

Acts 20:17 (ESV) *Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him.*

Vs 1-6 - Paul made a final visit to the churches of Macedonia and Achaia, spending the winter in Corinth where he most likely wrote the letter to the Romans.

Vs 7-12 - Eutychus falls out of the window.

Vs 17 *Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him.*

What an elder is not:

1. Older people in the church (though an elder can be older).
2. Good business men who are on the governing board of the church (though an Elder can be this).
3. Alternative to Deacons (Elders are different from Deacons).
4. An elite individual

An elder is a male servant-leader who has been tested and found trustworthy to meet all the pastoral qualifications in 1Timothy 3:1-8 and serves the local church through teaching, overseeing, and shepherding alongside a shared leadership with a plurality of other elders.

Plurality of elders

(Acts 14:23 ESV) And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

(1Tim 5:17 ESV) Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.

(James 5:14 ESV) Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

(Titus 1:5 ESV) *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*

Why do we have elders and why do we have plurality of elders? Because we believe there is more evidence to lead Jesus' church this way than any other. (illustrate with weds group meeting).

Paul leaves them with what he believes is his last words face to face to the elders of the church at Ephesus.

Acts 20:25–26 (ESV) *And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. 26 Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all,*

What does he leave them with?

We will look at A. How Paul lived among the church, B. How the elders lived among the church, C. How can the congregation love the elders.

A. How Paul lived among the church:

1 Corinthians 11:1 (ESV) *Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.*

Acts 20:18 (ESV) *And when they came to him, he said to them: "You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, (We stand up - we pursue unquestionable integrity)*

We look up | We are God-dependent

We stand up | We pursue unquestionable integrity

We step up | We model servant leadership

We open up | We practice complete transparency

Acts 20:19 (ESV) serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews;

1. He was not lazy; he served (We step up - servant leadership)
2. He was not full of himself; he was humble (We look up - God dependency)
3. He was not uncompassionate; he was empathetic
4. He was not a quitter; he persevered.

Acts 20:20 (ESV) *how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house,*

5. He was not a coward and closed off; he was courageous and open (We open up - we practice complete transparency)
6. He taught without holding back.
7. he gathered and scattered (gather on Sundays and scatter during the week to be on mission).

Acts 20:21 (ESV) *testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.*

8. He was not prejudiced. (He loved a diverse crowd)
9. He was gospel centered. (One of our distinctives- "We are passionate about Gospel centrality.")

Acts 20:22–24 (ESV) *And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city*

that imprisonment and afflictions await me. 24 But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

Acts 20:27 (ESV) for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.

10. He was not a sugar coater.

“Even though some parts of God’s Word were unpopular or difficult, Paul did not omit any of them in his preaching. In refusing to pass over teachings that might have offended some,” ESV Study Bible.

B. How the Elders lived among the church.

1. The term “elder” is interchangeable with the words, pastor, shepherd, overseer, bishop

Elder – *presbuterous* (*prez – bee’- ter- ose*)

Pastor or shepherd – *poimen* (*pew’ – me – on*)

Overseer or Bishop – *episkopos* (*a- piece’ ka- pose*)

(Acts 20:17-18, 28 ESV) Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders [*presbuterous*] of the church to come to him. [18] And when they came to him, he said to them... [28] Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers [*episkopountes*], to care [*poimainein*] for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.

(1Pet 5:1-2 ESV) So I exhort the elders [*presbuterous*] 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: [2] shepherd [*poimanein*] the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight [*episkopountes*], not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly;

2. An elder is called to teach, oversee and shepherd.

1Tim 3:2 (ESV) ...able to teach

Titus 1:9 (ESV) 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.

3. An elder’s authority is transferred authority from God.

Acts 20:29–30 (ESV) *I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.*

4. Elders protect the flock from wolves
5. Elders protect the flock from false teachers.

Acts 20:36–38 (ESV) *And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. 37 And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, 38 being sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship.*

Brothers (and sisters) in the Lord, love one another.

C. How can the congregation love their elders?

This may be strange coming from me, and elder, but my motive is 3 fold:

1. I want to be like Paul and NOT shrink back from the whole counsel of the Word.
2. I want you to love my brothers who lead as elders with me.
3. I want you to be joyful and benefited.

Hebrews 13:17–18 (ESV) *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, for that would be of no advantage to you. 18 Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things.*

1. Willingly and joyfully obey and submit to the Lord and his church.
2. Let elders rule without being pummeled with groaning.
3. Pray for your elders.