

What elders/shepherds (pastors)/overseers are to be (like):

- OT prophecy: Jer 3:15, 23:4. Shepherds after God's own heart.
- Qualifications: 1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9. Mature believers, able to teach
- Other descriptions: Heb 13:7 & 17; 1 Pet 5:1-3. Servant leaders, good examples to imitate

Where elders/shepherds (pastors)/overseers get their authorization & responsibility:

- Acts 20:28 says the Holy Spirit appoints elders; it is a historical precedent, but with no indication that it is unique.
- Scripture commands that elders be appointed in every town (Titus 1:5), and this pattern was carried out in the early church (Acts 14:23).
- Churches are to recognize the appointment by the Holy Spirit.

What elders/shepherds (pastors)/overseers do:

- Don't forget the part above about what elders/shepherds (pastors)/overseers are to be like ... it permeates everything below!
- Teach
  - Qualifications include "able to teach" and "able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also able to rebuke those who contradict it" 1 Tim 3:2 and Titus 1:9
  - Teaching by example: 1 Peter 5:3;
  - Congregation told to submit to or be subject to elders (or leaders), implies teaching: 1 Pet 1:5, Heb 13:7,17
  - 2 Tim 2:2 tells Timothy to entrust Paul's teaching to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. This could be broader than elders but it must include elders.
  - What *accords* with sound doctrine (Titus 2:1) → must go beyond explicit statements in scripture.
- Rule
  - Word has worldly baggage, but it's scriptural (1 Tim 5:17). Word in 1 Tim 5:17 = rule, direct, or be at the head of.
    - Fits with 1 Thess 5:12 ("over you in the Lord") and Heb 13:7 (obey your leaders and submit to them)
  - False ideas about "rule" are countered by other scripture (1 Pet 5:2-3; Mat 20:25-28; Heb 13:17 keeping watch over your souls!)
  - Key question: what do elders rule? It cannot be the same thing the congregation rules.
  - Biblical examples (they are situation-specific, and that is the point!)
    - Acts 11:30 - \$ went to the elders to decide how to use it
    - Acts 21:17-26 – elders urge Paul to undergo purification & pay for expenses; he does.

Handout for OBC Sunday School Class, 7/21/24

A Kingdom of Priests: Lanes of Authority in the Local Church, Lesson 3

### First Class (30 June): Member is an Office with Authority and Responsibility

**PROPOSITION 1:** Within the local church, the right question is not “who has final authority” but rather “who has authority and responsibility to do what?” or “what lanes (*plural*) of authority & responsibility has God established for the local church?”

**PROPOSITION 2:** To better understand the lanes of authority and responsibility God has given in the local church, we must analyze God’s Word with an eye for patterns of authority, responsibility, and institutions.

**PROPOSITION 3:** The office of priest-king given to the federal head Adam, which involved working and watching over the place where God dwelled, was further specified in the life of Israel, fulfilled in Christ, and has now been re-conferred on the membership of the church.

### Second Class (14 July): Congregations Exercise the Keys of the Kingdom

**PROPOSITION 4:** The congregation has authority and responsibility to exercise the keys of the kingdom, that is, to make formal priestly judgments and declarations concerning *what* is the true gospel and therefore *who* is a right confessor. The means of exercising the keys are baptism and the Lord’s table, which the congregation must guard. (As a shorthand, the congregation is to judge, declare, and guard the *what* and the *who* of the gospel.)

### Third Class (21 July): Elders Lead

**PROPOSITION 5a:** The Holy Spirit sovereignly appoints elders and gives them the authority and responsibility to teach, shepherd, and lead a local church.

**PROPOSITION 5b:** Deriving from its authority and responsibility to judge, declare, and guard the *what* of the gospel, a Spirit-filled congregation will: (1) recognize those who are marked out by the Spirit as elders who will equip the saints for the work of ministry by teaching and practicing the *what* of the gospel correctly; and (2) remove an elder if he becomes biblically disqualified.

**PROPOSITION 6a:** Elders have authority and responsibility to teach.

**PROPOSITION 6b:** Elders have authority and responsibility to rule.