

# Ordaining Officers in the Assembly

By Arthur Eggers, 2007

## PREFACE

### 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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### DISCLAIMER

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## THE 5 OFFICES FOR THE CHURCH

*"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." [Eph.4:11-12]*

These 5 offices were given to The Church.

1. The word **apostles** means "one sent out," these were to establish new churches:

*"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens 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." [Eph.2:9-10]*

*"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." [1Co.3:10]*

2. **Prophets** are inspired speakers who bring forth God's thoughts.
3. **Evangelists** to tell the good news of Jesus Christ, declaring His work on the cross. All of God's people should evangelize: *"But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry [2Ti.4:5]."*
4. **Pastors**, could have been translated **SHEPHERDS** as their duty is to watch the flock. In John 21:16 Jesus asked Peter to *"feed my sheep."* The best outline of a pastor's work is in 1 Peter 5:2 4:

*"¶ 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 (overruling) 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."*

5. Lastly are **teachers** who instruct others to know God's Word even better.

Why all these officers? *"¶ For the perfecting of the saints, • for the work of the ministry,"* and *¶ "for the edifying of the body of Christ"* to bring to a complete stage of growth. These officers were appointed in order that everything in the church might be arranged and put in order. The saints are to work in the ministry and edify the body. For how long?

*"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.4:13]*

## ELDERS

*"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. Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." [1Ti.5:17-20]*

The Greek word for **elder** is **PRESBUTEROS**, meaning “to be older” or “a senior”. He is considered one who has walked with the Lord many years. These elders are called to “rule well” or stand in the front rank to help preside over the meeting. Other elders are not necessarily preachers, but to assist the Pastor in whatever need he may have. We are told to give “double honor” to those who labor in the Word and doctrine.

**ACCUSATIONS AGAINST AN ELDER** Notice 1 Timothy 5:19-20 where we are told “*against an elder receive not an accusation.*” If there is some accusation of 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.”*

**REQUIREMENTS OF AN ELDER** In Titus 1:5-6, we read the requirements for being an **elder**:

*“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, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.”*

#### Requirements for Elders

1. Be blameless.
2. The husband of one wife.
3. Having faithful children.
4. Not accused of riot or unruly.

## BISHOPS

*“For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; 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 both negative and positive requirements for being a **bishop**. Now, let us consider both sides of the coin, so to speak.

#### Positive Requirement(s) for Bishops

1. A lover of hospitality.
2. A lover of good men.
3. Sober.
4. Just.

#### Negative Requirement(s) for Bishops

1. Must be blameless. as the steward of God.
2. Not self-willed.
3. Not soon angry.
4. Not given to wine.

**Positive Requirement(s) for Bishops**

5. Holy.
6. Temperate.
7. Holding fast the faithful word.

**Negative Requirement(s) for Bishops**

5. No striker.
6. Not given to filthy lucre.

There are 4 requirements concerning the **elders**, whereas the **bishops** have 6 negative and 7 positive requirements 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 requirements, so I will just point out some of them:

- **Blameless** is one that has so conducted himself that his conduct puts away any accusation that he, as a keeper of God's house, is unsound in his Christian faith.
- **No striker** is a person not quarrelsome and never striking another.
- **Filthy lucre** is no 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 by The Church. This is not one wife at a time but **ONE IN THE EYES OF GOD**. God doesn't join every couple together. In the flesh, many young people make foolish mistakes contrary to God's will and later repent. The wives of these officers also have a duty to God:
  - She is to be totally submissive to God and her husband as the head of the family;
  - she is to be a helper; and
  - she is to stand firm in faith with him by prayer even when she thinks he is wrong in his decisions.
- **Vigilant** or watchful over spiritual matters in the meeting.

The words **elder** (Greek: PRESBUTEROS) and **bishop** (Greek: 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."* In this instance 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 behavior, 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]*

**NOVICE:** One who has newly come to the faith.

There are 17 qualifications for 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.

## WHO SHOULD BE ORDAINED?

Who should have hands laid on them and ordained? The purpose for ordination is to set people aside and that they 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.

*"Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure." [1Ti.5:22]*

This is a warning against hasty ordination of untried men. Do not ordain someone too hastily, that is, without investigating their qualifications first.

*"Not a novice (one who has newly come to the faith), 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]*

How the devil would like to give God's people a bad name.

## AGE TO BE ORDAINED

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

*"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 exact 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, the overseers had laid hands on him.

## LAYING ON OF HANDS TO ORDAIN

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 or 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 but all things are to be done in order...being calm and with a sound mind they wait on the Lord and move according to His Word.

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