

Hednesford Pentecostal Church

Church Government

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1. INTRODUCTION

Over the centuries there have been many ways in which church has been organised and performed. Some of these ways have claimed to be based upon Scripture, others have been based upon traditions that have grown up. The purpose of this study is to examine what the Scriptures teach concerning the style of church and its leadership.

Within the New Testament there are areas where the detail concerning church structure and leadership is not totally clear. This allows for flexibility in differing locations and cultures and differing styles of leadership. However the principals of Christian life and relationships is crystal clear.

2. THE CHURCH

To understand the role of church government, it is necessary to understand the models of the church within Scripture, they are:

- The Body of Christ
- The Bride of Christ
- The Temple of God
- The Army of God
- The Support and Foundation of Truth

2.1. THE BODY OF CHRIST

The union with the Saviour and His purchased possession could not be closer, they are one body and He has the governmental position of the Head.

Eph 1:22-23 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, {23} which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

The word of God defines for us the make-up, purpose, government and the principles by which the church is to operate. In the New Testament every believer receives the privilege of being a member of the church and a minister of the gospel, with all believers being equal in status. No one person is defined as being more important more vital than another.

1 Cor 12:12-27 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. {13} For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body; whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. {14} For in fact the body is not one member but many.

{15} If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? {16} And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? {17} If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? {18} But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. {19} And if they were all one member, where would the body be?

{20} But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. {21} And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." {22} No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. {23} And those members of the body which we think to be less honourable, on these we bestow greater honour; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, {24} but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honour to that part which lacks it, {25} that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. {26} And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it. {27} Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

Here Paul teaches that the whole is more important than the constituent members. Although there is great diversity of giftings, callings and personalities, there is to be unity. Unity comes through a commitment to a single vision and purpose, and the sacrifice of self.

In 1 Cor 12:15 Paul uses a metaphor is of a body with an identity crisis caused by dissatisfaction. As with a human body, the body of Christ consists of many individual and differing members. Some of these members are more noticeable or have prominence; but none is more important than another, and indeed for the body to correctly function correctly, every member is required to do there part. It is God who arranges us in the body to please Himself and for His purposes, rather than for ours.

In 1 Cor 12:21 the metaphor changes to a body in rebellion, where individual members would seek prominence or recognition, or would seek to dominate other members. But all members of the Body are necessary, and no members are more honourable or important than any other.

In a body of diverse giftings, callings and characters, the humanly natural result would be a pulling apart and schism in the Body. However, if we move and operate as God intents, then the result is a healthy balance. If certain sections, ministries, giftings are overly prominent, or insufficiently utilised, then unbalance results which is unhealthy.

There are those people who idolise the famous TV evangelist or yesterday's faith hero; but show no respect for and neglect the elderly and infirm brother or sister. We should show the same care for each other.

Although we are all equal in terms of worth and calling, God has set various offices within the church, with defined tasks, responsibilities and authority. As members of the church we are to recognise, honour and submit ourselves to those who have authority over us. Scriptural submission is a willing and fearless act based upon respect for a person's call and character.

2.2. THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

Eph 5:24-27 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. {25} Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, {26} that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, {27} that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

2 Cor 11:2-3 For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. {3} But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

In the book of Revelation, chapter 21, the New Jerusalem is described as the bride, the Lamb's wife. The church is the espoused bride of Christ. This means that we are in a covenant relationship with Jesus, where we must give Him pre-eminence in our own lives. This relationship demands intimacy and devotion. As a bride we are to be a chaste virgin, dressed in the pure white linen.

Leadership in to teach and encourage people in their individual walk with God, warning against anything that would defile. Church gatherings require leadership that will assist people to corporately approach and worship God.

2.3. THE TEMPLE OF GOD

Eph 2:21-22 "in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you are also being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit"

1 Pet 2:4-6 Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, {5} you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. {6} Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."

God has purposed something for the Church throughout the eternal ages to come the glory and magnificence of which, eye has not seen, ear has not heard and neither has it entered the heart of man. Scripture tells us that the Church is to be the dwelling place of God through eternity. Again Jesus has the position of pre-eminence being the chief cornerstone.

Believers are described as being living stones being placed next to each other to form a spiritual house. God is the builder and maker of this house, temple or city (Heb 11:10). He is the architect, and it is the responsibility of church leadership to build according to the pattern (plans) that God reveals.

2.4. THE ARMY OF GOD

Rev 19:11-14 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. {12} His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. {13} He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. {14} And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.

The church does not actually receive the title of "the army of God" within Scripture, but the numerous references to the armour of God and spiritual warfare makes it clear. Again the pre-eminent position of the leader of the army is given to Jesus.

The task of church government is to make disciples, that is people who are disciplined in their own spiritual life and able to be effective in their faith.

2.5. THE SUPPORT AND FOUNDATION OF TRUTH

1 Tim 3:14-16 These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; {15} but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. {16} And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.

We must not under estimate the importance of the local church: the foundation and support of truth in the world. The church is salt and light in the world.

Church leadership are to teach truth, defend truth and ensure that members walk in truth. As this verse says there is a suitable manner in which people can behave in the church, and conversely there is an unacceptable way for people to behave. Church is not a club or society where we can all have our say, or where we can choose what we accept and what we reject. Church membership requires commitment and obedience to Scriptural principles.

The danger of free church structures and services is that people take the relaxed and informal atmosphere too far, and lose the sense of awe and fear that we need when we come to meet with the living God.

Having mentioned that the church is in society for the purpose of manifesting the truth, Paul now mentions fundamental aspects of that truth. The manifestation of God in human lives is indeed a mystery which is great in its importance, rather than in its obscurity; and this is without question. God was first and fully manifest in the life of Jesus, but now is to be manifest in the lives of the believer through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

3. LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH

There are various titles given within Scripture for jobs that are to be done, and these will be looked at later. Some of these positions are permanently based at a local church, whilst others have a wider sphere of ministry.

The broad task of leadership may be considered under the following:

- To proclaim the vision and give clear direction of how that is attained.
- To manage change.
- To take care of the church by feeding and guarding them. These are the pastoral duties.
- To disciple the saints so as to bring them on to maturity.
- To equip the saints so that the army of God might be mobilised to perform its task of completing the great commission.
- To raise up the next generation of leaders.
- To **contend earnestly for the faith** (Jude 1:3) against false doctrine, false brethren and the craftiness of the devil.

3.1. PLURALITY OF LEADERSHIP

Throughout Scripture leadership is seen as being plural, that is it is an activity requiring numerous giftings to be performed correctly. No one person has all the gifts and abilities required to perform that task to the standard that God requires. Even in the Old Testament leadership was performed

by a team, rather than an individual, even though there may be one person who had overall responsibility.

King Solomon, who was the wisest of men, recognised his own need of help, and wrote

Prov 11:14 Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

This verse has also been translated as "without vision the people perish". Vision and counsel refer to true leadership; leadership which instils vision and direction.

The majority of giftedness within the body of Christ is people orientated. The body also needs those leaders who can see the future, who can see what God wants to do, where God wants us go. Without a divine purpose the people (church) fall into decay.

The church requires multiple leaders, having different giftings, and skills to give healthy balanced direction.

3.1.1. Moses

Exo 18:13-23 And so it was, on the next day, that Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood before Moses from morning until evening. {14} So when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, "What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening?" {15} And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. {16} "When they have a difficulty, they come to me, and I judge between one and another; and I make known the statutes of God and His laws."

{17} So Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you do is not good. {18} "Both you and these people who are with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing is too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself. {19} "Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel, and God will be with you: Stand before God for the people, so that you may bring the difficulties to God. {20} "And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do.

{21} "Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. {22} "And let them judge the people at all times. Then it will be that every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they themselves shall judge. So it will be easier for you, for they will bear the burden with you. {23} "If you do this thing, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all this people will also go to their place in peace."

Moses was a good leader, giving vision and direction to the people. But at this stage he was not a good manager. The management of resource and time was a skill that he was going to have to develop.

People recognised that Moses could hear from God, and this pressurised Moses to misuse the gift. The gifting flowed and the people kept coming, but this did not mean that it was God's will.

Moses believed that he was doing the will of God. He was certainly working hard and making sacrifice for the people of God. But the way he managed his responsibility would wear him away and frustrate the people. God had made him responsible for delegation. The first duty of Moses

was to pray to God for the people, teach them the word of God and train them to be able to walk and work (disciple).

The monotonous work was to be delegated to other men. This would relieve Moses and give opportunity for other leaders to be developed. Delegation is a key to enduring the race.

The importance of character is seen again as we see that leaders are to be men who fear God, love truth and hate covetousness.

3.1.2. David

David was king over Israel, yet he learned to raise up other leaders and delegate to them. He ended up with a whole company of mighty and anointed men of war. David knew the voice of God and could prophesy in his own right, and yet he knew his own need of men like Nathan.

3.1.3. The Early Church

In the New Testament we see local eldership (always plural) being responsible for local church. We also see that although certain men were recognised as being "pillars in the church" (Gal 2:9), including James (Jesus' brother), Peter and John; that when important doctrinal issues had to be discussed a council meeting of the Apostles and elders was called together.

Acts 15:6-7 Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter. {7} And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: ...

This might not sound very spiritual, especially when we read of people arguing but at the end, everybody recognised the wisdom of God, and they collectively owned the decision such that they could say:

Acts 15:25 **it seemed good to us**, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

3.2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEADER

To be a leader in a church a person must have a recognisable call of God, must have gifts and abilities which are necessary for that role. Since God is a God of order we can expect that a person's character and natural gifting would also suite them to the task to which they are called.

This is not to say that the person will find everything they are required to do easy or natural. Their may be some aspects where the person needs to learn and develop new skills and abilities. And as everything in the Christian life, God will ever be seeking to stretch us and develop is in new areas. God does not want us to be come static, but He seeks for new areas where we can prove Him and develop. Our lives and ministries are to be ever developing and are never to be static. Because of this a person's ministry can change over the years.

Ultimately the building of the church of Jesus Christ is a supernatural activity, which is miraculous and cannot be performed by men. We are called to be co-labourers with Him. who has said that He would build His church. Hence the foundation for any Christian, including those in leadership is their relationship with God.

3.3. GIFTS

A gift is something that is offered by a giver and needs to be recognised and appreciated by a recipient. A gift is not given as payment, but without condition or price. Once the gift has been given it becomes the property of the recipient.

3.3.1. Natural Giftings

People have inherent abilities within their lives which is part of their make-up, these are natural giftings and are associated with a person's temperament. Christians, who see that the entire process of life from conception onwards is under the care of God, recognise that natural abilities are themselves gifts build-in from God.

Such natural gifts need to be trained and developed, like a raw precious stone dug out of the ground needs to be cleaned and honed. An untrained gift, for example a musical talent, is only capable of attaining to perhaps 20 % of its capability, if it does not undergo training.

Whether a person will submit themselves to the rigors and disciplines of training depends upon a person's character. We will see later that character is all important foundation for a person's gifting / ministry, but character also determines the level to which a gift is developed.

3.3.2. Grace Gifts

In addition to human capabilities there are gifts which are given to people by the grace of God. The Greek word for gift is *charisma* (plural *charismata*) which is closely linked to the word for grace *charis*.

In the New Testament the *charismata* gifts are listed as being given for the benefit of the church and they are associated with either Jesus or the Holy Spirit. For example;

Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, **but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Hence eternal life is a gift which is associated with Jesus Christ.

Within the New Testament there are three places where gifts are most fully listed, Romans 12:6-8, 1 Cor 12:8-10 and 1 Peter 4:9-11.

Rom 12:6-8 Having then **gifts** differing according to the **grace** that is given to us, let us use them: if **prophecy**, let us prophesy in proportion to our **faith**; {7} or **ministry [serving]**, let us use it in our ministering; he who **teaches**, in teaching; {8} he who **exhorts [encouraging]**, in exhortation; he who **gives**, with liberality; he who **leads**, with diligence; he who **shows mercy**, with cheerfulness.

Some grace gifts have no natural counter part, such as prophecy. Others however do have a natural counter part, such as teaching. There are non-Christian people who are excellent teachers, but they are unable to make plain to the people of God the mysteries of God. Hence natural giftedness is useful, but does not mean a calling or ministry in that direction. For example, an elder should be able to teach, but this does not mean that he is a teacher.

We see that the use of spiritual gifts requires both **grace and faith**. Grace means that we need to be gracious, merciful and loving towards the recipient of the gift. In using a spiritual gift, or in ministering to another, we should be seeking to serve, seeking to assist and seeking to help. The aim should never be to show ourselves as being spiritual, mature or better than anyone else.

In truth spiritual gifts flow out of a heart that is moved towards another, that has a burden of love and compassion, that is full of grace.

The means by which we receive from God and deliver to another a spiritual gift is faith.

1 Cor 12:8-10 for to one is given the word of **wisdom** through the Spirit, to another the word of **knowledge** through the same Spirit, {9} to another **faith** by the same Spirit, to another **gifts of healings** by the same Spirit, {10} to another the **working of miracles**, to another **prophecy**, to another **discerning of spirits**, to another **different kinds of tongues**, to another the **interpretation of tongues**.

This list is commonly recognised as the gifts of the Spirit, and the operation of each of these gifts is solely miraculous, there being no natural counterpart.

1 Pet 4:9-11 Be **hospitable** to one another without grumbling. {10} As each one has received a **gift**, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. {11} If anyone **speaks**, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone **ministers [serves]**, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Peter's list may be considered as a broad overview, but he appears to focus on attitude and purpose.

As one might expect there is a collation between the grace gifts and New Testament ministries. A person in the office of a prophet must be able to use the gift of prophesy. A teacher must be able to exhort and impart wisdom and knowledge.

3.3.3. Receiving Gifts

The New Testament tells us that spiritual gifts are given as the Spirit wills.

1 Cor 12:11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

The Holy Spirit is to be the initiator and orchestrator of the spiritual gifts. He decides what we each get. To complain about our lack of giftedness is to complain about the will of God. We need to utilise the giftedness we have received. Although there may be a certain spiritual gift which an individual can often utilise, if we are walking in the Spirit, then He can use us to manifest His ministry through any of the spiritual gifts as the need arises.

But we are also told to pray for and earnestly spiritual gifts, which suggests that we are not going to automatically receive everything the Spirit wills without our participation.

1 Cor 14:12-13 Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel. {13} Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.

James 1:5-6 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. {6} But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

1 Cor 12:31 **But earnestly desire the best gifts.** And yet I show you a more excellent way.

Jesus spoke about receiving gifts and the Holy Spirit from the Father, and the need to ask, to seek and to knock.

Luke 11:9-13 "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. {10} "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. {11} "If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? {12} "Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? {13} "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

These verse imply that God is always offering gifts, and is pleased to equip us the task He has called us.

3.4. QUALIFICATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP

In 1 Tim 3:1-13, Paul describes to Timothy the qualifications for elders (bishops) and deacons. Timothy's task at the church at Ephesus was not to single handed lead the church, but rather to establish a foundation for the future growth of the church by raising up a leadership, consisting of numerous people.

Titus had received similar instruction for the ordination of elders in the churches on Crete. Titus was to prayerfully choose the overseers based on the qualifications that Paul reminds him of.

The process of selecting elders and deacons was not something mysterious or super-spiritual, but rather was a combination of Timothy's and Titus' own judgement and the leading of God's Spirit. Elsewhere in Scripture we see the importance of prayer in the selecting of trainee leaders. Prior to naming the apostles Jesus spent a whole night in prayer (Luke 6:12-13). The qualifications that Paul mentions can all be seen or measured, but only the Spirit of God can reveal the true situation of a person's heart.

To the Elders at Ephesus Paul writes:

Acts 20:26-30 "Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. {27} "For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. {28} "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among **which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers**, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

These qualifications not only apply to elders and deacons but can be thought to equally apply to any position of authority or ministry within the body of Christ, including para-church organisations. Neither are these qualifications solely applicable to those in leadership, but rather these are goals for all Christians which are demonstrable in those who mature and suitable for leadership.

1 Tim 3:1-13 This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. {2} A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behaviour, hospitable, able to teach; {3} not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; {4} one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence {5} (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); {6} not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. {7} Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

{8} Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, {9} holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. {10} But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. {11} Likewise their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. {12} Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. {13} For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Titus 1:5-11 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you; {6} if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. {7} For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, {8} but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, {9} holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict. {10} For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, {11} whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.

To start with (1 Tim 3:1) Paul states that candidates for eldership must firstly **desire** the position; that is there is to be willingness, commitment and spiritual hunger. Someone who has gifting and ability, but has no desire to **serve** God and His church is not suitable. This is to be a desire to "**work**", rather than just a desire for a title or recognition.

The qualifications for leadership are threefold; **spiritual, moral and domestic**, and are relevant to character issues and relationships rather than ability and gifting. A godly and mature character ensures stability, overcomes obstacles and temptation and is the vehicle that carries a gift to its maturity.

The qualifications are defined by describing what a prospective leader should be, and then what they should not be.

3.4.1. What Should A Leader Be

- **Blameless**

An overseer must be of blameless moral character, being free from vices and sin. He should be free from any sinful addictions being free from the power of sin.

- **Temperate (Self-Controlled)**

He must be self-restrained in speech and conduct.

- **Sober-Minded**

He must be sober-minded. That is he must be clear thinking and also fair in his thoughts towards others.

Phil 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy; meditate on these things.

Character and conduct begin in the mind. We are to some degree that which we consistently think about. Paul's admonition refers to what things we think about and also what we think about other people (just and good report). We are to avoid critical analyse of others.

Noble means lofty, elevated, impressive, admirable character or ideas. True loveliness also agrees with truth and purity.

- **Of Good Behaviour**

Its not what a man says or teaches or how he appears, the life fruit is seen in his behaviour.

- **Hospitable**

He must be willing to open up his home and life to others.

- **Able To Teach**

To teach means being able to impart truth and faith to the saints. Teaching not only requires a knowledge of the truth, but also the developing of the ability to communicate to others.

- **Reverent and Holy**

All believers should have a sense of awe and the fear concerning the person of God. We need to show reverence concerning the things of God, rather than flippancy. We need a sense of what is holy and we need to live holy lives.

1 Pet 1:16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."

God only has one standard of holiness: His own holiness.

- **Pure Conscience**

Our inner conscience is to be focused on God and His laws, rather than sin and self. Our conscience needs to be heightened and sharpened through the word of God. People in the world can do many things without feeling condemned by their own conscience. The danger is that even as Christians we can deceive ourselves, being led astray by our sinful lusts.

1 John 3:20-22 For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. {21} Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. {22} And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

We are all called to "hold on to" the faith as though gripping something precious and important. We must value our faith, and recognise its pre-eminent claims in our lives.

- **A Lover Of What Is Good**

We are to love what is good, and conversely hate what is evil. This means that we should enjoy and participate in what is inherently good and wholesome, but we should shun and take no pleasure in what is sinful.

- **Just**

Like God we are to be fair with all people. It is particularly important that leaders are fair, unbiased and just.

- **Gentle**

Gentleness is a characteristic of Christ. It does not suggest weakness, but rather being approachable and the ability to take care of the delicate and weak; someone other people can trust their hearts and hurts.

An overseer is going to have to teach, instruct, persuade and correct people. He must there be able to this in a way that the other person can receive, understand and not feel destroyed.

3.4.2. What A Leader Should Not Be

- **Not Given To Wine**

"Not given to wine" does not suggest total abstinence, but rather that there is no habit, craving for or reliance upon alcohol. Drunkenness is forbidden in Scripture, and is associated with rebellion, self-will and stubbornness. Wine inflames the passion, but removes judgement making men mock and deride. Alcohol also turns men into brawlers.

Prov 20:1 Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, And whoever is led astray by it is not wise.

Prov 23:29-35 Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? {30} Those who linger long at the wine, Those who go in search of mixed wine. {31} Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it swirls around smoothly; {32} At the last it bites like a serpent, And stings like a viper. {33} Your eyes will see strange things, And your heart will utter perverse things. {34} Yes, you will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, Or like one who lies at the top of the mast, saying: {35} "They have struck me, but I was not hurt; They have beaten me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake, that I may seek another drink?"

Isa 5:22 Woe to men mighty at drinking wine, Woe to men valiant for mixing intoxicating drink,

1 Cor 5:11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; not even to eat with such a person.

1 Cor 6:9-10 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, {10} nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

Gal 5:19-21 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, {20} idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, {21} envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Eph 5:18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,

- **Not Violent or Quick-Tempered**

A bad temper or violence shows areas of character which require grace and change, indicating a lack of true spiritual maturity.

- **Not Greedy For Money**

1 Tim 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

If we love money then we are not trusting God, or seeking first His kingdom. A root is something that is buried from sight, but can bear visible fruit which bears no resemblance to the root. When

the love of money is in the heart, then the life-fruit can be tainted with all sorts of evil. The result of such fruit is sorrow.

- **Not Double Tongued**

Double-tongued refers to the ability of some to say one thing and yet think something totally different.

- **Not Quarrelsome**

A quarrelsome person, who demands that others listen, but does not value or respect another point of view, would damage the church.

- **Not Covetous or Self-Willed**

Covetousness is self-seeking, self-serving and self-gratifying. If someone puts great value or importance in external issues or possessions, then they are still in love with the world.

3.4.3. Relationships

A position of leadership within a church is one of the few jobs where someone can be disqualified from holding office because of the unsuitability of their partner or other family member.

- **The Husband Of One Wife**

There were many in the time that Paul wrote his letter that practised polygamy. Paul says that a candidate for leadership should only be married to one wife. I do not believe that Paul intended to say that a candidate for leadership must be married. This verse is part of the foundation for the Christian practise of only having one wife, reflecting the original intention of God at creation, "the two shall become one flesh."

- **Rule His Household Well**

The husband should provide a home where the members of the household thrive and feel secure. If he has failed do this how then can he look after the larger family unit of the church.

The man's children are to respect their father and the correct basis for submission is respect (reverence) not fear or legalism. We earn respect and cannot demand it.

Paul's reaching concerning a man ruling his own house, not only refers to relationships but also the managerial aspects of the home: the financial issues, the maintenance of the home etc. Rule means to maintain and exercise the oversight, rather than enjoying the position of a dictator. Unless a man has achieved godly leadership in his own household, he is not fit for oversight in God's church.

- **Providing for His Family**

The New Testament is clear that whenever possible a man should work to provide for his family.

2 Thes 3:10-12 For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. {11} For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. {12} Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.

In the world there are those people who pack in work to live off benefits, but this is not consistent with the Christian faith. When Adam sinned he brought a curse upon mankind;

Gen 3:17-19 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. {18} Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. {19} In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return."

Some seek to avoid the curse and live a life of ease, whilst they live by the sweat of somebody else's brow.

3.4.4. Not A Novice

Someone young in the faith has not been proven through spiritual battles. The aim of Christianity is never to puff up a person's ego, rather as John the Baptist said, Jesus must increase and "I" must decrease. Pride means that self is increasing, and that the focus has been lost. Pride always leads to a fall

Prov 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.

3.4.5. Having a Good Report

Some people are disqualified from holding such an office because they have a bad reputation with the people outside the church; perhaps from when they were unsaved. This might not seem fair, but what is best for the church is to be considered as the highest priority.

3.4.6. First Proven

Elders and deacons must first be proven before offered office.

1 Tim 3:11: The character of wives is a factor in considering elders and deacons. An unruly or godless partner may disqualify someone from taking a leadership or other position of responsibility.

1 Pet 5:2-4 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; {3} nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; {4} and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

4. MINISTRIES

1 Cor 12:4-6 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. {5} There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. {6} And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.

In this verse we see the Trinity involved in the empowering the Church, the Body of Christ for action. The **Spirit** distributes and manages the spiritual gifts, which as we have said are more than natural abilities. This is an equipping function. The **Son** distributes and manages the ministries. This is a managerial function. The ministries are people submitted to His Lordship. The Father distributes and manages the workings (domain of effect or breadth of influence). This is a leadership or steering function.

The body is full of diversity and these differences bring conflicting forces, drives and desires; but this does not have to mean division. A single vision is the thing that can hold us together. We each

have received spiritual giftings, callings and domains (areas of authorised service) for us to participate and serve.

1 Cor 12:27-31 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. {28} And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. {29} Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? {30} Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? {31} But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.

The list combines ministry gifts, spiritual gifts and practical functions. Interestingly when Paul tells us to earnestly desire the best gifts, the context is about gift ministries.

Eph 4:8, 11-13 Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men."

{11} And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, {12} for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, {13} till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

Without Christ men are held captive by sin and the enemy of our souls, and are unable to achieve their God-given potential, such that abilities and giftings lie dormant and unfulfilled. It is the will of God to give us gifts, that we live fulfilled and effective lives.

The repetition of the word "Some" in verse 11 means that these do not define all the functions and ministries within the body, but are the gifts given for the body. The gifts are people, people with a function, an anointing and a commission. Those with these callings upon their lives are called to be servants of the body of Christ. Hence these are not positions which men can attain to, but rather are callings which should be obeyed. The goal of these people is not to **do** their gift, but rather to equip, mobilise and release the whole army of God.

Maturity cannot come without UNITY, FAITH and KNOWLEDGE of Christ. The aim is that we all come maturity, hence our concern is not our ministry or our status, but rather the body of Christ. Those who divide are immature in the faith, and do not truly know Christ. The first function of the ascension ministries is unity.

The body is only truly edified, only truly moving in the love of God, when it is growing.

4.1. CALLING

Throughout Scripture we see that an essential part in being a minister for God is that of being called to task. We read that when God wanted to deliver His people from the hands of their enemies, He started by choosing a leader, or a prophet or a judge. God called Abraham, Moses, Gideon, Samuel, David etc. We understand that all these men were foreknown by God and selected even before they were born.

Jer 1:4-5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: {5} "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations."

Jesus chose those would were to be His disciples, He selected those whom He sent out to minister in pairs. Speaking of the Old Testament priesthood, the writer of the Hebrew epistle says:

Heb 5:4 And no man takes this honour to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was.

As we have said previously, along with the calling God imparts natural and spiritual gifts and abilities, which suit the calling of the person. Even a person's sanctified temperament suits the purposes of God. The importance of a person's character as the foundation for the gift has previously been discussed.

However calling and gifting in themselves are not sufficient for someone to begin their ministry.

Mat 22:14 "For many are called, but few are chosen."

Many people do receive a calling upon their life, a God given task and purpose. The fulfilment of that task is probably the definition of true satisfaction and happiness. However many are called, but few fulfil their God given purpose or achieve their potential. There can be many reasons for this; character flaws, insufficient preparation or training, insufficient attention to detail, cares of this world, fear of man etc.

Having received a calling upon our lives we must take care that we are selectable, that we will be chosen.

4.2. PURPOSE

Eph 4:12-13 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, {13} till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

The broad function of church government is equipping, edifying and the maturing of the Body of Christ, with the goal of fulfilling the Great Commission. There are different aspects to church government:

- providing leadership and direction
- providing challenge and stimulation for growth and improvement
- the mobilisation of the church for the work of ministry
- to maintain and care for the existing church
- to guard the doctrine and stand for the truth

Such a variety of functions requires a plurality of leadership with differing skills and callings. Throughout the New Testament leadership is seen in the plural. If a local church has only a single leader, then it will reflect his personal giftings, and will not be sufficiently balanced to be poised for growth.

Church government should provide **leadership** and **management** to the house of God, but what does that mean practically.

4.3. LEADERSHIP

Leadership has been called the **Management of Tomorrow**, and is the difficult task of knowing how to get people from where they are to where God wants them to be, as revealed in His vision. It can be easy to get a great prophetic vision about the future, the difficulty is how do we get from where we are today to that great vision of tomorrow. Such a task brings the challenge of change.

It has been said that **leadership is taking people where they don't want to go**, since if they wanted to go there then they would make their own way.

Leadership is an issue of influence, of inspiring the people, of painting a clear picture of what tomorrow could be like. The leader needs to be able to persuade the people that they can get to that vision, that they can take the next step. The people need to be inspired to make the required changes, to make the sacrifices and to pay the price.

Prov 11:14 Where there is no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

Or without vision the people perish. Vision and counsel refer to true leadership; leadership which instils vision and direction. The majority of giftedness within the body of Christ is people orientated; the body also needs those leaders who can see the future, who can see what God wants to do, where God wants us to go. Without a divine purpose the people (church) fall into decay.

The goal of leadership is not to do but to cause to be done. They can't manage detail, they can't do it themselves, but they are the catalyst and uniting force that mobilise and release the army of God.

Leadership is a gift to the body, but is also part of the body, sharing in its nature. There are different types of leaders: Commander, Encourager, Carrier

The greatest way that a leader can maximise his effectiveness in serving the Church, is to produce other effective leaders. Men and women who will outlive him, and who will be spread out, expanding the range of influence. It has been said that success is not success unless there is a successor.

John Maxwell says that it can take 20 years for a leader to fully develop.

4.4. MANAGEMENT

To many management sounds like an unspiritual and unscriptural worldly term, but in truth it is a very Scriptural and very necessary function.

Exo 18:13 And so it was, on the next day, that Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood before Moses from morning until evening.

Exo 18:17 So Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you do is not good.

Moses was a good leader, giving vision and direction to the people. But at this stage he was not a good manager. The management of resource and time was a skill he had yet to develop. Moses believed that he was doing the will of God. He was certainly working hard and making sacrifice for the people of God. But the way he managed his responsibility would wear him away and frustrate the people. God had made him responsible for delegation.

We need management within the Church, the management of people, the management of resource and the management of detail. All managers don't need to be visionaries, they just need a defined area of responsibility, lines of accountability and the authority to do the task.

The longest lasting revivals that have taken place are those which have had strong leadership and good management. John Wesley gave strong leadership and directed a revival which lasted thirty-seven years. Some genuine outpourings of God's Spirit have lasted only a few years, or a few weeks, and have left leaders broken and discouraged. What was the difference? A lack of leadership and management. These activities do not attempt to direct the Spirit of God, but rather

keep the people balanced, relevant and focused. An outpouring of God's Holy Spirit does not come to entertain the church, to justify the church or to make the Christian's life easier. It comes to save the lost and destroy the works of darkness.

Eccl 5:3 **For a dream comes through much activity,** And a fool's voice is known by his many words.

Having a dream or a vision, is not the same as seeing it fulfilled. Perspiration must follow the inspiration.

4.5. FUNCTIONS

Eph 4:11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

The five Ascension gifts have been called the Mighty Hand of God, as each function can be represented by a digit on the left hand. The forefinger is the finger that points, and that represents the Prophet. The middle finger is the one that reaches out the furthest and represents the Evangelist. The third finger is the one that has then wedding ring and represents the Pastor who is married to the flock. The little finger is the one that can get into the ear, and that represents the teacher. The thumb is the one that can cover all the others, and that is the Apostle.

The following analysis of the Ephesian 4:11 roles is by Mr Dwight Smith.

Role	Definition	Preoccupation	Blind Spots	Impact
Apostle	One who is sent	Urgency of tomorrow	Demands of today	Church planting
Prophet	One who knows	Demands of tomorrow in the light of today	Demands of today	Stirs the church
Evangelist	One who tells	People and the task. Urgency of today	Demands of today	Soul Winning
Pastor	One who cares	People and the demands of today	Urgency of tomorrow	Nurture and care
Teacher	One who explains	Truth	Time	Explanation

Apostle	Prophet	Evangelist	Pastor	Teacher
Builder	Stirer	Stirer	Keeper	Keeper
Release	Challenge forward	Challenge outward	Comfort	Comfort
Leader	Director	Director	Manager	Manager

4.5.1. Apostles

The definition of an Apostle is "One who is sent". The Apostle is a builder, and a foundation layer. His is the responsibility of paving the way from where we are now to the vision of a better tomorrow. This is primary leadership. The Apostle has to co-ordinate at all levels: local church, denominational and national.

1 Cor 9:2 If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

1 Cor 3:10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.

The Apostle Paul says that the proof of his Apostolic calling was the church, and that it had been his function to lay a foundation for future generations and ministries to build upon. Now that Paul had physically moved on he had no political authority over the church, but he did have influential authority.

4.5.2. Prophets

The New Testament prophet lives in tomorrow, and brings visions to the church of what God wants and what could be.

1 Cor 14:3 But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.

The primary focus of prophetic ministry within the local church is to **edify (build up), exhort (stir up) and comfort (cheer up)**, or to encourage, to build and establish. The shallow end of the prophetic anointing is brings a word of exhortation, edification and comfort. These three describe general needs of any spiritual family.

The office of a prophet is a mature prophetic anointing that brings revelation, warning and direction from God's throne. The prophet has **foreknowledge** and a prophet is a **stirrer**. He is concerned with only the major issues of the day.

Acts 11:28-29 Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. {29} Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea.

Acts 21:10-11 And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. {11} When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"

Also the prophetic reveals and exposes things hidden, perhaps for correct or even judgement.

Rev 2:20-23 "Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. {21} "And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. {22} "Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. {23} "I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.

In the book of Acts we see Apostle and Prophet teams (such as Paul and Silas) working together.

Because Prophets live in tomorrow, they can be totally unconcerned with and are irritated by the needs of today.

4.5.3. Evangelists

Evangel is another word for gospel, and an evangelist is a messenger of the gospel, one who spreads the good news. An evangelist is driven by a single passion for winning the lost, and equips and inspires the church for the Great Commission, stirring us for action.

Acts 8:5-8 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. {6} And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. {7} For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralysed and lame were healed. {8} And there was great joy in that city.

Evangelists can be totally blind to the nurture and care needs of existing flock of God.

4.5.4. Pastors

1 Pet 5:1-4 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: {2} Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; {3} nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; {4} and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

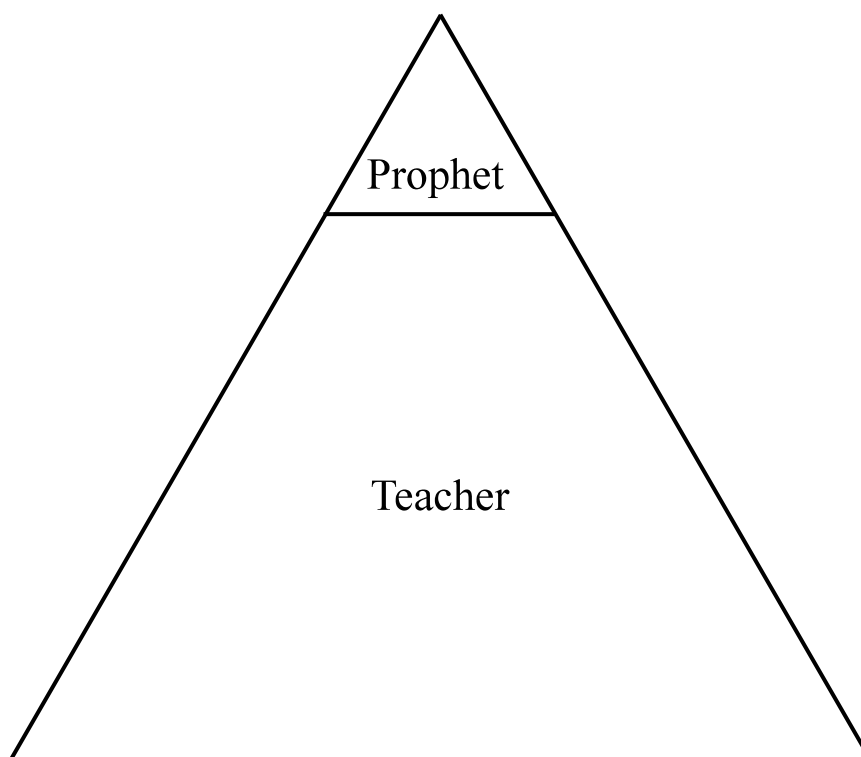
Pastors are managers or shepherds of the flock and their heart is towards people. Their role is to feed, nurture and guard the flock of God, that is the everyday spiritual needs of the flock.

Because they are pre-occupied with today's needs and problems, Pastors take little time to think ahead or to make sure that they are working forward towards a vision.

4.5.5. Teachers

Teachers expound the whole counsel of God.

The following illustration shows the difference between teachers and prophets. Both are concerned with communicating the truth of God's word.



Prophets are concerned with
the major issues of the day

Teachers are concerned with
the whole counsel of God

The prophet is only concerned with **provoking**, and the particular need of the hour, in emphasising a single truth. Hence taken on its own, or out of context, a prophet's ministry is out of balance.

A teacher is concerned with **principles**, in laying a foundation of truth for peoples whole lives.

4.5.6. Eldership

The character of an elder, in terms of what he should be and what he should not be, have been previously discussed. Hence here we will deal with the function of the eldership.

The primary function of eldership within a local church is the care of the flock, and is synonymous of a shepherd's care of his flock. Jesus Himself is described as the Great Shepherd and the Good Shepherd. He also describes the difference between a true shepherd and a hireling:

John 10:11-14 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. {12} "But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. {13} "The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. {14} "I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.

In Jesus' calling of Peter, He tells him to feed His sheep and feed His lambs (John 21:15-21). Hence the prime function of the Eldership is pastoral.

Acts 20:28 "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

1 Pet 5:1-4 The elders (*title*) who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: {2} Shepherd the flock (*function*) of God which is among you, serving as overseers (*domain of responsibility*), not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; {3} nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; {4} and when the Chief Shepherd appears (*accountability*), you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

As we have said previously an elder must be called by God to the task, since it is the Holy Spirit who **makes** someone as overseer. Before they are officially made overseers, this calling will be evident through their works which can be tested. And to make doubly sure those appointing them can test the suitability of their character by comparing them against Paul's list in 1 Tim 3.

Bishop is another title for Elder and means "overseer", referring to those who were the leaders of a local church. Another synonymous term is "presbyter".

As we have said before there are those ministries outside the local body, such as Apostles and Prophets, which may have no political power or authority within a local assembly, but their only power is through influence in a relationship. The Eldership of a church, however, is the group that does hold the political power.

It is the Eldership which appoints or removes people to or from positions, it is the Eldership who make executive decisions and it is the Eldership who have the responsibility for correction or even removing people various people from the fellowship.

2 Tim 4:2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

Titus 2:15 Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

For example, when Paul was writing to the church at Corinth concerning a church member in an adulterous situation.

1 Cor 5:4-5 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, {5} deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

It may be that the some of the elders within an assembly are recognised as having one of the Ascension Gift ministries, such as a Apostle, Pastor or teacher. It is usual for at least one member of the eldership to be a Pastor, and in small churches the senior elder is often the Pastor. In large churches, the senior elder might indeed be an Apostle.

In the church at Antioch, a strong, growing and visionary church, the leadership team appears to have consisted of teachers and prophets.

Acts 13:1-2 Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. {2} As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

Prophets and teachers are both gift ministries, the two having separate functions, but both being equally required to bring the people of God to maturity. Teaching helps us to know and understand God's principles of life (strategy). Whilst prophecy imparts the purposes of God for a specific situation (tactics). Teaching reveals the mind of God to the mind of man, whilst prophecy reveals the heart of God to the heart of man.

The idea that a church should be run like a social club, where everyone has a say or a vote, does not have a Scriptural basis.

4.5.7. Deacons

Although Paul describes the character traits required in a person who is being considered for the office of a deacon, the New Testament does not explicitly describe the function of a deacon, obviously their function was considered obvious.

The Greek word in the New Testament is *diakonos*, and can be translated a servant (table servant or waiter) or minister.

As a general term, it is used commonly within the New Testament. For example, it is used of royal servants:

Mat 22:13 "Then the king said to the **servants**, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

of Timothy as a servant of God:

1 Th. 3:2 and sent Timothy, our brother and **minister** of God, and our fellow labourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith,

of Paul and Epaphras as servants of the church and gospel:

Col 1:7 as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful **minister** of Christ on your behalf,

Col 1:23 ...and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

When Jesus taught about the required servant attitude of a believer, the word *diakonas* is used, hence Jesus Himself is the ultimate deacon.

Luke 22:25-27 And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.' {26} "But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. {27} "For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.

There is another sense in which this Greek word is used within the context of the New Testament Church, where some official role within a local assembly is clearly meant. Paul greets the church

at Philippi with its bishops and deacons, and he instructs Timothy concerning the selection and appointment of deacons.

Phil 1:1 Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

1 Tim 3:8-13 Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, {9} holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. {10} But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. {11} Likewise their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. {12} Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. {13} For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Early within the life of the New Testament church at Jerusalem, the Apostles ordered that seven men be appointed to relieve them of practical duties, so that they could concentrate on the preaching the word and prayer.

Acts 6:1-4 Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. {2} Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. {3} "Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; {4} "but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

Although these men were not described as deacons, it is generally understood that this was the initial model of choosing out people who would serve the church in practical things, freeing the church leadership to concentrate on its primary tasks. The role of people operating in such roles was later formalised as deacons.

Hence the deacons within the local church are given responsibility for various practical functions, reporting to the local eldership who maintain the managerial oversight of the work. These practical functions could include administration, maintenance of buildings, day to day financial affairs etc.

In 1 Tim 3 were Paul records the character requirements for both elders and deacons, the immediate notable difference is that deacons are not required to be able to formally teach others the word of God.

In Paul's list in 1 Cor 12, the inclusion of administrators (sometimes translated governments) is probably another term used for the role of a deacon.

1 Cor 12:28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

4.5.8. Helps

1 Cor 12:28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

Helps is the ministry of the number two, the unseen support, the un-noticed assistant, the one whom does seek or share the lime light. Without the support and the aid of Helps the more prominent (but no more important) ministry could not function. Helps are "co-labourers". It is interesting that many of the key Biblical leaders started off as a help to a previous leader.

4.5.8.1. Jesus' Helps

There were a number of people who served Jesus as helps, some of which are among the disciples we are familiar with, but there were others as well. To these people Jesus delegated various tasks.

Luke 22:8-10 And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat." {9} So they said to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare?" {10} And He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters.

Mat 21:1-2 Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, {2} saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me.

Others helped Jesus by providing for Him financially from their own substance.

Luke 8:2-3 and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities; Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, {3} and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance.

Others helped Jesus by the friendship and hospitality.

Luke 10:38 Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house.

4.5.8.2. Ananias

Acts 9:17 And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Ananias is not heard of again, but this single act of obedience was necessary to change the world.

4.5.8.3. Unknown Disciples

Acts 9:23-25 Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him. {24} But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him. {25} Then the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket.

Paul's life was saved early after his conversion by a number of disciples who physically lowered him to safety so as to escape the ambushes set at the city gates.

4.5.8.4. Paul's Nephew

Another time Paul's life was saved by the intervention of his nephew.

Acts 23:15-16 "Now you, therefore, together with the council, suggest to the commander that he be brought down to you tomorrow, as though you were going to make further inquiries concerning him; but we are ready to kill him before he comes near." {16} So when Paul's sister's son heard of their ambush, he went and entered the barracks and told Paul.

4.5.8.5. The Four Friends

Mark 2:3-5 Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. {4} And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. {5} When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."

What makes a high quality friend?

High quality friends: (1). will carry you; (2). are not distracted by a crowd; (3). gets beneath the surface; (4). stays with you until breakthrough comes; (5). adds value to your life.

4.5.8.6. Barnabas

Acts 4:36-37 And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, {37} having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

4.5.8.7. Joshua

Exo 24:13 So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up to the mountain of God.

4.5.8.8. Elisha

2 Ki 3:11 But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there no prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of the LORD by him?" So one of the servants of the king of Israel answered and said, "Elisha the son of Shaphat is here, who poured water on the hands of Elijah."

Elisha was called to be prophet in Elijah's place. But he had to start by being his personal assistant, by being his Help. A pre-requisite for leadership is humility, the willingness to serve another, to serve someone else's vision. Humility comes before honour (Prov 15:33), and we need to prove our self faithful in the small thing before the big thing comes (Matt 24:45, Matt 25:21, Lk 16:10). It's in this place that we are mentored, Elijah's anointing and way's were permeating Elisha, until the day came when he took on the mantel and said "Where is the God of Elijah?".

4.5.8.9. Joseph

Gen 39:21-22 But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. {22} And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison; whatever they did there, it was his doing.

At home, in Potiphar's house, and in prison Joseph knew God's mercy and blessing. But his promotion was not solely due to this; Joseph also worked along side God in that he worked hard, showed himself to be trustworthy and served his masters as a Help. He did everything as unto the Lord. His loyalty and dedication got him in trouble with his brothers, when Joseph didn't take the easy option of collaboration but reported them to his father.

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