

## “Lower Thirds” Material

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Pastor Ben Cross

**1 Peter 5:1-5** *So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.*

**1 Peter 4:16-17a** *If anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God...*

Biblical Context: God announces severe judgment is coming in **Ezekiel 9**. He specifies that it will begin in his own household. In **v. 6**, God commands Ezekiel to “start in the sanctuary.” Then Ezekiel writes: “So, they began with the elders...”

Peter takes a page out of **Ezekiel’s** playbook. He says, “When we suffer as Christians, it follows the same pattern as Israel. God’s judgment begins with us. Out of love, God disciplines us, sometimes severely so. He is training us to trust and obey him more deeply and to bear more spiritual fruit (**Hebrews 12; John 15**).

Then, like Ezekiel, Peter goes straight to the leaders—**5:1** *So, I exhort the elders among you...* Just as in ancient Israel, the elders of the New Testament church are key to the spiritual well-being and health of God’s people. It’s a formidable responsibility.

**5:1-2a** The Elders’ Role

**5:2b-3** The Elders’ Readiness

**5:4** The Elders’ Reward

Paul’s Instruction to Titus: A church is not fully in order until a team of qualified elders are overseeing its care.

The New Testament references to elders are always in the plural.

**1 Timothy 5:17** *Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.*

## The Duties of a New Testament Elder

- equip believers for spiritual maturity and the work of the ministry (**Ephesians 4:11-16**)
- be an example of Christlikeness (**1 Peter 5:3**)
- pray for the church (**James 5:13-17**)
- govern the affairs of the church (**1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12**)
- guide and lead the church (**Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24**)
- guard and protect the church (**Acts 20:28-31**)
- oversee and admonish the church (**1 Thessalonians 5:14**).

**1 Peter 5:4** the unfading crown of glory

**Hebrews 13:17** *Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over you souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning for that would be of no advantage to you.*

**1 Peter 5:5** - *Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”*

## Two Important Truths

- 1) the vital importance of godly leaders faithfully discharging their duties as under-shepherds of the Lord Jesus, guarding, guiding, admonishing, comforting and sustaining the church through crisis
- 2) the absolute importance of maintaining a spirit of humility, not only among the spiritual leaders of the church, but the entire congregation, especially in times of suffering

## The Commissioning of Our New Elders

*Sheldon Johnson, Peter Shum, Sanjeev King and Ron Ewert*