

The Messenger



“... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:15

A Weekly Publication of the Christians Meeting at
Westlake church of Christ, 2291 Highway Z, Wentzville, Missouri 63385

Website: westlakechurchofchrist.org

Sunday: AM Bible Study – 9:30 a.m., AM Worship – 10:30 a.m., PM Worship – 5:00 p.m.; Wednesday: PM Bible Study 7:30 p.m.

Dedicated to the Proclamation of the Truth in the Spirit of Love (Ephesians 4:15)

Evangelist and Editor:

Volume 14, Issue 24

Dempsey Collins

July 14, 2013

Listen to PROVE ALL THINGS on 730 AM WKRE, Sunday mornings from 8:15 to 8:30

Elders in the New Testament Period

by Gary Henry

(Conclusion)

What is the Significance of the Work of an Elder?

A. A *crucial* work.

1. No work is more needed in a congregation than the important work of scriptural elders.
 - a. Congregations with no elders lack one of God’s major provisions for spitual health and growth.
 - b. Congregations with unqualified or inactive elders are greatly hindered.
 - c. Congregations with elders who do their work inadequately or unscripturally are also greatly hindered.
2. The elder’s work is positively beneficial, “a good work” (I Tim. 3:1).
 - a. When done scripturally, the work contributes to the well-being of the church - Eph. 4:11-16.
 - b. Elders make a valuable contribution to:
 - 1) The moral and doctrinal soundness of the congregation.
 - 2) The scripturalness and effectiveness of the congregations’ worship and study.
 - 3) The thrust of the congregation’s evangelism.
 - 4) The motivation and zeal of the congregation.
 - 5) The peace and unity of the congregation.

B. A *challenging* work.

1. Numerous are the difficulties and discouragements of the elder’s work.
2. “This is no little job and no little man can do it” (H.E. Phillips). If any work requires the “right stuff,” this is it.

3. The nature of the work demands the strongest and most spiritually mature Christian men - no qualifications would be needed if just any man could do the work.

C. A *grave* work.

1. The work entails the most serious and sober responsibilities.
2. Those who accept the leadership of their fellow Christians enjoy the benefit of greater opportunities for service, but leadership posts also carry with them greater temptations and greater consequences of failure.
3. Elders are uniquely *accountable* to God - Heb. 13:17. Cf. Ezek. 34:10. Elders must labor so as to be "innocent of the blood" of their brethren - cf. Acts 20:26, 27.
4. Two dangerous extremes need to be avoided. (Cf. similar extremes in the parenting of children.)
 - a. Haphazard service as if one were not accountable.
 - b. Refusal to serve at all, using the accountability as an excuse - cf. Matt. 25:24-30.
5. What is needed is the attitude of Isa. 6:8, tempered with the attitudes of II Cor. 5:10 and of II Cor. 3:4, 5; Phil. 4:13. It is helpful to consider Solomon's attitude toward responsibility and accountability in I Kings 3:7-9.

D. A *joyful* work - Heb. 13:17.

E. An *honorable* work - I Tim. 3:1.

1. The work possesses dignity and deserves honor. It is "a noble task" (I Tim. 3:1 RSV), "an honorable ambition" (NEB). Cf. I Thess. 5:12, 13.
2. In some cases, "double honor" (I Tim. 5:17, 18) is called for. Financial support of elders who give themselves to their work is scriptural, needed, and beneficial.

F. A work *worthy of aspiring to* - I Tim. 3:1.

1. Aspire - to aim at, to strive toward an end.
2. Aspiration to the work of an elder does not mean "running" for elder, politicking, or promoting self.
3. More younger men are needed who will aspire to the work, and more younger women are needed who will prepare themselves to be suitable wives of elders.

Conclusion

A. It is the responsibility of elders to rule, watch, oversee, and shepherd Christians.

1. Nothing is more helpful to the life and work of God's people than scripturally qualified and appointed elders who understand and fulfill their responsibilities.
2. Nothing is more harmful than elders who do not.

B. The favor of God and the joy of His reward await elders who have served willingly and obediently - I Pet. 5:1-4.