

Situations Requiring Shepherds

Standard Responsibilities

- Marriage & Family Matters
- Governance, major decisions
- Ministering
- Problem-solving
- Teaching
- Preaching*
- Knowing the flock
- Reputation with outsiders

Modern Challenges

- Abuse, trauma
- Divorce, Remarriage
- Sexual scandal, other harms
- Power struggles/wolves
- Pyramid Schemes
- Protecting children
- Doctrinal threats
- Other complexities

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Developing Elderships

March 5



The Scriptures

Including the churches after the apostles

March 19



Lessons

Churches of Christ and Discipling Churches



Observations

Present day elderships



A Process

Customizable for congregations of all sizes

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The Scriptures Including the churches after the apostles

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Considerations

How would we recognize a candidate for eldership?
What are the demands placed on a shepherd/elder?
Are the descriptions in 1 Timothy and Titus prescriptive or descriptive?
What are the risks for an elder?
Are there different kinds of elders?
What is the authority dynamic with other roles?
Who makes decisions? How are decisions made?

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The Scriptures



OLD TESTAMENT

- Important spiritual matters (Leviticus 4:13–21)
- Share the burdens of the people (Numbers 11:16–17)
- Dealing with crimes (Deuteronomy 21:1–9)
- Disciplinary issues (Deuteronomy 22:13–21)
- Deuteronomy 25— administrator justice and for protection.
- Helping the flock remember their history (Deuteronomy 32:7)
- Ministry - feeding, strengthening, healing, binding up the broken, seeking lost sheep, caring for the perishing, and sustaining the standing. (Ezekiel 34:1-17)



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Old Testament



The Lord said to Moses: “Bring me **seventy** of Israel’s elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the tent of meeting, that they may stand there with you. I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take some of the power of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them. **They will share the burden of the people with you so that you will not have to carry it alone.** — Numbers 11:16-17

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Old Testament



Remember the days of old; consider the generations long past. Ask your father and he will tell you, **your elders**, and they will explain to you. — Deuteronomy 32:7

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Old Testament



The word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, prophesy against the **shepherds of Israel***; prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? — Ezekiel 34:1-2

* kings, Levites, priests, elders, etc.

As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. — Ezekiel 34:12–13

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Old Testament



I will **tend them in a good pasture**, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord. I will **search for the lost** and **bring back the strays**. I will **bind up the injured** and **strengthen the weak**, but **the sleek and the strong** I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice. — Ezekiel 34:14–16

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Old Testament



“ ‘As for you, my flock, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: **I will judge between one sheep and another**, and between rams and goats. Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? *Must you also trample the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet? Must my flock feed on what you have trampled and drink what you have muddied with your feet?* “ — Ezekiel 34:17-19

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Old Testament



“ ‘Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says to them: See, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you shove with flank and shoulder, butting all the weak sheep with your horns until you have driven them away, **I will save my flock**, and they will no longer be plundered. I will judge between one sheep and another. — Ezekiel 34:20-22

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The Scriptures



NEW TESTAMENT

- Handling financial matters (Acts 11:29–30)
- Involvement in major decisions (Acts 15:1-29)
- Guardians of the flock (Acts 20:13-30)
- Selection under normal circumstances (1 Timothy 3:1-13)
- Some elders direct affairs (1 Timothy 5:17)
- Urgent placement because there is a problem (Titus 1:5-16)
- Additional role(s) of elders (1 Timothy 4:14, 5:17-21)
- Considerations for shepherds (1 Peter 5:1-4)

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Inter-Testament



“At the end of the third or beginning of the second century BC under the Seleucid king Antiochus II, we have evidence of the existence of a council of elders consisting of seventy (or seventy-one) members, the Sanhedrin”.

—Evans, D. & Godwin, J., *Elder governance*

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Gospels/Acts



JUDAISM

Alongside chief priests

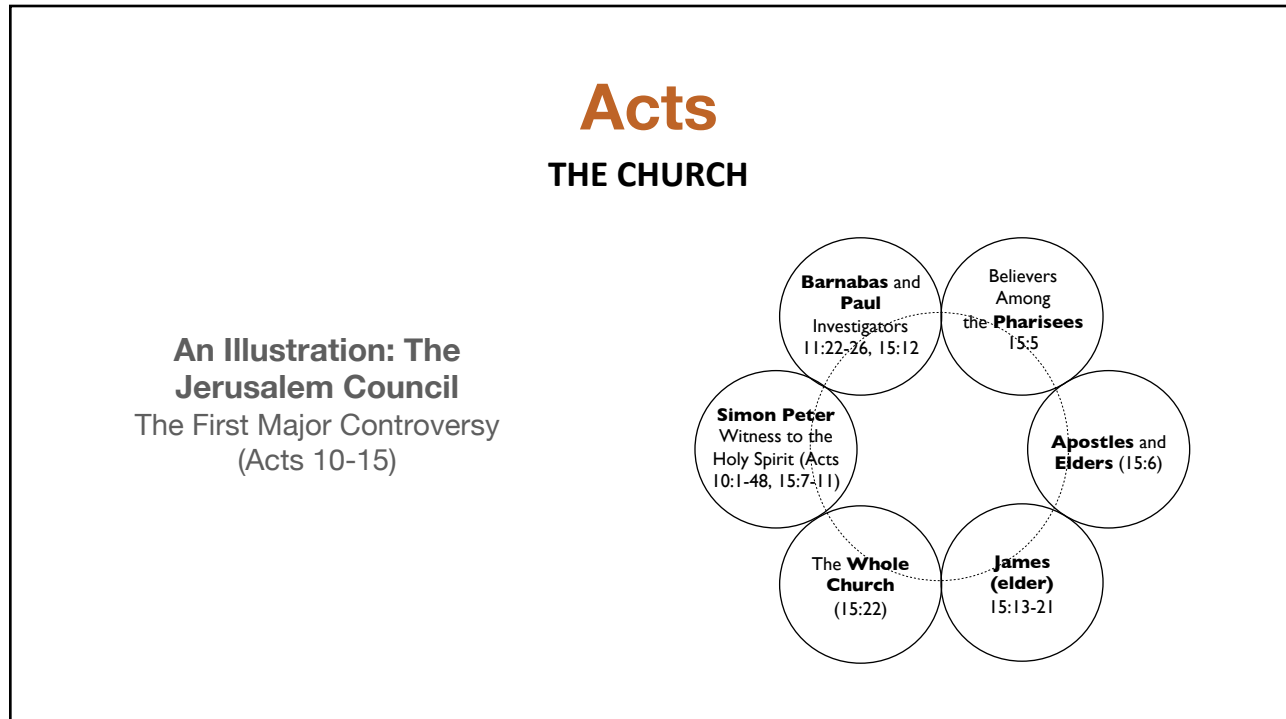
Many abused their position

Part of the conspiracy against Jesus

Opposed the apostles, complicit in Stephen's death (Acts 4-7)

Good examples: Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea

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Acts
THE CHURCH

From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church.
 ... **Keep watch (proséchō)* over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.** Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears. — Acts 20:28-31

As a nautical term, it means to hold a ship in a direction, to sail towards

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The Letters



Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. **Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap. — 1 Timothy 3:1-7**

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The Letters



Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

In the same way, **their wives are to be women worthy of respect**, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.
—1 Timothy 3:8–11

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The Letters



An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe (Gk. *pistes*) and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. **Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless**—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. — Titus 1:6-9

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The Letters



To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow **elder** and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be **shepherds** of God's flock that is under your care, *watching over them*—not because you must, **but because you are willing**, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.
— 1 Peter 5:1–4

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After the Apostles

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- Reactivity to heresy led to increased control
- Overly directive tone in 1 Clement, '96AD
- Hierarchy of elders, Ignatius, ~110AD
- Distinguish bishop/overseer from elder
- Increased power differential led to rivalrous pursuit of positions
- Contributed to formation of clergy/laity and pyramid structures
- The basis of Roman Catholicism (Pope, Cardinals, Bishops, Priests and Deacons)

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After the Apostles

1

- Clement of Rome, ~95AD, is considered the first Church Father
- Representatives of Corinth sought help
- Response to a dispute in which elders of the Corinthian church had been deposed.
- Clement asserted the authority of the elders as rulers of the church
- Terminology of military rank and a hierarchical pyramid was promoted



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After the Apostles



“Be eager to do everything in godly harmony, **the overseer presiding in the place of God** and **the elders in the place of the council of the apostles** and the **deacons**, who are most dear to me, having been entrusted with the service of Jesus Christ.”

Ignatius
to the congregation in Magnesia

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After the Apostles

“**Wherever the bishop (overseer) appear, there let the multitude be**; even as wherever Christ Jesus is, there is the catholic Church. It is not lawful either to baptize, or to hold a love-feast **without the consent of the bishop ...**”

Ignatius
to the congregation in Smyrna

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