LEADERSHIP

I. Its organization.

A. The Bible reveals whenever the gospel was preached and obeyed local churches began.
   1. This was true in Jerusalem.
   2. This was true in Antioch (Acts 11:19-26).
   3. This was true in Corinth, Ephesus and everywhere the gospel was preached.

B. These followers of Christ assembled together every first day of the week and many other times throughout the week.

C. We then read about these congregations having elders.
   1. Paul, on the way back through the congregations he had established on his first missionary journey, appointed elders in every city (Acts 14:21-23).
   2. This is the plan for leadership that God has for His people.

D. For a congregation to have a scriptural organization, it needs to have elders assisted by deacons.

E. There were also what we might call scripturally unorganized congregations in the New Testament.
   1. These would be congregations that did not have elders.
   2. The congregations that Paul established did not have elders at first until he came back through and appointed men to that office.
   3. The congregations in Crete did not have elders at the time Paul wrote to Titus.

F. We should point out that this was to be temporary and today, congregations should not be content to go along without elders, but should be working towards obtaining them.

G. We might point out as well that a congregation can be unscripturally organized.
   1. Men who don’t meet the qualifications we will later note who hold the office make it unscriptural.
   2. Some congregation might have devised another pattern for organization.

H. A congregation may be unscripturally unorganized.
   1. This would be the case in a congregation where one man has the rule.
   2. This is the case in congregations where what is called “evangelistic oversight” is followed.

I. For a congregation to be scripturally organized, which is God’s plan for every congregation, there needs to be scriptural leadership.

II. Its qualifications.

A. Not everyone is qualified to fill a leadership position.

B. Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus and gave them the inspired list of qualifications for one to fill the role of elder in the Lord’s church (1 Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:6-9).
C. These can be broken down into positive and negative qualifications.
   1. There are some things they must be.
   2. There are some things they must not be.
D. The purpose of this sermon is not to go over each qualification but we must understand that these qualifications must be met.
   1. There is not one that is more important than another.
   2. Each one must be in or out, whatever the case may be, of the life of any man who desires the office of an elder.
E. He can’t meet 80% or 90% of the qualifications and be fit to serve, it must be all.
F. A man can’t be appointed in hopes of getting him to meet these qualifications.
G. These are traits that the man in question is to have exhibited over a period of years to show that he is qualified for the position.

III. Its designations.
A. There are several scriptural names by which the leadership can be known in a congregation.
B. Most commonly in the Lord’s church the designation is elder but there are other biblical terms that point to the role of a leader.
C. They are called elders or presbyters (Acts 20:17; 1 Timothy 4:14).
   1. This comes from the Greek word “presbuteros,” meaning older.
   2. According to Vine’s it also indicates spiritual maturity.
   3. This is in line with the qualification of “not a novice.”
D. They can be called bishops or overseers (Philippians 1:1; Acts 20:28).
   1. These two words come from the same Greek word that means “one who oversees, takes care of.”
   2. This has to do with both his home and the congregation (1 Timothy 3:4-5).
E. They are also called pastors or shepherds (Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 5:4).
   1. The word translated pastor means “shepherd.”
   2. This has to do with the one of the obligations they have which we will now notice.

IV. Its obligations.
A. There are certain things that elders must do in order to fulfill their role as shepherds, bishops or presbyters.
B. God had given them certain duties that only that group of men can perform.
C. To fulfill their role as shepherds they must:
      a. Elders need to be students and growing spiritually.
      b. They need to watch the example they set.
   2. Take heed to the congregation.
      a. They are to tend to the flock by watching over them and feeding them.
      b. They are to watch out for trouble (vs 29-31).
   3. Just as a shepherd had a staff and other instruments, the shepherd
of God’s flock has prayer and God’s word (vs. 32).

D. Elders are to be in charge and rule in the Lord (1 Thessalonians 5:12-14; 1 Timothy 3:4-5; 5:17; Hebrews 13:17).
   1. Elders are over us in the Lord, which means in the Lord’s work and will.
   2. They are to warn us who are unruly and support those who are weak.
   3. He has not just to rule but to rule well.

E. He is to be a teacher (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9).
   1. To do this he must know God’s word.
   2. He has to use it effectively in order reach the lost and stop the mouths of false teachers.

F. He is to watch for the souls of the flock (Acts 20:28).
   1. The reason for this is that he will give account of them on Judgment Day (Hebrews 13:17).
   2. Just as a shepherd would keep the flock of sheep away from that which would harm them, the shepherd of souls is to be on the lookout for that which spiritually harms.

G. He is to willingly take on the role of shepherd and leading by example (1 Peter 5:2-3).