



Heavenly People With an Earthly Work

By Arthur Eggers

PREFACE

Although we are heavenly people we are still on the earth and we all have responsibilities. I have been asked to spell out, in detail, what God expects of each saint in the local meeting.

Arthur Eggers, 2007

REFERENCES USED IN THIS PUBLICATION

- **American Standard Version** (ASV or AV) is a version of the Bible that was released in 1901. It soon came to have other names, such as the American Revised Version, the American Standard Revision, the American Standard Revised Bible, and the American Standard Edition. By the time its copyright was renewed in 1929, it had come to be known by its present name, the American Standard Version.
- **King James Version** (KJV) references are used throughout this publication unless otherwise noted.
- **Revised Version** (RV) (or English Revised Version) of the Bible is a late 19th-century British revision of the King James Version of 1611. It was the first and remains the only officially authorized and recognized revision of the King James Bible.

Note: *Definitions of references pulled from Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, January 2013.*

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5 OFFICES IN THE CHURCH

Let us begin with Scripture from Ephesians 4:

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." [Eph.4:11-13]

In these verses we read of 5 offices in The Church: Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers. Let us look at these first.

APOSTLES AND PROPHETS

APOSTLES and **PROPHETS** were given to set up the foundation for The Church

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." [Eph.2:19-21]

The whole household of God is built upon the foundation of the **APOSTLES** and **PROPHETS** and Jesus Christ is the most important stone in the building. It is on this foundation the building is closely joined (organized) together and on this we grow into the fullness of Christ.

"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." [1Co.3:10-13]

There were 7 church Apostles, and Paul called himself "a wise masterbuilder," laying the foundation so other saints can build on it. We are building on the same foundation that has already been laid. Is it not important that we all take heed and build on the same foundation and not another doctrine? Are you using the right building materials? The first 3 building materials are gold, silver, and precious stones, these are all spiritual; the last 3 are wood, hay, and stubble; these are all of the flesh. The reason it is so important is that our work will be tried by the fire of God's judgment; it will be destroyed if it is of the flesh and, though it may seem good to others, it will be burned to nothing. We have the very same church Apostles today.

EVANGELISTS, PASTORS, AND TEACHERS

This leaves evangelists, pastors and teachers. The word **EVANGELISTS** means "to announce good news." Their job is to spread good news wherever they go.

"But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." [2Ti.4:5]

The word for **PASTOR** is translated **SHEPHERDS** in Hebrews 13:20 and 1 Peter 2:25. Pastors are to watch over the sheep; to love, feed, lead and protect them. We will look more at this later.

The **TEACHER** is an instructor of the Scriptures. **PASTORS** and **TEACHERS** work closely together *"for the perfecting of the saints."* Now, there are 3 offices more to consider.

ELDERS, BISHOPS, AND DEACONS

ELDERS

First office is the elder.

"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward." [1Ti.5:17-18]

Notice 1 Timothy 5:19-20: *"Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."* The Greek word for **elder** is **PRESBUTEROS** and it means *"to be older; or a senior; he is considered one who has walked with the Lord many years. These are called to "rule well" (stand in the front rank) to preside over the meeting; ELDERS are not necessarily PREACHERS. We are told to give double honor to those who labor in the Word and doctrine.*

Then we are told *"against an elder receive not an accusation."* If there is some misconduct, there must be 2 or 3 witnesses that can bear record against him.

"One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established." [Deu.19:15]

In Matthew 18:15, 16, Jesus said, *"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. If he is proven at fault he is to be rebuked before all, that others also may fear."*

"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, (left undone) and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: ¶ If any be blameless, • the husband of one wife, Ḳ having faithful children • not accused of riot or unruly." [Tiu.1:5-6]

BISHOPS

Now let us look at both sides of the coin for the **BISHOP**.

- The negative side is: *"For a bishop ¶ must be blameless, as the steward of God; • not self-willed, Ḳ not soon angry, • not given to wine, • no striker, ' not given to filthy lucre."*

- Then the positive side: “*☒ But a lover of hospitality, • a lover of good men, ☿ sober, • just, • holy, ’ temperate; ’ holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers*” [Tiu.1:7-9]

There are 4 things concerning the **ELDERS**, whereas the **BISHOPS** have 6 negative and 7 positive things concerning them. More is said of a bishop in 1 Timothy 3:2: “*A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach*” We know the meaning to most of these so I will just point out some of them.

- **BLAMELESS** is one that has so conducted himself, that he cannot be proven to be unsound in his Christian faith or as a keeper of God’s house.
- **NO STRIKER** is a person not quarrelsome and never striking another.
- **FILTHY LUCRE** is desire for self gain.
- **SOBER** is self-controlled, discreet or temperate.
- **HOLY** as to character.
- **HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE** — As we know, polygamy was well practiced by the heathen but not in The Church; this is not one wife at a time but one in the eyes of God. God doesn’t join everyone together. Many young people make foolish mistakes in the flesh contrary to God’s will and later repent. The wives of these officers have a duty to God too; they are to be totally submissive to God and to their husband as the head of the family; they are to be helpers, and to stand firm in faith with him by prayer even when they think he is wrong in his decisions.
- **VIGILANT** (watchful) over spiritual matters in the meeting.

The words **elder** (**PRESBUTEROS**) and **bishop** (**EPISKOPOS**) are used together because both words carry the idea of being “overseers.” Because they are overseers, they should be ordained in every church.

“And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.” [Act.4:23]

Also in Acts 20:17, “*And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.*” Then in Acts 20:28 we notice, “*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, (EPISKOPOS) to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*” Paul is talking to the **ELDERS** but he calls them **BISHOPS**. Their job is to watch over the flock under the authority of the pastor.

“This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.” [1Ti.3:1-7]

A novice is one who has newly come to the faith.

There are 17 qualifications of being a **BISHOP**, so we know this office is really important to God. This is truly an office to be desired or to stretch oneself out to obtain.

DEACONS

The last of these offices are **DEACONS** (Greek: **DIAKONOS**). Some form of **DIAKONOS**, is translated "to serve" about 20 times, "to minister" about 60 times. The thought of the word **deacon** is "to run errands, a waiter at tables or some other menial duties." This office is not of lesser importance than the others. **DEACONS** are to relieve others of menial duties as we read in Acts 6:3-6, *"Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them."* There was a great need for the **APOSTLES** to spend most of their time preaching the Word.

"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."
[Act.5:42]

Because of this, many of the poor went without food. They needed help to serve them so the **APOSTLES** could have more time to pray and preach. This doesn't mean that the deacons didn't preach, because in the book of Acts we read of a couple who did.

- We read of Stephen, *"full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen"* [Act.6:8]. This led to his death.
- Philip was also a preacher. In Acts 8:5-8, *"Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city."*

Then, in Acts 8:26-39, we see Philip preaching to one person...the eunuch.

"And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." [Act.8:34-35]

Also in Acts 21:8-9, *"And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy (speak by inspiration)."*

Who can say this ministry is any less important than **ELDERS** and **BISHOPS**? Because of this, Paul adds other qualifications for the **DEACONS**:

"Likewise must the deacons \mathcal{E} be grave, • not double-tongued, \tilde{Z} not given to much wine, • not greedy of filthy lucre; • holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless." [1Ti.3:8-10]

"Let the deacons be ' the husbands of one wife, ' ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." [1Ti.3:12-13]

Even so the deacon's wife must " \mathcal{E} be grave, • not slanderers, \tilde{Z} sober, • faithful in all things" [1Ti.3:11].

Not only are there 7 things to qualify the deacon, but 4 things concerning their wives; this is important too. All who hold any office are responsible to God and to all the saints for their behavior.

SAINTS

There is one more part of the body of Christ that needs to be mentioned, they are called **SAINTS** that are being perfected so they can work in the ministry and edify the body of Christ. As they grow in the Word to become mature, they have a more responsible place in the meeting. The qualifications of saints are found in Ephesians 4.

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." [Eph.4:14-16]

They grow out of childhood into established **SAINTS**; they speak only the truth in love recognizing that Christ is the only head to the body, and lastly, they take their place in the body to help other **SAINTS** in the body to edify itself in love. What a special, responsible place to have; and, how important it is to be faithful to the meeting where God has put us to minister.

ELDERLY PEOPLE, MEN

We have special instructions concerning elderly people.

"Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity. Honour widows that are widows indeed." [1Ti.5:1-3]

This is the same word as the office of an **ELDER**; but here we are talking about the older men and women in the family of God, and our attitude toward them in the meeting. The older men are to be spoken to as if they were our parent. We are to respect them for their age sake. Titus 2:2 tells of those who are worthy of this respect: *"That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience."* They are to be vigilant, honest, have self-control, be sound in doctrine and steadfast in faith, loving and cheerfully enduring whatever comes. The aged men deserve all respect.

AGED WOMEN

God has a job for the aged woman too. In Titus 2:3-5 we are told: *“The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, in order that the word of God be not blasphemed.”* God has a job for everyone who is qualified. The “aged women” are told that they are to teach the young women to be sober (have self-control), to love their husbands and their children; what a great ministry this is for them.

They are to treat the younger men as brethren or near kin, *“The glory of young men is their strength: and the beauty of old men is the gray head”* [Pro.20:29]; and the younger women as sisters. All women are to be treated with all purity. These saints may not be spiritual or hold an office but they are all of one body.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TODAY?

What does all this mean to us today and how do we apply all this to the church? **PASTORS, TEACHERS, ELDERS, BISHOPS, DEACONS, and SAINTS**, they all have an active part in each meeting. Let us think of this as a sheepfold in which God is the Owner and Christ is the Chief Shepherd. Under Christ is a shepherd (**PASTOR**) over each flock, and under his authority are helpers to care for the flock in love.

“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.” [1Pe.5:1-4]

This is an exhortation of great importance. He is saying that he wants them to listen to the **ELDERS** which were in their midst. Peter was speaking as a fellow **ELDER** with authority because he was with Christ in both His sufferings and on the mount of transfiguration. These **ELDERS** are to take oversight of the flock.

In 1 Peter 1:1, Peter called himself an *“apostle of Jesus Christ,”* yet he used the term co-elder with the others. The message is in 3 parts: Feed the flock, take the oversight, and be examples.

1. Feeding the flock is the major duty of an **ELDER**; give them the Word of truth, the gospel of deliverance, straight forward and boldly. Give them what is good for them. Don’t sugar coat the truth but present it with firmness balanced with grace. Peter learned the importance of this from Jesus Himself.

“So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him,

Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep." [Joh.21:15-17]

Loving Jesus is the basis of feeding the sheep. Jesus asked for a deeper love than Peter was able to give at that time. However, Peter learned it after he was filled with the Holy Spirit.

2. The phrase "*taking the oversight thereof*" is a different Greek word made up of **EPI** and **SKOPEO** meaning "*to look upon and mark things out.*" However, it does not mean to act on them, they are to take the problem to the shepherd (**PASTOR**).
3. They are to be examples (patterns) to the flock. All of which is done in an attitude and action of love.

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." [1Pe.1:8]

Jesus taught us to love in the highest degree.

ELDERS were not called to feed all sheep just those who were in their flock. They are only to take the oversight of them with a protecting eye, not by compulsion but with a willing heart. Not for greedy gain, of which so many are guilty, but of a ready mind. The word **oversight** is from **PRO** (Greek) meaning "*front of*" and **THOO-MOS** meaning "*passion*" or "*to show a lot of passion.*" **ELDERS** are not to be lords over God's heritage (to overcome and take control of other saints lives) because the saints do not belong to the elders; they belong to God. Instead, the **ELDER** is to be an example to the flock, to be a figure or pattern for others to follow. Who but God knows if the under shepherds (**ELDERS**) will not pastor the flock one day?

Lastly, in view of the coming of the Chief Shepherd, if the **ELDERS** are faithful and obedient to their master there will be a reward...similar to the prize that was given to winners of the public games; it is a place of honor given by the king after the game is over. This is our motivation that makes us a true shepherd before God.

In the same manner, the **TEACHERS**, **DEACONS**, and **SAINTS** have a responsibility before God to constantly think of others and not for what they get out of it. They are not to seek praise from man but from God. Timothy is an example of this kind of devotion as we read in Philippians 2:19-20, "*But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.*"

Paul loved the saints so much he sent faithful Timothy to check on their spiritual condition. The word **likeminded** has the thought of "*having the same kind of spirit.*" What kind of spirit do you have?

The bottom line is **faithfulness** to the place where we have been called, no matter what other people do. We do not have our eyes on people, only on our faithful Lord who loved us and gave Himself for us; thus in return, we give ourselves in service to Him. The Apostle Paul called himself a servant 4 times. The Greek word for **servant** is **DOO'-LOS** and carries the meaning of "*being a bond slave.*" Oh! What a lowly place the Apostle Paul took, even being an Apostle of Christ.

In Philippians 2:7, Jesus is said to have taken the part of a bond slave. We also do not esteem ourselves more highly (better) than another.

"For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." [Rom.12:3]

So whether you are a **TEACHER**, **DEACON**, or **SAINT** God expects you to be faithful to His calling.

WHO SHOULD BE ORDAINED?

Lastly, who should have hands laid on them and be ordained? The purpose for ordination is to set people aside so they will be recognized by other saints as having a job to do for the Lord.

Caution must be taken as to the conduct of a person who is being considered for ordination. They must be known and have proved themselves. 1 Timothy 5:22, says to, *"Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure."* Do not ordain someone too hastily; that is, without investigating their qualifications first.

"Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." [1Ti.3:6-7]

A novice is one who has newly come to the faith.

What is the age to be ordained? This is according to their spiritual growth and not physical age.

"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." [1Ti.4:12-14]

We don't know Timothy's age but he was young compared to the other followers of Paul; however, he was a true example in every way. God had given him a gift that was foretold when the overseers had laid hands on him.

We do not read where they laid hands on **TEACHERS**, although their place needs to be known by everyone in the meeting. Acts 6:2-6 is the only scripture where it says they laid hands on **DEACONS**. However, we know they were set aside to labor for the Lord because in Romans 16:1 we read, *"Phebe, called a sister to Paul was a servant (deacon) in the church at Cenchrea."*

SUMMARY

From all these Scriptures we know God wants people set aside and known by all as having a specific job to do. The **ELDERS** (overseers) are to watch the flock that no harm comes to

any. If anything is seen they are to report it to the **PASTOR** and together they are to tell the Chief Shepherd, crying out to Him in prayer. They do not take things in their own hands. All things are to be done in order, being calm and with a sound mind, waiting on the Lord and moving according to His Word.

The **DEACONS** are to do what they can to keep everything running smoothly in the meeting so the **PASTOR** can spend more time in the Word and study. Just remember, everyone has a job to do and we all work together in love. When we do not have this love, the whole meeting feels its effects.

In these last days there is so much disrespect for those in authority. It is as though they are not spiritual enough to get the mind of the Lord about things in the meeting. If this is true, then they do not deserve respect. However, if it is not true, then their words should be taken as from the Lord. Often, we see those in authority are put down and corrected by those with little or no right to do it. We trust God that everything is done in the order God has ordained for each local meeting.

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