

Elders are given to us by God to help us grow spiritually

It is a sad fact that so many of the Lord's people worship where there are not even two men who are qualified to serve as elders, and so the congregation has to do without an eldership. But maybe it is just as sad that those of us who are fortunate to be in congregations where there are elders don't appreciate them as we should. The fact is, **elders are given to us by God to help us grow spiritually**. If we are so blessed as to have scripturally qualified elders, we should consider them as nothing less than gifts from God for our good.

In **Hb. 13:17**, the writer said, "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning." What a priceless blessing! Yet how long has it been since any of us thanked God for His provision of wise, godly men in the congregation who are willing to watch out for our spiritual welfare? Do we not see the benefit we've been given in the provision of these men?

In **Ac. 20:28**, elders are instructed to "care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood." Having men of integrity and spiritual maturity to lead and feed us in the Lord is a wonderful thing. We need to acknowledge the goodness of this blessing. More than that, we need to cooperate with the process of edification of which it is a part. In a good sense, we need to "take advantage" of what God has given us.

The eldership is not a man-made institution. We need to remember that the work of elders — two other New Testament descriptions of the same office are bishops/overseers (**Ac. 20:28; Phil. 1:1**) and shepherds/pastors (**Eph. 4:11; 1 Pt. 5:1-4**) — is a part of the wise plan that God has devised for His church. We read in **1 Tim. 3:1**: "The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task." When godly men fill these roles, the result is the strengthening of the church. In His infinite wisdom, God knew precisely the type of leadership and service that would contribute to the kind of strong relationship He wanted us to have in the church. Rather than resent these means of strength, let's be appreciative. And let's help our children to have healthy attitudes toward leadership in God's family.

Monday: Ephesians 4:11-16

Key Idea: Christ gave us elders to build up the church.

Questions for Family Growth: In **v.11**, what other term is used to describe those who are elsewhere called "elders"? What does it mean that Christ "gave some to be" (NKJV) shepherds, etc.? What does **v.12** say about the purpose for which Christ gave these?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 10:8**.

Tuesday: Acts 20:17-38

Key Idea: Elders are shepherds of God's flock.

Questions for Family Growth: In **v.28**, what does it mean that elders are to “feed” (KJV) the church? In **vv.29,30**, what kind of dangers are they to look out for? What does it mean that elders are to “be alert” (**v.31**)?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 10:9.**

Wednesday: Hebrews 13:7,17

Key Idea: Elders watch out for our souls.

Questions for Family Growth: In **v.7**, what things are we to do in regard to our elders? What are we instructed to do in **v.17**? What is it that elders will have to “give an account” for? How should we help them?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 10:10.**

Thursday: 1 Peter 5:1-4

Key Idea: Elders are examples to us of how to live the Christian life.

Questions for Family Growth: Name some activities in which elders can be a good example to us. What does it mean that elders exercise “oversight” (**v.2**)? According to **v.4**, what is the reward that faithful elders will receive from the Lord?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 10:11.**

Friday: 1 Thessalonians 5:12,13

Key Idea: We are to honor our elders in love for their work's sake.

Questions for Family Growth: In **v.12**, what does it mean to “know” (KJV) those who are over us in the Lord? What are some ways we can show that we “esteem them very highly in love because of their work” (ESV)?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 10:12.**

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