

Leadership in the Church
(Ephesians 4:11-12)

Introduction:

1. Last Wednesday evening we studied the instructions given in James 5:14-15 that involve *"the elders of the church."*
2. Perhaps this is a good time for us to be reminded of God's plan for "leadership in the church."
3. Let us begin by emphasizing the fact that . . .

Discussion:

- I. CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH
 - A. This point is clearly stated in Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18.
 - B. In addition,:
 1. Jesus built His church (Matthew 16:18)
 2. Jesus purchased the church with His blood (Acts 20:28).
- II. AS HE BUILT HIS CHURCH, CHRIST PLACED CERTAIN LEADERS IN IT (Ephesians 4:11-12)
 - A. According to vs.12, the Lord did this so His work would be carried out and so the church would be edified.
 - B. In vs.11, five groups of leaders are listed that the Lord placed in His church.
 1. The first two groups of leaders were temporary: "apostles" and "prophets."
 2. The other groups of leaders are permanent ("evangelists," "pastors," and "teachers").
 - a. "Evangelists" [also called preachers and ministers] proclaim God's Word.
 - b. "Pastors" [also called elders, shepherds, overseers, and bishops] are responsible for overseeing God's people.
 - c. "Teachers" are instructors of God's Word.
- III. THE LORD'S PLAN IS FOR EACH CONGREGATION TO BE LED BY A SPECIAL GROUP OF MEN
 - A. This plan is revealed in:
 1. Acts 14:23 -- Paul and Barnabas ordained elders in every church.
 2. Philippians 1:1 -- The church in Philippi had bishops as well as deacons.
 3. Titus 1:5 -- Titus was to ordain elders in every city.
 - B. Only qualified men may serve as elders (Titus 1:6-8; 1 Timothy 3:1-7).
 - C. Elders have weighty responsibilities that are revealed in:
 1. Acts 20:28 -- take heed to self and all the flock, feed the church
 2. Titus 1:9 -- hold fast the faithful Word
 3. Hebrews 13:17 -- watch for the souls of the congregation
 4. James 5:14 -- visit and pray for the sick
 5. 1 Peter 5:1-3 -- feed the flock and take the oversight properly.
- IV. IS IT POSSIBLE FOR A CONGREGATION TO EXIST WITHOUT ELDERS?
 - A. We can answer this question by considering how:
 1. newly established congregations in the New Testament existed for a time before elders were appointed
 2. a congregation may not have men who are qualified to be elders.
 - B. Thankfully, the church in Jerusalem has provided an example for us to follow in Acts 6.
 1. It seems from Acts 15:2 that this church eventually had elders.
 2. However, in Acts 6:1-7, a matter was taken care of before elders are mentioned.
 - a. (vs.1) A problem developed in the Jerusalem church.
 - b. (vs.2-6) The apostles dealt with this matter before the church, and they got the members involved.
 - c. (vs.7) The cooperation of everyone involved led to continued growth.

Conclusion:

1. In His Word the Lord has given a plan for leadership in His church.
2. Let us follow His plan, and let us avoid any plan that is not found in the Bible.