

# BODY LIFE



LOVE



SERVE



GIVE

## Eldership – 1 Peter 5

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It is an Aussie attitude to leadership to put them down. We tend to have a bad attitude to those in authority over us. Take the new NSW leader, Kristina Keneally. One of the first headlines I saw about her was: – PUPPET Premier. Some places put leaders on a pedestal and so when they fall they fall from a long way. No chance of that happening with aussies.

This attitude has crept into the church. Some say that church is all about community. They quote Jesus when he says 2 or 3 are gathered then that's church. It's not.

Somehow we think God thinks it's a good idea for the good order of society to have leaders but not in the church. Husbands, Fathers, those in authority. Important to have people who take responsibility and initiative so things happen.

Also if you're come every week or especially if you are a visitor in one sense I'm sorry because I maybe talking about a subject that is a sore spot for you because of a bad experience you've had. If you're a visitor come back again to see that we speak about other things but especially Jesus and His Gospel.

We are continuing our series on '**the Body Life**'. We have been looking at the working definition:-

### **What is 'church' and what does it do?**

The local church is a community of people who believe in Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord. They are devoted to Scripture are **organised under appointed qualified leadership** and gather regularly for preaching, worship, the Lord's Supper and baptism, and go out into the world to live and speak about Jesus.

#### **1. State: Jesus the chief shepherd**

##### **Read: 1 Peter 5:4**

Jesus the Shepherd. Jesus is the senior pastor. The senior leader of the church. Jesus is the highest leader.

Jesus says in Matthew 16:18 - **I will build MY church**

Paul in Colossians 1:15-18 says:- **Jesus is the Head of the church**

It is good to remember that. Overtime people forget this and think it is about people, personalities and programmes.

For Jesus to be the head means to be first – primary – most important. He does the shepherding – leading, caring, protecting, There is no other foundation. The church is his and exists for his glory.

How do mission, preaching, worship and life? We look to Jesus for all of church life. We go to Jesus and ask what do you want in your church.

WHY? He is the head of everything. HE is the head of you. Everything else will come and go but he will remain. Submit to him now you'll forced to later.

Jesus appoints Elders to shepherd his church under Him and by Him.

#### **2. Eldership**

##### **Read Acts 14; 15; 20**

##### **a. A pattern at the beginning of the church**

We'll see this when we study Acts next year that the author is describing not prescribing.

He is telling us what **DID** happen not necessarily what **SHOULD** happen. When you move to the letters that are written to settled churches you get idea of is meant to part of the life of a church.

*So do we see appointed qualified leadership or what we call Elders being a vital part of church life? YES we do.*

### **b. A pattern of God's work in the Old Testament**

God has always raised up men as leaders to do His work. Particularly his work of salvation. Patriarchs like Abraham. Judges like Samson. Prophets like Isaiah. Kings like David. He didn't have to but he chose to. Let's go and have a look together.

### **c. An expectation of the church today**

**Philippians 1:1 says:-** Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons

**1 Timothy 5:1 says:-** if anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task

**Titus 1:5 says:-** The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town

**1 Peter 5 says:-** To the elders among you...Be shepherds of God's flock

You can see that these leaders are called elders, pastors or overseers. The terms are interchangeable. They are one and the same group. There a plurality of Elders who form a team of people. They have different gifts but are equal.

It is necessary to have people who will take responsibility and initiative in the church.

Here's a story about 4 people named everybody, somebody, anybody and nobody. There was an important job to be done and everybody was sure that somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that, because it was everybody's job. Everybody thought anybody could do it but nobody realised that everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that everyday blamed somebody when nobody did what anybody could have done.

### ***What do these Elders do?***

#### **3. Elders – the under shepherds**

They do Shepherding of God's flock. They have a responsibility to Jesus for the church.

This can be summed up under 4 headings:-

**Teaching** – In the list of qualifications in 1 Timothy 5 there is one skill required ie *able to teach*. As shepherds that are feed the flock. This involves knowing the Bible, understanding it and clearing teaching.

**Protect** – Acts 20:28 says *Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock*. They are to protect the flock from false teachers.

**Caring** – James 5:14 says:- *Is anyone sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over them...* They are to care for the church. They are to lose sleep over the people under their care as a father or mother does for their children.

**Managing** – In Titus 1:7 they are called overseers and so are to provide oversight. Supervise. They are not only to know what is going on in the life of the church but lead and direct what is going on. Making sure there is direction, systems, policies, procedures for church life.

These are all to be done with an attitude SERVING like Jesus who laid down his life for his sheep.

#### **Why?**

Someone needs to takes responsibility. Someone needs to take the initiative.

#### **4. Our response to Elders**

**Read Hebrews 13:17**

This is a verse we skipped over when we went through Hebrews. It could be easy to react to these verses because of the words obey and submit. Remember Jesus. He said he submitted to the will of the Father. It is not a degrading or belittling thing. Not unqualified submission or obedience. Remember following the leadership of the Eldership or other leaders is not following them but following them as they follow Jesus.

See Hebrews 13:7.

The Elders are to desperately and wholeheartedly love Jesus. Treasure him above all else and this should be evident to all. They are to be overflowing with joy in Jesus. Thankful for Jesus. Humble before Jesus. They are not meant to make it up. If you see Jesus in front of them then you follow.

How do you see Jesus in front of them?

The Word of God the Bible is what is shaping and directing their leadership. If they are not then there is opportunity to say so. We are sinners. We are not perfect. We are fools for Christ. God uses the foolish. As I keep saying church is a bunch of messy people led by messy people. Expect us to fail not that would disqualify. You don't need to keep rubbing that in the leaders face but work out how you can help them in their weakness. Especially not grumbling about them. Remember where that got them. 40 years in the wilderness. This will be of no advantage to you.

**Brothers and sisters PRAY for your leaders. Pray for the Elders.**

Pray they will **show you Jesus.**

Pray they'll be **reading His Word and praying.**

Pray for their **families.**

**Conclusion: Let's go back to where I began. Jesus.**

Not about our church.

Not about the programmes.

Not about what we offer.

Not about the worship and how good the music is.

Not about the number of people who come.

Not about the people.

It is about Jesus. It is about whether he is at the centre of our church.

Whether he is the centre of the life of each individual here.