

# 1 Timothy 5:17–18

5:17

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor,  
especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.

b

5:18

For the Scripture says,

b

“You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,”

c

and, “The laborer deserves his wages.”

# Pay Your Elders

(1 Timothy 5:17–18)

You might be thinking ...

1. “Well, this is awkward.”

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. “Would it be better if a man who isn’t an elder of this church preached on this passage about paying your elders?”

3. \_\_\_\_\_

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You might be thinking ...

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3. “How is our church doing at paying our elders?”
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You might be thinking ...

1. “Well, this is awkward.”
2. “Would it be better if a man who isn’t an elder of this church preached on this passage about paying your elders?”
3. “How is our church doing at paying our elders?”
4. “Why devote a sermon to paying our elders?”

## 4 Questions about 1 Timothy 5:17–18

1. Does 1 Timothy 5:17 distinguish between two kinds of elders—ruling elders and teaching elders?
2. What is the main command to a local church in 1 Timothy 5:17–18?
3. Why should a church pay its elders, particularly the ones who labor in preaching and teaching?
4. Should a church require that some elders not be paid?

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NIV:

The elders who direct the affairs of the church well  
are worthy of double honor,  
especially those whose work *is* preaching and teaching.

Does 1 Timothy 5:17 distinguish between two kinds of elders—ruling elders and teaching elders?

1. Who argues that 1 Timothy 5:17 distinguishes between two kinds of elders—ruling elders and teaching elders?

*Those with a Presbyterian polity.*

2. Is a pastor different from an elder or overseer?

\_\_\_\_\_.

3. Why are there three terms for the same office?

\_\_\_\_\_.

Who holds final authority?

1. The bishop? That is *episcopal* polity.
2. The presbytery? That is *Presbyterian* polity.
3. The elders? That is *elder-rule* polity.
4. The congregation? That is *congregational* polity.

Those with a presbyterian polity argue that 1 Timothy 5:17 distinguishes between two kinds of elders—ruling elders and teaching elders:

1. *Ruling elders* focus on leading the church. These men are typically unordained laymen who function like managers, not like pastor-teachers.
2. *Teaching elders* or *pastor-teachers* also help lead the church, but they focus on preaching and teaching. These ordained men typically have advanced degrees in the Bible and theology, and the church pays them to concentrate on preaching and teaching.

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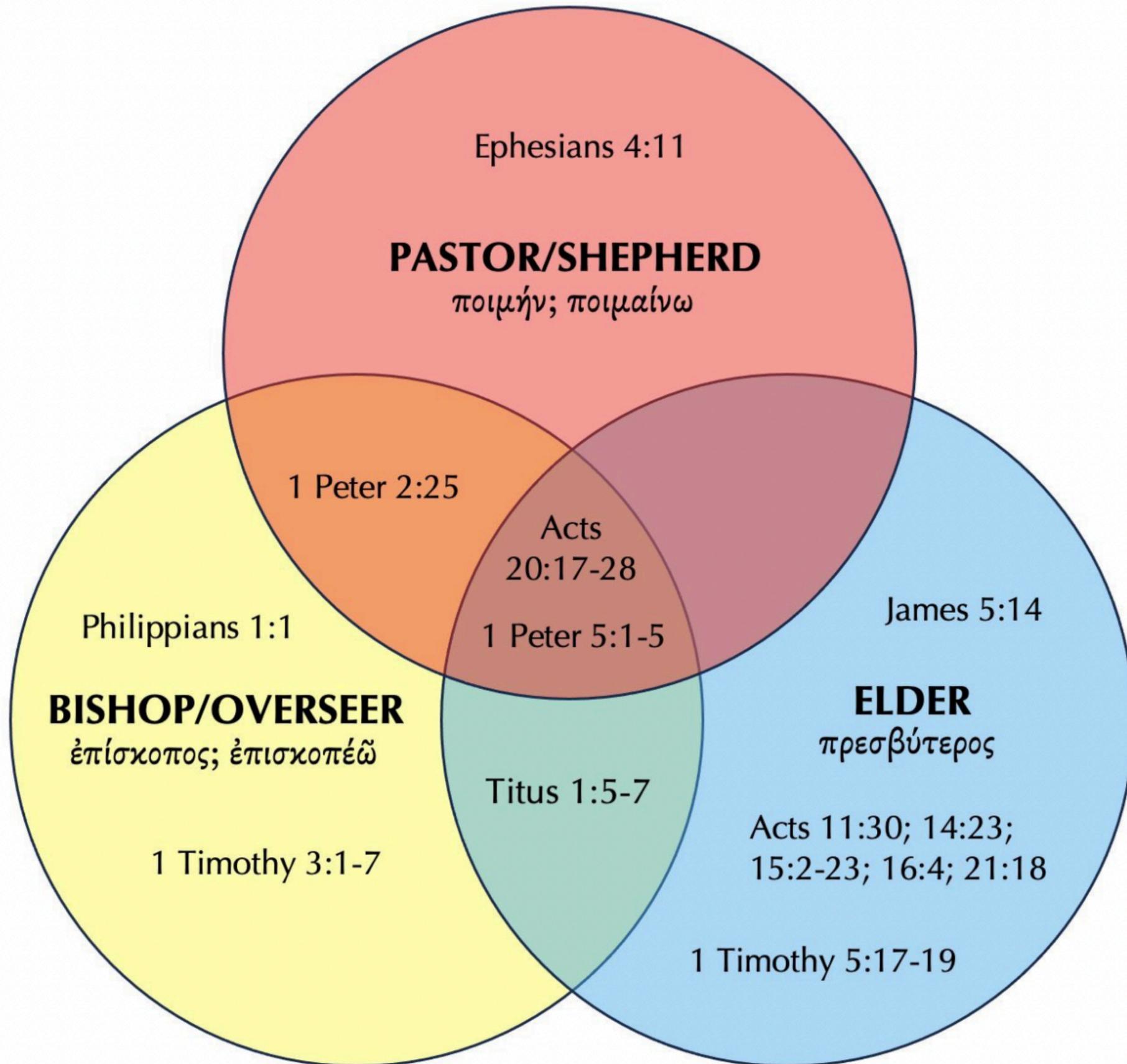
*Those with a Presbyterian polity.*

2. Is a pastor different from an elder or overseer?

*No, pastor, elder, and overseer refer to the same office.*

3. Why are there three terms for the same office?

\_\_\_\_\_.



1. Acts 20:17, 28:  
“elders ... all the flock ... overseers to care for the church”
2. Titus 1:5, 7:  
“elders ... overseer”
3. 1 Peter 5:1–2:  
“elders ... fellow elder ... shepherd ... exercising oversight”

Is a pastor different from an elder or overseer?

*No, pastor, elder, and overseer refer to the same office.*

1. The NT uses pastor, elder, and overseer interchangeably.
2. The NT gives basically the same qualifications for overseers and elders in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.
3. Pastors, elders, and overseers have the same function. (But four factors distinguish a subset of pastors who “labor in preaching and teaching”: time, gifting, training, and effort.)
4. The NT never lists pastors, elders, or overseers as separate offices.

1. Who argues that 1 Timothy 5:17 distinguishes between two kinds of elders—ruling elders and teaching elders?

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2. Is a pastor different from an elder or overseer?

*No, pastor, elder, and overseer refer to the same office.*

3. Why are there three terms for the same office?

*Pastor, elder, and overseer emphasize different aspects of the same office.*

- *Pastor* emphasizes shepherding.
- *Elder* emphasizes character.
- *Overseer* emphasizes oversight.

## 4 Questions about 1 Timothy 5:17–18

1. Does 1 Timothy 5:17 distinguish between two kinds of elders—ruling elders and teaching elders? *No, all elders rule, and all elders teach.*
2. **What is the main command to a local church in 1 Timothy 5:17–18?**
3. Why should a church pay its elders, particularly the ones who labor in preaching and teaching?
4. Should a church require that some elders not be paid?

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- Is “Let the elders ... be considered worthy” a misleading translation? *Yes, this is not a command to “allow” elders to be considered worthy of double honor; it is a command to consider certain elders as worthy of double honor.*
- What does “double honor” mean? *It refers to respect and payment that is higher and more generous.*
- What does it mean to “labor in preaching and teaching”? *It means to work hard at it.*

My routine for preparing a sermon has ten steps:

1. Pray.
2. Repeatedly read the passage in its literary context.
3. Trace the argument as a phrase diagram in Biblearc.
4. Draft a sermon outline based on my phrase diagram.
5. Compare English translations.
6. Draft the sermon manuscript.
7. Read secondary literature.
8. Prepare slides to go along with the manuscript.
9. Solicit feedback.
10. Read the manuscript aloud.

## 4 Questions about 1 Timothy 5:17–18

1. Does 1 Timothy 5:17 distinguish between two kinds of elders—ruling elders and teaching elders?
2. What is the main command to a local church in 1 Timothy 5:17–18?  
*Give double honor to your elders who rule well, particularly the elders who labor in preaching and teaching (5:17).*
3. Why should a church pay its elders, particularly the ones who labor in preaching and teaching?
4. Should a church require that some elders not be paid?

Question 3. Why should a church pay its elders, particularly the ones who labor in preaching and teaching?

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3. Why should a church pay its elders, particularly the ones who labor in preaching and teaching?  
*Scripture teaches the principle that a laborer deserves to get paid (5:18).*
4. Should a church require that some elders not be paid?

# Rationale for Paying All Pastors

Principle 1. The New Testament teaches that a pastor deserves to be paid (1 Tim 5:17–18).

Principle 2. The New Testament teaches that a pastor may choose not to accept his payment (1 Cor 9:1–15).

Conclusion. Therefore, a church should pay every pastor for his work, and a pastor may choose not to accept his payment.

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9:1  
b  
c  
d  
9:2  
b  
c  
9:3  
9:4  
9:5  
b  
c  
d  
9:6  
9:7  
b  
c

Am I not **free**?  
Am I not an apostle?

Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?  
Are not you my workmanship in the Lord?

↳ If to others I am not an apostle,  
at least I am to you,  
↳ for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

This is my defense to those who would examine me.

- [1] Do we not have the **right** to **eat and drink**?
- [2] Do we not have the **right** to take along a believing wife,  
as do the other apostles  
and the brothers of the Lord  
and Cephas?
- [3] Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no **right** to refrain from working for a living?
  - [a] Who serves as a soldier at his own expense?
  - [b] Who plants a vineyard without **eating** any of its **fruit**?
  - [c] Or who tends a flock without **getting** some of the **milk**?

9:8

Do I say these things on *human* authority?

b

Does not the *Law* say the same?

9:9

↑ For it is written in the Law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain."

b

Is it for *oxen* that God is concerned?

9:10

Does he not certainly speak for *our* sake?

b

It was written for our sake,

c

↑ because the plowman should plow in hope

d

and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop.

9:11

↓ If we have sown spiritual things among you,

b

is it too much if we reap material things from you?

9:12

↓ If others share this **rightful claim** on you,

b

do not we even more?

c

Nevertheless, we have not made use of this **right**,

d

but we endure anything

e

↑ rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

9:13

Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their **food** from the temple,

b

and those who serve at the altar share in **the sacrificial offerings?**

9:14

In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.

9:15

But I have made no use of any of these **rights**,

b

↑ nor am I writing these things to secure any such provision.

c

For I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of my ground for boasting.

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*No, the command in 1 Timothy 5:17 presupposes that a church should pay all of their elders.*

## Two Concluding Exhortations

1. If you *are* financially supporting Christ the King Church regularly, cheerfully, and generously, *continue that good work.*
2. If you are *not* financially supporting Christ the King Church regularly, cheerfully, and generously, *please do.*