

Biblical Principles for Leaders

And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church. 28 "Be on guard for yourselves and for 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. **Acts 20:17, 28**

From this passage and others, we can learn what God had in mind when He created leadership in the church. We observe here, as well as Eph. 4:7-11 and 1Co. 12:11 & 28, that the Holy Spirit appoints leadership in the church, and that the choice is based in God's sovereign decision, and not in human politics and preference. Although God is quite capable of leading his people in a different fashion, the Word clearly teaches that He has chosen to use human leaders to care for and lead the church.

Leaders are given the responsibility to shepherd the church and provide oversight.

Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as {your} fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, 2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to {the will of} God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. **1Pet. 5:1-4**

This scripture helps us understand the scope of a leaders responsibility, and also something about the life he is to live. Shepherds are called to shepherd the flock of God among you. There is a divine limitation on the role of a shepherd, and that he is to know which sheep are his responsibility to care for and lead. The activity of shepherding involves four primary areas of ministry:

- (1) Leading**
- (2) Feeding**
- (3) Protecting**
- (4) Nurturing**

This scripture also points to the admonition that the leaders are to lead by example, which means:

- ▶ Their lives are to be worthy examples of one who is submitted to Christ's Lordship. Men's lives should be qualified in accordance with 1Tim. 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9.
- ▶ Their lives need to be observable to those "among them", who are seeking to follow their example.

Biblical Principles for Followers

Obey your leaders, and submit {to them} for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an

account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you. **Heb 13:17**

To obey your leaders implies that you must know who they are and that you are in enough relationship with them to know what they are saying. To submit to their leadership is the choice of those following, not something imposed by leaders.

But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, **13** and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. **1 Thes 5:12-13**

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. **18** For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages." **1 Tim 5:17-18**

So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel. **1 Cor 9:14**

Our view of how we relate to a local church is to be shaped by these principles. The bible uses descriptions like "household" and "body" to illustrate the type of relationship we are to build with one another. When we join our lives to others in the local setting, it should not be based on a particular building or even a denominational name, but on the following:

- ▶ Do the doctrinal beliefs bear witness with the truth?
- ▶ Does the vision of that particular local church bear witness with what God's calling me to be a part of? Am I willing to help accomplish the vision God's given to that church and it's leadership by actively supporting the work both with my spiritual gifts and natural talents & resources?
- ▶ Are there Biblically qualified leaders who lead by example and will I submit to their leadership and oversight of my life and family?
- ▶ Am I willing to embrace the members of that local body — allowing them to get involved Biblically in my life and for me to get involved Biblically in theirs?

Week 6 Taking Ownership of Membership

Lakeview Membership Process