

- **STRAUCH:** *One tangible way the Holy Spirit influences and directs local churches is by providing men from within the church itself to oversee and shepherd the flock ... 20:28 – the Holy Spirit appoints elders to oversee shepherding of God’s church ... 20:24 – the Lord Jesus appoints Paul to testify to the gospel of God’s grace (compelled by the Spirit, vs22) ...* The leadership of a church is established by God because the church belongs to God ... As men are called to lead in the home, so men are called to lead in the church ... Doesn’t mean women have nothing to offer ... All Christians are gifted by the Holy Spirit to do their part in building up the church ... This is accomplished as elders and pastors faithfully shepherd the church ... They do this by overseeing the church, guarding the church, teaching the church
  
- **Elders** – In OT, men who collectively ruled over and served God’s people – politically, judiciously, religiously ... In NT, served as officials in Judaism ... In the Church, role and responsibility of elders is redefined by Christ and His gospel (vs19, 21, 28, 32-35) ... **Overseers** – look intently on, personally care for ... Elders oversee the people of a church ... In NT letters, both terms seen as interchangeable (vs17, 28; Ph1:1; Tt1:6-7) ... **Pastor** – noun form of shepherd ... Elders pastor/shepherd the people of a church ... **Elders = Overseer = Pastor**
  - Today’s church culture, title pastor typically given to person serving in a paid position at a church ... They are licensed or ordained to do ministry by a denomination ... Role of senior pastor seen as a first among equals ... From among the church, elders serve in plurality, which is both equal and diverse ... Among the plurality is a leader (ex: Peter, James, John among the apostles) ... **Every pastor is an elder, and every elder pastors the church, each according to their own giftedness and responsibility**
  
- Why does God appoint pastors and elders in churches – **to shepherd the church of God** ... Who’s the church of God – **those He purchased with His own blood** (also translated: *with the blood of His own Son*) ... To **shepherd** His people, God appoints **pastors and elders to oversee** the church, **guard** the church, **teach** the church
  - **Oversee** – the church is precious and costly ... A local church consists of people who’ve been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ ... This makes the local church precious and costly ... And why it should be treated as such ... Those who are power-hungry, abusive, manipulative have no business being pastors or elders ... They’re unqualified for ministry ... The leadership of a church is that of servant leadership
  
  - **Guard** – the church is vulnerable to the schemes of satan ... Guard the flock (vs29) ... Guard yourself (vs30) ... Guard the Truth (vs30) ... Serious charge to take up ... Biblical discernment needed when it comes to who we listen to, what we read and study ... Not everything labeled “Christian” is biblical or beneficial (2Co11:13-15)
  
  - **Teach** – the church is built up by the gospel of God’s grace ... Paul’s purpose is to finish the ministry Jesus appointed him to do – **testify to the gospel of God’s grace** (vs24) ... Referenced in **vs21, 25, 27, 30, and 32** ... Every church established was done so by this gospel ... It is the truth every disciple follows ... It is the truth that builds us up and keeps us pressing on in faith ... We’re entrusted to God and to the word of His grace – as we hold on to them, they keep us holding on