are looking at the work of a Deacon as not only being a servant of others, but also a "leader" of others. To be an effective leader in the Church, it is important not only to understand the meaning of leadership—but more important, to know and understand what true spiritual leadership is.

Leadership in the world and in the Church may have some common ground upon which to build, but when the edifice is completed, the end results will be quite different in most instances. This is often where church leaders make their mistake and remain poor "spiritual" leaders by looking too much at leadership in the world and not seeing and being the spiritual leaders that God wants (1 Cor. 3:1-3). We believe it is important that Deacons know the difference. Spiritual leaders need to go to "school" under the Master Teacher (Jesus)! This "schooling" is not only important for the person willing to serve as a Deacon, but it is important for the health and welfare of the Lord's Church as well. This schooling can stress:

1. The need to have a love for the church and its work (Matt. 6:33; John 14:15).
2. The need to be willing to sacrifice his time, efforts, talents, and possessions to help the church to accomplish its mission (Mark 16:15; Rom. 12:1; Lk. 14:25-35).
3. The need to have a deep sense of responsibility to God and others (Matt. 22:37-40).
4. The need to have a sense of urgency to carry out God's Will (Eph. 5:16; 2 Cor. 5:10-11).
5. Not to expect his full reward for his work here in this life (1 Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Tim. 4:6-8).

Insights from Exodus 18:17-27

Moses' Father-in-law saw how stressed out Moses was and gave him some advice on leadership. It may be helpful to see and evaluate these recommendations:

1. **Appoint men willing to be taught God's word (v. 20).**
2. **Appoint men with leadership ability ("able men"—v. 21).**
3. **Appoint men who fear and reverence God and His Word (v. 21).**
4. **Appoint men who know the truth, can teach the truth, stands for the truth, and a person of truth (v. 21).**

5. **Appoint men who hate covetousness, who are not greedy and lustful after filthy lucre, not a lover of money, and cannot be bribed (v. 21).**
6. **Appoint men who understands the need for delegating responsibilities to others because he cannot do it all by himself (v. 21).**
7. **Appoint men who are willing to bear burdens of leadership—to spend time listening to people and judging matters among them (v. 22).**

Characteristics of a Good Leader

1. **He provides direction (1 Cor. 11:1).**
2. **He points onward and upward (Phil. 3:13-14).**
3. **He realizes that all are working together with God to accomplish His Will (1 Cor. 3:9).**
4. **He has faith in God and in His people (Heb. 11:6; Philemon 21).**
5. **He duplicates himself (2 Tim. 2:2).**
6. **He is also a follower (1 Cor. 11:1).**
7. **He has worthwhile goals that he encourages others to attain unto (Rom. 8:24).**
8. **He is willing to be trained for greater service (2 Tim. 2:2).**
9. **He realizes he is a servant, not a master (Matt. 20:25-28; 23:10-12).**
10. **He is steadfast in his life and work (1 Cor. 15:58).**

The Importance of Good Leadership

1. **Eph. 4:11-16:**
 - a) **For the perfecting of the saints;**
 - b) **For the work of ministry;**
 - c) **For the edifying of the body of Christ;**
 - d) **To come to the unity of the faith and to fuller knowledge of the Son of God;**
 - e) **Not to be tossed about by every wind of doctrine;**
 - f) **To speak the truth in love;**
 - g) **To build itself up—or to grow up!**
2. **Hosea 4:9; Acts 20:28-30:**
 - a) **"Like people, like priest." Leadership affects people for good or bad.**
 - b) **Leadership usually determines the faithfulness or apostasy of the church.**
 - c) **Missionaries know that a work is unstable until sufficient time is allowed to develop seasoned spiritual leaders.**

Concluding Thoughts

The Lord has provided the leadership for the church (Eph. 4:11). Qualities for these leaders are spelled out in the Word of God. But leaders need to be prepared, trained for their work.

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. Deacons are both servants and leaders.
- _____ 2. Leadership in the world and in the Church have "some" common ground.
- _____ 3. A person influenced too much by worldly leadership will make a poor spiritual leader.
- _____ 4. To be a good spiritual leader, it is important to be school by the right teacher.
- _____ 5. Delegating responsibility to others is an important role of a leader.
- _____ 6. A good leader is also a good follower.
- _____ 7. A good leader strives to duplicate himself.
- _____ 8. An important goal of spiritual leadership is to bring people to maturity.
- _____ 9. Leadership usually determines the faithfulness or apostasy of the church.
- _____ 10. Leadership affects people for good or bad.

"The Self-Evaluation of Deacons"

A person's unwillingness to truly see himself makes it very hard for proper changes for the better to take place in his life. Some of Jesus' strongest rebukes were spoken to the religious leaders of the Jewish Nation. He called them: *"hypocrites," "fools and blind," "whitewashed tombs full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness."* (Matt. 23:15-27). He also pointed out to them that their *"hearts were dull," "ears are hard of hearing,"* and *"eyes they have closed."* (Matt. 13:15). The Hebrew writer rebukes those to whom he was writing with a similar concept: *"you have become dull of hearing."* (Heb. 5:11) James talks about a person who sees himself in a mirror and then quickly forgets what kind of person he was. He pointed out that this person is one who may hear the Word of God, but is not a doer of the Word (Jas. 1:23-25). He also adds that a person can think that he is religious, but deceives his own heart making his religion useless (1:26-27).

**THE
GREAT
DECEIVER**

Mankind has a problem with deception! He is very capable of being deceived by others and also of deceiving himself. (Heb. 3:13; Jas. 1:22). Satan did his job well on the first couple deceiving them into openly rebelling against God (1 Tim. 2:14). Satan is the great deceiver (Rev. 12:9). His desire is to deceive the whole world so that they will follow him and not the true God of Heaven.

Spiritual Leaders

Spiritual leaders should be "servant" leaders! Why did Jesus so strongly rebuke the Religious Leaders of the Jews? We believe that it was because their whole outlook was wrong!

1. *"They say, and do not."* (23:3)
2. *"They bind heavy burdens on people, and will not move them with one of their fingers."* (23:4)
3. *"Their works they do for to be seen of men."* (23:5)
4. *"They make broad their phylacteries."* (23:5)
5. *"They enlarge the borders of their garments."* (23:5)
6. *"They love the uppermost rooms at feasts, chief seats in synagogues."* (23:6)
7. *"They love greetings in market place and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi."* (23:7)

Jesus did not want his followers to get caught up in this kind of outlook and warned his disciples:

1. *"Be not called Rabbi."*
2. *"Call no man your father."*
3. *"Neither be called masters."*
4. *"He that is greatest among you shall be your servant."*
5. *"Whoever shall exalt himself shall be abased."* (Matt. 23:8-12)

We believe the key word here is "attitude!" The problem is not whether to call someone a teacher (master), preacher, deacon, or an elder. The Scriptures, themselves, use these terms to refer to God's people. What Jesus was trying to get them to see was the attitude behind the terms. Is it a title to exalt someone over their brethren? Or, is it a term used to emphasize a work responsibility? The attitude involved makes a world of difference!

Jesus is dealing with a Carnal versus a Spiritual outlook in leadership. We live in a materialistically-minded world. It is not easy to live in the midst of this and not be affected; especially, when you are spending 5 to 6 days a week in the midst of such. **Materialism, Sovereignty over people, Selfishness** fills our world. To overcome these outlooks requires Constant vigilance, prayer, Christian fellowship, and Jesus being in control of our lives. He made it clear that a worldly outlook on leadership was not to be among His people.

1. **The greatest one was the servant of all.**
2. **They were not to crave titles of position, power, or prestige over people.**
3. **Rather, they were to crave to be a servant to people.**

When men seek position and power over people:

1. **They cease to be servants;**
2. **They strive to manipulate people to do their will;**
3. **They are not concerned about the people doing God's will.**

We believe Jesus is saying:

1. **We don't need preachers; we need servants who preach!**
2. **We don't need teachers; we need servants who teach!**
3. **We don't need deacons; we need servants who serve!**
4. **We don't need elders; we need servants who shepherd the flock!**
5. **Preachers, teachers, deacons, or elders are not great—SERVANTS are!**

Terms are not to be used as titles to elevate, but terms that designate the kind of service we render. An often used phrase can help to illustrate: *"You should put a man in as an elder reluctantly; for once he is in, you can't get him out."* Why is it so hard to get him out? Is it because he has the wrong attitude about the eldership? There has probably been more problems caused in the church by bad attitudes than bad doctrine. Divisiveness in the church could easily be solved by changing attitudes.

Why is a Servant Attitude so Hard to Grasp?

The Apostles of Jesus had a real struggle with this during the Public Ministry of Jesus. Matt. 20:25-27 was expressly spoken to the Apostles of Jesus. They were caught up in a worldly, carnal outlook about leadership. Jesus stated it plainly: ***"the greatest is one who is servant to all."*** You would think that that was plain and clear and should have solved the problem. However, on the night of Jesus' betrayal (after 3 ½ years) the disciples were still squabbling over who would be the greatest in the kingdom. Jesus washed their feet to again help them see that the greatest is the one who is servant to all.

A servant attitude seems to be hard for men to accept because of our pride! Who wants to volunteer to be last? The flesh cries for the first place! It cries for a place of pre-eminence like Diotrephes (3 Jn. 9-10). The flesh likes to be in control, directing, making decisions, etc. When leadership in the church is presented as a position of authority and power, it appeals to the flesh! The following quote can help us understand: *"The impression is left that if a man can reach the eldership that he has risen as high as he can go in the church."* To men after the flesh, the eldership is everything and the deaconship is nothing. But in the sight of God, a faithful deacon is just as honorable as a faithful elder. We need to put to death this fleshly, carnal view of power positions in the church. Let's stop thinking of the elders as the highest ranking officials of the church, and think Biblically—they are humble servants of the Lord just like the rest of us. The

Apostle Peter, by inspiration, expressed this clearly: *"serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock."* (1 Pet. 5:2-3). God wants elders to show people how to live rather than try to force them by their authority. Jesus set the pace for us! His greatness is seen in His submission (Jn. 6:38; Lk. 9:56; Jn. 12:47). He proved His right to lead by His own submission to the Father's Will. Leaders are not leaders first, but followers first. When they have shown their own willingness to surrender to God's Will; then, and only then, are they fit to serve as leaders of God's people.

Evaluation of Deacons

Sometimes it may be good to have others to evaluate leaders just in case they can't or refuse to see themselves as they really are. Deacons definitely need to examine themselves and their work (2 Cor. 13:5) just as all other servants in the kingdom of God. It is commendable when God's leaders will continually examine themselves diligently to see what kind of attitude they are reflecting by their lives. And of course, every day, all of us should be examining our lives by the will of God.

Concluding Thoughts

It should be obvious that the purpose of self-examination is for us to:

1. *"bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."* (2 Cor. 10:5).
2. *"to be crucified with Christ; so Christ can live in me"* (Gal. 2:20).
3. *"to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God"* (Rom. 6:6).

Self-examination helps us to recognize and confess our sins, and keeps us humble before God (1 Jn. 1:7-10). The price to be paid for spiritual leadership is great. But if we are to impact the world, we must pay the price of being a servant leader.

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. Mankind has a real problem with truly seeing themselves as they really are.
- _____ 2. Jesus called religious people hypocrites, blind, and fools.
- _____ 3. A religious person can deceive his own heart.
- _____ 4. Jesus gave quite a few reasons for saying that the religious leaders were hypocrites.
- _____ 5. It is wrong to call a person a teacher or a deacon.
- _____ 6. It is wrong to call a person a preacher or an elder.
- _____ 7. The titles: Elder, Deacon, Preacher, or Teacher are used to exalt people above other Christians.
- _____ 8. When men seek position or power over people, they cease to be servants.
- _____ 9. Jesus said: *"We don't need Preachers; but servants who preach!"*
- _____ 10. The 12 disciples had no real problem over this issue of power and position over people after Jesus' rebuke in Matt. 20.

Lesson Thirteen

"The Appointment of Deacons"

After sufficient study and evaluation, the congregation should be able to appoint men to special areas of responsibility as Deacons. If a congregation has a desire for proper spiritual leadership and are willing to work under their leadership, the appointment of such men should go smoothly and peacefully. We know that God wants each congregation to have Elders and Deacons to be in the leadership of the church (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1-13).

The work of Deacons is primarily derived from the word itself (to serve or minister to). There is an endless amount of work that needs to be done connected with the congregation and qualified men need to be appointed to see that such is accomplished. Their work is with and under the oversight of Elders. They become a part of the leadership of the Church. Their lives and examples become very important both in and out of the Church. Much will depend upon their efforts! It is not just a name or title of honor, it is real responsibility—real work! The efficiency of the Church and keeping down of problems largely depends upon the promptness, systematic, and faithful discharge of the duties of Deacons. If they serve well, they are praised by God and respected by God's people. When their work is done well, the church will be at peace, edified, and reaching out to the lost. There is no "great" church in the sight of God that does not have "great" servants!

The Kind of Men We Want to Appoint

We certainly want to appoint those who God would approve of and that are willing and prepared to give themselves to the task assigned. These men need to be good husbands and fathers that show that they lead their families well and are capable to lead God's people in accomplishing His work. We need to appoint men whose spirit is good towards God and his fellow-Christian. Men need to be appointed that work well with others that helps to keep the church unified and at peace. It is to put together a great working team for the building up and spread of the kingdom of God. We certainly desire to appoint as many men as possible in order to handle all the many responsibilities that need to be covered.

What is Appointing Deacons a Sign of?

1. **A sign of progress.** We are moving forward. It should be a sign of numerical growth, spiritual growth, and men who strongly feel their responsibility before God.
2. **It should be a sign of maturing of individuals in the church.** Men are proving themselves not only willing but able servants of God. They recognize the seriousness of the task they are asked to oversee.
3. **It is a sign of stable family life within the church.** Strong stable families are a must in order to have a strong church. To appoint men as Deacons means that quite a few families have worked at bringing their lives into conformity to God's Will and they can serve as good examples of family life before others.

Procedure for Appointing Deacons

After a sufficient amount of study time, discussion, and questions being answered, it is now time to set the procedure into motion that leads to the appointment of Deacons. The following procedure is suggested as one way of accomplishing the task:

1. Prepared forms to be handed out to the congregation, filled out, signed and returned to Elders with our recommendations of the men we feel are qualified and willing to serve as Deacons.
 - a) Generally, there is no limit to the number of names to be submitted.
 - b) We need all the men who are qualified and willing to work to be used.
2. The Elders will compile the information on each man whose name is submitted.
3. They will talk with each man regarding their qualifications and their willingness to serve the congregation.
 - a) There may be questions about one's marriage, family, or children.
 - b) There could be questions about the person's life.
 - c) Many questions may be in the realm of opinion or judgment.
 - d) Some questions may be in the realm of degrees of being qualified.
4. Names of those willing to serve will be placed before the congregation to be further evaluated by every member who will cooperate.
5. A set time will be given for any questions or problems to be submitted to the men personally or to the Elders for further review.
6. If all questions can be solved, the remaining men will be appointed by the Elders at a set date.

Concluding Thoughts

Appointing of Elders and Deacons certainly should not be taken lightly. It should be a time of encouragement because of having men who may be qualified and willing to serve. Whatever special service is planned for their appointment should be done with stressing the seriousness of the matter.

****See special suggested form that could be used on the next page.**

**SUGGESTED LIST OF NAMES TO BE CONSIDERED FOR A
DEACON**

Qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3:8-13

“Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their houses well. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

Areas of Service: Involvement, Communications, Fellowship, Church Growth, Finance, Youth (Jr. High), Youth (Sr. High), Education (Lower Grades), Education (Adults), Building and Grounds, Worship, Security, Evangelism, Visitation, Benevolence, Missions.

Please list as many names as you feel are qualified!

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Give your suggestions to one of the elders....THANKS!

Please Sign your Name _____

