

“Setting Elders Straight”  
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“This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you—if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. For an overseer, as God’s steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.” (Titus 1:5-9)

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Titus had two jobs to accomplish for Paul. First, Titus needed to “put what remained into order” and secondly, to “appoint elders in every town.” When it comes to our corporate worship of God, 1 Corinthians 14:33 tells me that “...God is not a God of confusion but of peace” and in verse 40 that “...all things should be done decently and in order.” Other than because the Bible says so, is this important to this church and if so, why?

Is there a temptation to keep doing the same things in the same ways so that the church service is “done decently and in order” (the “we’ve-always-done-it-that-way” mindset)? If so, why so? If not, why not?

In a DesiringGod.org article by Christopher Asmus, he reminds me that: “In the presence of God, his people fall on their faces in worship (Genesis 17:3; Nehemiah 8:6; Ezekiel 1:28; Revelation 4:9–10; 5:8, 14). In the presence of God, his people raise their hands in worship (1 Kings 8:22; Ezra 9:5; Nehemiah 8:6; Psalm 63:4; 134:2; 141:2). In the presence of God, his people bow down in worship (Exodus 34:8; Psalm 5:7; Isaiah 66:23; Zephaniah 2:11). In the presence of God, his people even dance in worship (2 Samuel 6:14; Psalm 149:3; 150:4).” Do I not do such things in the name of maintaining “orderly worship”? Explain.

Asmus went on to point out that: “The crucial point is that throughout the Bible, the posture and physical expressions of true worship do not distract from God’s glory, they display it. When the President deplanes from Air Force One, servicemen stand in concrete postures of salute at the bottom of the stairs. Does anyone ever look at the servicemen and say, “Put your hand down! You’re causing a scene”?...Likewise, when we see people in the presence of God bowing down or raising hands in authentic spiritual worship, we are not to look to them, but through them, and see a ruling and reigning Christ who sits supreme over the worshiper’s body, life, and world... The point is that as we observe

humble, physical expressions of true worship, we are not being distracted from God, but pointed to him...What message does stoic standing send to your people?" And???

The antithesis of peace and order is disorganization, chaos, disagreement, discord, disorder, fighting, and Imbalance. How should we, as a church, handle such things if they arise?

Do I have anything along these lines (e.g., disagreement, discord, disorder, etc.) going on in my life that it would be good to get into order? If so, how should I handle such things if they arise? If not, why not?

What is the "job" of an elder and on what do I base my answer?

When was the last time I prayed for our elders?

When I think about the elders in this church, besides the biblical qualifications ("[A]n overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined" have I also in some ways or at some time pulled out Mary Poppins' measuring tape and added that elders must be "practically perfect in every way " to the list of qualifications? If so, why so? If not, why not?

How readily do I "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account (Hebrews 13:17a)"? Explain.

Pastor Wally spoke of the differences between calling a pastor/elder whose job it is to preach, steward, shepherd, and pray for their flock and hiring a church "CEO" who oversees staff, manages budgets, provides a vision, etc. for the church. John Piper has famously said, "Brothers, we are not professionals." In other words, pastors have no corporate ladder to climb. So, sometimes we struggle

between the calling and the “employment” of pastors. In what way(s), if any, have the lines between these two “job titles” become blurred for the church?

R.C. Sproul in discussing elders in a [ligionier.org](http://ligionier.org) devotional entitled “Foundation for Instruction”, said, “Time and again in church history, Paul’s prophecy regarding the presence of false teachers in the church has been fulfilled (Acts 20:28–30), and the only way to guard against their destructive influence is to appoint men who “hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught” (Titus 1:9)...John Calvin comments, “In a pastor there is demanded not only learning, but such zeal for pure doctrine as never to depart from it.” The church can help produce and sustain such men by supporting the education of young pastors, providing the means for seasoned pastors to receive further training, and helping pastors acquire the resources they need for their own libraries. John Calvin writes, “Those persons shall be chosen who, having cordially embraced the truth of God, and holding it firmly, never allow it to be wrested from them, or can be torn from it.” The elder, **as well as all believers**, must have not only knowledge of Scripture but love of its teachings. As we study, we should be looking not only to know for the sake of knowledge but to love what God teaches. (Emphasis added.)” R.C. ends by asking, “Are you asking Him to help you develop this love?” And???

Pastor Wally encouraged us to “be ready to face choices between cultural transgressions and biblical transgressions as the day draws [near]” ...will I be faithful to the world’s standard or God’s standard. We know that if we don’t adhere to the world’s standard, we can face the wrath of the cancel culture, the loss of friends, being “deplatformed” on Facebook and Twitter, possibly the loss of a job, and being called all kinds of hurtful names. On the other hand, if I go against God’s commandments – His standards, I can wind up asking “on that day”: “... ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” (Matthew 25:44-46) Hmmm, being deplatformed or eternal punishment...Do I tend to look at life’s choices that I make through the eyes of the world or through the eyes of God and why?