

The Gift of Elders

by Denny Kenaston

The gift of elders is a gift from God to the church, given to equip the saints for the work of the ministry.

Duration: 1:25:28

Scripture: 1 Timothy 5:17

Topics: "Elders"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by asking the congregation to pray for him as he delivers his message. He cautions against overreacting to negative experiences in church and emphasizes the importance of following biblical principles. He shares examples of small groups that reject the need for leaders and highlights the problems that arise from this approach. The preacher then turns to Ephesians 4 and explains that the gift of elders is given by God to the church. He also references 1 Timothy 5, which emphasizes the importance of honoring and supporting elders who labor in the word and doctrine.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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Good testimony to us all. Somehow, in spite of us, God builds His church, doesn't He? And you can be sure that it was in the mind of God to build His church with frail human beings. It is in the mind of God that when it's all said and done, all we can do is throw our crowns at His feet and He gets all the glory.

Whether it be here on this earth or whether it be in eternity, both places, God wants us to throw our little crowns at His feet and give Him all the glory for whatever He has done. That no flesh should glory in His presence. Paul said, no flesh.

Well, I greet you in the name of the Lord Jesus this morning, grateful for how God has led in the service already. We never really know what's coming next around here, do you? My children said a couple of weeks ago, what is a regular service? I like that. We just allow God to move, lead and direct.

And we never know when we get here if there's going to be an anointing, if we're going to have weeping, if there's going to be a time of rejoicing or a season of prayer. We just never know. But God knows and we just submit to Him.

Well, ordination time is always a joyous time in the life of a congregation. That's the way we found it through these many years. This morning and all week long, my heart has been rejoicing in the activities that lie ahead of us today.

There are places where it is considered a sad thing that we're having an ordination. The people weep for the ones that are being ordained. The sisters cry on the shoulder of the wives of the ordained.

And the people shudder at the thought that they might be chosen to stand up and lead the congregation. Through the years we have sought to change that mindset. It is not a sad day.

Yes, it's a sober day. But it's not a sad day. It's a joyous day.

God in His mercy has looked down upon us and guided us and directed us and blessed us and we are having an ordination today. I believe that's how we should look at this day. Just like the Bible says, it is a good thing according to 1 Timothy chapter 3. If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good thing.

Yes, weep over it. Yes, pray for your brethren. Yes, my sisters, be an encouragement to the sisters of the ordained.

But it's a good thing to be ordained into the ministry. And we thank God for that. It's a good thing to be called by God and the church into the ministry.

Through the years, we have sought to lift that standard up. And I feel it's important to do it because we have many young men in this congregation and how they view the work of the ministry will affect all of us in the next generation. Well, this evening, I believe Brother Aaron will be addressing the elders that we're ordaining and he will be addressing them and their responsibilities to God and the church.

That's the message this evening. But this morning, it's my responsibility to address the church and their responsibility to God and to their elders. The title of my message this morning is this, The Gift of Elders.

This is not a new message for me. I think I've preached it ten times. It's a message that I preach at ordination time all around the United States when we have ordinations.

The Gift of Elders. The New Testament is full of scriptural direction on the subject of the responsibility of the church to their elders. And I've been given this assignment.

It seems like the right time to address this subject. It's the teachable moment. But I want to preface my message this morning with these words.

And I've known for two weeks that I'm going to be sharing this message this morning, so I've been reflecting on the words that I'm going to say. I thank God continually for the way this congregation takes

care of and responds to their elders. I thank God continually.

So while we are going to speak this morning on our responsibility to our elders, I want you to know this message is not a rebuke, but rather it's preventative maintenance that we continue to open our hearts to the principles, the scriptural principles, which God breathed out in His Word on how we should relate to those whom God calls and whom we call to be the leaders among us. So I just want to preface the message with that. I consider it a privilege that I get to serve here.

I talk to lots of pastors outside of our context, and some even in our context. And I know how it can be. And I just thank God for the way this congregation responds to their elders.

I find in the Scriptures a beautiful balance. And the Scriptures are that way in many places. God balances His Word with other words.

The messages today are the same. One this morning, and one this evening. God gives balance in the Scriptures.

God gives instruction to the church on how they should respond to their elders. God gives that instruction for the church. God gives other instruction to the elders, and what their responsibilities are to the church.

And if the elders take heed to the Word concerning their responsibility, and the church takes heed to the Word concerning their responsibility, those two come together so beautifully and balance out to a lovely relationship between the church and its elders, and the elders and the church. For example, the Scripture is very clear. God speaks to leaders.

And He says to the leaders, Be servants. Be servants. But God did not speak those words to the congregation.

It wouldn't be good if we thought in our minds, Oh, we're getting two more servants. They're my servants. I can ask them to do this, and ask them to do that, and they'll do this, and they'll do that.

They're my servants. Oh, isn't this wonderful? I'm getting two more servants today. That would not be good.

That would not work out right. No, that's what God says to the leader. God says, You leader, I'm putting you in a place of prominence.

Be a servant. Take the low road. But to the congregation, God says, Esteem them highly in love.

That's what God says to us. Now, it's good for us to hear those words. But if the elders hear those words and say, Hey, you guys need to look up to Me.

You're not esteeming Me highly. This isn't right. It won't come out right.

Just like it doesn't come out right with husbands and wives. If the wives preach to the husbands the things that God tells them to do, or the husbands preach to the wives the things that God tells them to do, we all can testify that doesn't build a very good relationship. Amen? Amen, sisters? It doesn't come out right.

So, we rejoice this morning at the beautiful balance that God will give all of us today. Beautiful nuggets that will balance together and make a beautiful relationship between elders and congregation between

congregation and congregation and elders. I'd like us now to open our Bibles to Ephesians 4 so that I can explain why the title is given the way it is.

The gift of elders. In Ephesians 4, verse 7, we find these beautiful words. But unto every one of us, unto every one of us, is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Wherefore He saith, when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. That's speaking about Jesus. He led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men.

Now, He that ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens that He might fill all things. By the way, God is doing some of that filling all things today. He's doing it from His throne.

Verse 11, And He gave some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers. He gave. This is where I get the title the gift of elders.

He gave. There are several gifts mentioned here. But not all the gifts are mentioned here.

But these are ministry gifts. These are leadership gifts which God gives to men that He might fill all things. He fills all things to those men and He also fills all things through those men.

And we see that in verse 12. Why He gave for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Now, there are two ways that commentators view that verse that I just read to you.

Some commentators say that God gave apostles and prophets and evangelists and pastors and teachers to do the work of the ministry. They are to perfect the saints. They are to do the work of the ministry.

And they are to edify the body of Christ. And I have no problem with that. Elders are supposed to do those things.

But other commentators would say, and this would be my opinion on this verse also, that He gives these gifts unto men that they might perfect the saints, that the work of the ministry can be done by the saints, that the body of Christ can be edified by the saints. That's a different view. One puts three or four men ministering in a congregation and everyone else sitting and listening.

The other releases the gifts in the body of Christ, and has the whole body edifying itself in love, which if you read down further in verse 16, you'll see that that is the picture that Paul is speaking about. He gives us the picture of a body, a body that edifies itself in love. A body is made up of many different members, but the body takes care of itself.

This body, my body, edifies itself in love. It took care of me today. These hands washed my body today.

These hands took care of me today. These hands picked up water and allowed me to drink it today. This body has been edifying itself all day long in love.

And God wants this body to edify itself also in love. And because God wants that, He gives this body the gift of elders. It is their responsibility to equip the saints.

And that's what that word perfecting of the saints means. It's there to equip the saints so that we can all do the work of the ministry and all of us can edify ourselves and each other in love. That's God's goal till we all come unto a perfect man, a mature man, a mature expression of the body of Christ in this locality.

That is God's heart. So thus, the gift of elders. Let's think about the gift for a moment.

Let's look at the perspective of the gift. I know that some of you know very well what I'm saying. Some of you may not.

But you know, there are many, many people who would long for just one elder. Amen? They would long for one. Many people have had none for years.

That is a gift. A gift. Now, how do you receive a gift? If you see its value, how do you receive a gift? How shall you receive your elders? With gratitude.

As we realize, God is giving us a gift. Men who are willing to labor, to pray, to fast, to preach, to counsel. God is giving us a gift.

Consider this also this morning, brothers and sisters. Who is the giver of the gifts? It is the God of Heaven. I think it's two, maybe three weeks ago, but remember when I had the message about where were the men? And we looked just briefly.

We didn't really go into it, but we read the Scriptures there in Isaiah chapter 3. What happens when God's people turn away from God? God Himself takes the leaders away from them. Well, just like God takes the leaders away from those who turn away from Him, God also brings leaders to those who sincerely want to do what is right. And thus, this morning, we must also look up into the face of God and realize that God is looking down on us and blessing us.

Because of the sincere desire of our heart, God is looking down on us and blessing us. Not because we're perfect. Not because we don't ever make any mistakes, but because of the sincerity of our hearts that we want to do what is right.

God is giving us leaders. It is a gift from the Lord. I want now to turn to some verses in the New Testament.

1 Timothy, if you'll turn there. I want to read these three portions of Scripture and then look at seven clear points in the New Testament. Seven very clear principles in the New Testament that God gives to us to help us to understand how we should respond and our responsibility to the elders that God gives us.

First of all, 1 Timothy 5, verse 17 through 19. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn, and the laborer is worthy of his reward.

Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them, I believe the context here, them, the elders, that sin rebuke before all that others also may fear. Now over to 1 Thessalonians 5. I'm not going to make a lot of comments on these words because I want to address them in points here.

1 Thessalonians 5, verse 12 and 13. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake and be at peace among yourselves. And lastly, let's turn to Hebrews 13.

And then we'll look at these points. Hebrews 13, first of all, verse 7. Hear God's word this morning. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith follow, whose faith follow considering the end of their conversation.

And verse 17. Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves for they watch for your souls as they that must give account that they may do it with joy and not with grief, for this is unprofitable to you. This is unprofitable to you.

Alright, let's look at these seven principles in the New Testament. The first one that we would like to consider, the church's responsibility to elders. It's clear in these verses that we read that we are to esteem them.

We are to esteem them. And the Scripture is very clear on this. This word esteem means to give them a place of high honor.

To give them a place of high honor. And you may say now, wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute. It's not good for them to be in a place of honor.

They need to be humble. That's true. They need to be humble.

And God says to them, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God. But God does not say to the church, humble your ministers. Give them a place of high honor.

Highly esteem them, the Scripture says. We all know, all of us brothers we know, what it does to our hearts and our lives when our wives highly esteem us. Nobody is worried about getting lifted up in pride when your wife is highly esteeming you.

In fact, it works the other way. It brings humility to your heart. It causes a fire of desire to burn in you.

It makes you want to do and be more what she wants you to do and be than the other. And my dear brothers and sisters, it works the same with men in the eldership. If you highly esteem them, it will humble them.

They will walk away saying, I don't deserve this kind of honor. And they will see their mistakes and wonder how you could honor them. And all of that will work like a flame of desire in their heart and they will go further because of it.

We know it works that way in our homes, doesn't it? Brothers, even sisters, when our children highly esteem us and give us a place of high honor, we just want to lay down our lives even more for them and be what we're supposed to be and serve them the way we're supposed to. And it works that way in the eldership in a local church. God says to the leaders, be humble servants.

Wash the feet of the brothers and the sisters. Expect nothing. Serve with all your heart.

And when you get done, say these words in your hearts. I have done what I should. I am an unprofitable servant.

But to the congregation, God says, esteem them highly in love for their work is safe. Even the Scripture says, double honor for those who are ruling well. And do you notice those verses it says, especially those who labor in the Word? You know, sometimes I'm not sure if we realize what goes in to this good food we

get around here.

Sometimes I'm not sure if we realize how many hours of labor went into that fresh piece of bread that we got on Sunday morning. God says, especially those who labor in the Word. And brothers and sisters, it is a labor.

It is a labor. It is not an easy task. It doesn't come easy for any of us.

When I think about this subject of esteeming them highly, I thought about this, and it's fresh in my mind because I was just away from having meetings in an unknown place to me. But you know, brothers and sisters, an open, supportive, respectful, interested face is one of the sweetest things that you could give to your elder. Do you know that? I'm talking about right now while you're sitting in the service.

It's one of the sweetest things you could do for your elders. It was a way of meetings in a new place, in an unknown place, standing before 300 people, and most of them I didn't know. Do you know what I looked for in that congregation while I was standing there skinning them, preaching a hard message to them? I looked for faces that were looking at me like this.

And I found a few. Do you know when that meeting was over, I went to those people whom I didn't know. I didn't know who they were.

But I went to them and I shook their hand and I blessed them and I thanked them for the encouragement that they were to me. You know, three out of five of them were ministers. They knew.

They knew. You can't imagine what that does when a minister looks down into your faces. You can't imagine.

Esteem them highly in love. The Bible says along this line of esteeming them, don't rebuke them. That's what it says.

Don't rebuke them. Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father. May I say this? The blessing will fall back on you in many, many ways.

It will fall back on you. And I don't have time to speak about all the ways that it will. But you know, when you have that heart attitude toward your elders, you will receive more from them.

When you have that attitude toward your elders, your children will receive more from them. When you have that attitude toward your elders, your elders will labor more for you and the blessing will fall back on you. Isn't God good? How beautifully those things work together.

Brother, number two, follow them. And by that I don't mean obey them. That's another point.

Follow them. Hebrews, remember the verse? Whose faith follow considering the end of their life. Follow their faith.

By that I simply mean this. Brothers, sisters, we are to follow their example. See how they love the Lord and do likewise.

See how they labor and serve and follow their example. See how they live out their Christianity and seek to pattern yourself after it. Whose faith follow? Peter said to the elders, admonishing them that they are not

to be lords over God's heritage, but examples to the flock.

That's the encouragement that God gives to an elder. But what a tremendous blessing it is to an elder to be in the midst of a people whom he knows they are following by example. Examples to the flock in devotional life, in family life, in personal convictions, in business life, in church life.

Follow their example. You know, some time ago, a brother said to me, Brother Denny, we like the church here. We like it.

The preaching is good. We don't agree with everything you do, but the sermons are good. We like it here.

And I'm not sure if he realized what he was saying, but do you know that's what they do in the Baptist churches and evangelical churches all over America? They like the good sermons, but I'm not going to follow that guy. No, he's kind of a fanatic. He's kind of extreme.

You know, he's a little this, and he's a little that. You know how he is, and so we just leave him there. Oh no.

Oh no. The Bible says, you watch that life and you follow his example. Watch and see how he raises his children.

Listen in your ear to see what kind of a devotional life he has. Follow his example. See what he does in his free time and follow his example.

Look at the convictions that he's living out. See what his everyday Christianity looks like and follow his example. Whose faith? Follow.

What an easy way to serve a people, a people who want to follow. Amen? Number three. The Scripture admonishes us to pray for them.

To pray for them. Paul was constantly asking for prayer. Pray for me.

Remember me in your prayers, he said. Pray that I'll be able to say the Word of God the right way. Pray for me, that God will give me utterance.

Oh, what a beautiful request for prayer. That God would give me utterance. These were the kind of prayer requests that Paul gave as he wrote letters to this place and that.

All the places where he had been, he passed back to them. Don't forget me. Pray for me.

We are to hold them up in prayer. Pray when they're facing decisions. Pray for them on Saturday when they're preaching on Sunday.

Pray for protection over them from the enemy. Pray a covering over their family because the enemy is stalking their family. Be sure of it.

He is stalking their family. This guy and all these things he says and the way he's living. If I can just knock those children out, then everything will be done.

His mouth will be shut. Pray for his family. The enemy is stalking his family.

Pray at your times of devotion in your home. Pray at the mealtime. Lift up your ministers in prayer.

And have special times of prayer for your ministers. You know, I read an article some time ago written by a minister who decided out of a burden, out of the longing burden that his people would hold him up in prayer. He decided to do an experiment one Sunday morning.

And he came together with the church on a normal Sunday morning. And before he started his message, he just broke his heart before the congregation and he said these words, I really, really need your help this morning. How many of you this morning, while I preach, how many of you would just hold me up in prayer? I mean, not just a little prayer here and then your mind is off on everything that I'm saying, but how many of you will just hold me up in prayer all the way through my message this morning? How many will do that? And I mean, how many of you, how many think, you know how many people raise their hand? They all raise their hands.

You know why? Because they knew it was right. They knew it was right. But he arrested their heart.

And they did. They prayed for him while they listened. Their heart was lifting up to God in prayer.

It was the best sermon he ever preached. It was the best sermon he ever preached. So who got the sermon? The preacher or the people? And you know, I think there should be enough prayer engaged for the preacher, the one who's going to stand and minister that we can't really tell who got the message.

The people or the preacher? And it really doesn't matter. All that matters is that a message came from the throne room of God to the congregation this morning. That's what's important.

This also is profitable for you if you will remember your minister in prayer. May I also just say this? Maybe there are a few in this room whom God calls to pray, to spend much time in prayer. Hold those ministers up.

Do it. You will never be sorry. Just yesterday, a brother came to me.

And we were sharing. And I shared with him a blessing. Something that happened in my family's life.

And his eyes lit up with joy. And he said these words, Oh brother, my family has been praying that very thing for your family. I just thought, Thank God.

Thank God for somebody who would do that. Who would pray like that. Hold them up in prayer.

Lift up their hands like Aaron and Ir. Number four. Know them.

The Scripture says. Know them. Get to know them.

Learn how they think. Learn what makes them tick. Learn what their burdens are.

Learn what their visions are. Learn what their dreams are. Find out the deep desires of their hearts.

Know them. Which labor among you, that are over you in the Lord. 1 Thessalonians 5 Now, if you are going to fulfill this scriptural principle, you must spend time hearing them.

You must have a desire to know what is their vision. You should be thinking thoughts like this. My minister is coming to our house for a meal today.

What questions can I ask him? You know sometimes, you know, you sit around on a Sunday afternoon and just chit chat, and you know, weather, and this, and that, you know, and go home. But other times, I'll go to someone's house and I just sit there and answer questions for two hours. What's the difference? I think somebody wants to know.

They want to know me. Get their heart on biblical issues. What do you see in this? What do you think about this, brother? What's your conviction on this subject? These things take time.

Sometimes a length of time. Sometimes just simply an interested heart on a Sunday morning. You can find out.

Oh, I know what's in that brother's heart. I know what motivates him. I know what his burden is.

I know what his dreams are. I know what his vision is. Number five.

Obey them. Yes. Obey them.

I know. Some of you probably had some bad experiences. Maybe you were in a different church setting and things didn't go well.

Maybe the elders lorded it over you. Who knows? There are many people here today. We have many different experiences.

But I just want to caution us all this morning that we not overreact to a bad experience in our church life. These principles are in the Bible. And they work.

And every principle that God gives He has a reason for giving it. And great blessings will fall on all of us if we follow it. And much trouble will come if we say For example I know of little groups here and there around the United States.

Four families. Us four and no more. Right? You go to them.

You meet them. They come to big meetings here and there when I travel. And there are four families.

And these words is what I hear. We don't have any leaders among us. We don't believe we need them.

We don't believe the Bible teaches that. We just kind of all share together in the ministry. These are the words that I hear.

Two years later you go back again and it's still us four and no more. Or it isn't even there anymore. You know that's an overreaction.

That's a bitter attitude toward a difficult experience they went through. And I know they've gone through some and maybe you have too. But in that bitterness of soul they've read this book and went right over all those verses that we just read.

They went right over them and did not see them. And somehow explained them away because of the bitterness of their soul. But the Bible is very clear.

In not one place but I think five places obey them. Authority is a clear scriptural principle. God has given the elders authority.

We must acknowledge that. Now that's not for them to acknowledge. They're not supposed to walk around saying, you know, I'm in charge around here.

Bless God, you're going to do what I say. No. That's not for them.

But that's for us. That's for us. This word obey, I want to quickly say it's not the same obey as children obey your parents in the Lord.

It's not the same word. And God is not saying to the congregation just blindly do whatever the elders tell you to do. That's not what God is saying.

But that word is rather a word of yielding to their desires. It has the connotation of allowing yourself to be persuaded rather than just do what you're told. Just do what you're told.

You do what you're told. No. But allow yourselves to be persuaded in the direction of those elders.

That's what it means. We look through these verses in the Scripture. We find words of submission.

We find the word rule. We find the word lead and follow. And all of these are a beautiful picture of a shepherd-sheep relationship.

There cannot be a shepherd-sheep relationship if the sheep don't follow. Amen? So, the Scriptures are clear. Obey them that have the rule over you.

God tells the leaders to be servant leaders. God tells the leaders not being lords over God's heritage but examples to the flock. But God says to the congregation, follow your shepherds.

Open your heart to their direction. And you know, it's beautiful the way that God says it there. The last verse we read there in Hebrews.

God even says to a sheep, you know, it is unprofitable to you if you're always making the trouble and making it hard and finding a fault and, you know, finally that shepherd is just not going to lead you because it's just too difficult. This will be unprofitable to you. It is profitable to you if your heart says, Amen, preacher.

Amen. There must be order in the household of God. If there is no order, a house will be divided against itself and it will fall.

It will not stand. God knows that. There will be times, and I might say, with my 23 years of experience here, those times are very few.

But there will be times when you will just simply need to bow your heart and say, That's fine, you elders. That's right. You do it that way.

There will be those times. It will be profitable to you if you can yield to that. For they watch for your souls as those who must give an account.

Who must give an account. I mean, as I understand that, someday those elders will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who judges the quick and the dead. And he will say, Why didn't you warn this one? Why didn't you step in there and give some direction? And there they will be.

Number six. Church's responsibility. How do we respond to the gift of elders? Number six.

We should support them. And by that, I do not mean just financially. But I do mean that.

But it's a whole lot more support than helping him pay his bills at times. There's a whole lot more to support than that. Stand beside them.

Affirm them. When they preach the tough sermon, go and bless them. Go and thank them that they had the courage to say it like it is.

Now, if he's worth his salt, he doesn't need that encouragement. He's going to do what is right anyway. But oh, how helpful it is when he's given a tough sermon and you go up to him afterwards and say, God bless you, brother, for that.

Write them a letter or a note of encouragement. Put yourself in their shoes sometimes. And then respond how you think you would want and need at that time in their life.

And yes, support them. Financially, this is good for us to consider what blessing falls back on us when we are careful to watch over our minister to see that he's free enough to get fresh bread from heaven, that he's free enough that he can take some of those counseling responsibilities, that he's free enough that he can watch over his own devotional life, keeping his personal fire burning, which I'm sure that they'll be challenged in those things tonight. But it's our responsibility to watch over that and make sure that they're free enough to do that.

You know those Scriptures there in Malachi where it says to bring the tithes into the storehouse and all of that, you know, and God says, you've robbed me. And they said, where in have we robbed thee? And God says, in tithes and offerings. Then He says, bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse and prove Me now, sayeth the Lord, and see if I won't pour you out a blessing that you can't even contain.

I'm not quoting exactly right, but I know those are the basic words there. You know, when I was a young Christian, I used to read that and think, oh, God's saying just tithe and I'll bless your finances and you can't out-give God and I think you can apply those verses that way. Because God does take care of those who give.

That's true. But as I studied deeper into the relationship of what was done with those tithes in the Old Testament, it's very clear to me what God was saying. God was saying, you bring those tithes into the storehouse and then do with them what I've told you to do, which, by the way, was to free the ministers so that they can minister and see if I won't pour you out a blessing that you can't contain.

And I believe that's what God is saying there in Malachi. So, the blessing is way more than money in your back pocket. It's way more than that.

It's spiritual riches in Christ Jesus which flow out to you out of the heart of a minister who has had time to seek the face of God. Support them. And lastly this morning, protect them.

Protect them? Yes. Protect them. We read the verses, but let me just give it to you again.

Against an elder, receive not an accusation, but with two or three witnesses. Receive not an accusation, but with two or three witnesses. Don't receive accusations against your elders.

Don't do it. Don't ever do it without two or three witnesses. Oh, that would take care of so many things, wouldn't it? If on a Sunday morning after the service, a certain brother comes to you and says, Hey, did you hear? Did you hear what Brother Aaron did? And you answer back, Excuse me, just a moment.

Brother John? Brother Joe? Here comes Brother John and Brother Joe. And then you turn back and say, Now, what was that that Brother Aaron did? Man, that would cure so many accusations, wouldn't it? What was that now that Brother Aaron did? And if Brother Aaron did something, then we want Brother Aaron to see what he did wrong. But most of the time, the accusations are done in secret, they're done one-on-one, and they wouldn't ever go and tell that minister what they think.

Most of the time. So, I just encourage you this morning, protect them. I didn't say, overlook their sin.

I didn't say, cover up their sin if they have sin. No. Them that sin, rebuke before all.

But I'm talking about this, which happens in many congregations, this, you know, Do you know what? Don't do that. And don't hear that. And stop it, when it starts to come your way.

Now, having said these seven things, I know that some of you that are listening, as I said already, maybe you've had a bad experience, and maybe these seven things don't sit too well with you, and you think, what is all of this? But may I just encourage you again this morning, I'm not just telling you things that I thought up. They are in this blessed book. And they're in here for a reason.

And if this congregation, and congregations that spring up out of this congregation, are going to be here ten years from now, and fifteen years from now, this shepherd-sheep relationship must be cultivated. Even as it has been through these years, so let it be for the next ten or twenty years, this beautiful shepherd-sheep relationship being built. And like I said, in the beginning I'll say again, I'm so blessed through the years, that it is this way, even as I said.

So let's just keep moving in that direction. God has blessed us, and God will bless us, if we will continue this shepherd-sheep relationship, according to the principles, clearly revealed in God's word. Let's kneel together for prayer.

I just want to open it up for a few moments of prayer. Some sheep. Let's pray about this together.

Some of you brothers lead out. Some of you sheep, you lead out. And then I'll close.

Lift up your voice so we can all join you. Others, others pray out, lead out. Amen.

Yes, God. Amen, God. Just agree all of us here upon our knees, Lord.

We thank you for the elders, Lord, that you have given to us, and that you are giving to us, God. I thank you for the elders that you've given to me and to my family, Lord. I thank you that I have a church where I can go, where I can bring my family, where my children are excited to come to church, Lord, and they love to hear the sermons, God.

Oh, Father, I pray. Oh, help me to do my part, Lord, and support these elders that are in this congregation, God. Oh, Father, God, we just lay our hearts open before you this morning and pray that you will take us all as a congregation into all that you have for us, Lord, that your name would be glorified upon this earth, Lord.

We know we make mistakes, God, but oh, we desire that you would be glorified, God, in this community where we live, Lord. So, God, we pray. Take these words, Lord, and let them sink deep into our hearts, Lord.

God, I'm trusting you for this, and I thank you for hearing our cries. In Jesus' name. Thank you, Brother Denny, for those admonitions to us, this congregation, this morning.

Thank you for reminding each one of us of our responsibilities there. I'd like to open up, give the congregation an opportunity to share, to respond to the message. Maybe you have something in your heart you want to share.

I just encourage you to raise your hand if you feel God leading you to share something this morning in response to the message. We're dying to hear your hearts. Do we have anyone? Anybody, Jeff? I have a few thoughts.

I hope I can get them all together. One was I was thinking back to when I first heard this principle of the shepherd and the sheep. I was a young man in my early 20s sitting in a Baptist church, and I said some foolish words.

I said, I don't want to be any dumb sheep. And I said it out of ignorance and foolishness. I was still learning the Bible and the principles.

And, you know, in any forms of government, there must be leadership. Without leadership, there's anarchy and chaos. And, you know, I was thinking of the, as Denny was preaching, of a pastor with sheep and shepherds that care and harmony and beauty.

And there are wolves about, and yet there's a protection there because there's care and love. And I'm thankful for the Bible principles. And I was also thinking that the Scriptures, if we are biblicalists, we cannot deny them.

The Bible says, Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine. I want to commit my life to that, to honoring, loving, praying. We have as a family in the past and will continue on.

And I'm blessed by the overflow of blessings that have come upon us and our family because of that. I can testify to that. God is good.

I want to say this message has spoke truth to my heart. Thank you. Yeah, I want to praise God, too, for elders that labor in the word.

I know it's not that way in other places. And I believe they labor to be balanced and to rightly divide the word of truth. I also want to praise God that He has ordained that there would be authority in the church.

And He has also ordained that there would be submission in the church. And I think that we miss it. I think that submission has become a word that we don't like.

It's not popular in this culture that we live in. And yet it's a beautiful thing. It's something that testifies to the world that the church is not like the world.

And that I think of a marriage, too. And the testimony of a submissive wife is often much more powerful than an authoritative husband. And it's something the world can't understand.

It's baffling to the world. And I just think it's that way in the church. The one is necessary and both are necessary.

There has to be authority and there has to be submission. And I just praise God this morning that I think we see that truth. And I just want to bless Danny for laboring in the word this morning.

Thank you, brother. Others? Yes, I can say amen. I appreciated the message.

As he was talking about the shepherd and sheep relationship, I had to think of, you know, if the leader has that proper relationship with Christ, as a shepherd and sheep relationship, then the congregation can easily follow as sheep follow the shepherd, the leader. And I think that our leaders do have that proper relationship. And we're blessed to see that.

So, amen. Amen. I'm blessed to be a part of this congregation.

I just want to take this time to bless the elders that we've had in the past. I appreciate to have this place to bring my family. We enjoy worshiping here.

We feel part of the congregation here. Our heart is being knit together. You know, we could get pretty practical.

We say, well, you know, these men we are ordaining, are they capable? But that's really not the question. The question is, is God capable to work in these men's lives and to, through these channels, meet the needs of the congregation? I do believe that God is capable. And in this principle of submitting and honoring, I think we, the congregation, should not look at it as heavy rules or laws, but in the dispensation of grace.

Look to God for grace and to walk it out in the spirit. And I think that's the way that it was meant to be. God bless us.

Thank you, Brother George. It's just a blessing to hear the brothers share their support on a message like this. Frontier? I just want to thank Jesus that we have people like Denny, and like Aaron, and like Emmanuel, and all the other elders and the new elders coming into our lives.

Because, no, we're not going to agree with everything they say, but sooner or later the Lord is going to show us what's real. Our flesh steps in and gets in the way, but Jesus steps in and shows us what's real. How we can build our life on Jesus and not on our flesh.

And I owe apologies to elders, certainly I do. I'm sure we all do. But let's look at Jesus, and let's look at Jesus, how he puts people in front of us to lead us, to guide us.

We can't guide ourselves. None of us can. And they need guidance too.

They need our prayers. They need our love. They need our affection.

They need everything we need. And they need everything that Jesus gives. Please don't judge our elders.

Because if you do, I think you're judging Jesus. And Jesus loves us dearly, deeply. And we'll know someday when we go to heaven how much he loves us.

So let's not judge him on this earth. Just love each other. Forgive each other.

Thank each other for their prayers. Thank each other for their kiss. Thank each other for the hugs.

I've never had this. But each day the Lord has given me more and more. Through prayer, through sacrifice.

But the sacrifice I'm giving, look at the sacrifice Jesus gave us. So we can live. And live the way we should live.

Not live in our flesh. But live for the Bible. God is an unbelievable loving God.

Don't take God for granted. We have in the past. Let's not do it in the future.

Because we can be with him forever. That's a big word. Ever.

Eternity. I don't want to be on this earth, but I do want to be with my creator. Thank you.

Thank you Brother Robert. In the back. Thank you Denny for your words this morning.

And I thank you for those points that we can have practical points to look at and to look over on a regular basis to realize the importance of what our part is as a sheep. I thank the Lord that I can be a sheep. And I thank you for the shepherds here that have that staff that can come out and to pull us back when they need to and can love us and share with us.

I thank the Lord for each one of you here. And I am so blessed. And I also want to take this time to thank the families of those elders.

The time that they give up their father and their husband to many hours of meetings and counseling time. I know it would be very difficult for my family to have me gone as much time as you are gone. And I want to really thank you for the gift that you give our church in the time that they are away from you.

Thank you Brother. I praise the Lord also for being here this morning and my family being here. But I would like to do something.

I would like to honor somebody this morning a little bit. He is the pastor of the last church that I was with. He is a Baptist pastor.

And he was a blessing to me. When I got born again, I went there to church for two years. I had a beautiful relationship with him.

And he would call me pretty well every week, three times a week. And he stopped being to encourage me. And even now yet, I have stopped being to pray with him once in a while when I am near his house.

But when I left the Baptist church there, he heard my heart and he appreciated it. And he encouraged me. And I just want to give him the honor for that.

He was a blessing. I don't really know the difference between a pastor and a shepherd or an elder back then. But he called himself pastor.

But I definitely believe he had a shepherd's heart. And we got along together in the name of Jesus. And even now.

And he was a blessing. He was easy to entreat. He was just a blessing that brother was.

His name was Pastor Chuck. And it is my heart's desire to have a relationship with my elders. Like she's been a shepherd.

Amen. And I have to say, he was a good example. Pastor Chuck.

He just took time and he listened. And we had a beautiful relationship and we still do. In fact, I talked to him on the phone the other day.

And he encouraged me to go on with the Lord. And he just told me I should keep in touch with him and tell him where I met. And I decided to have that relationship the same here that I had with him.

Amen. And one blessing also is one day Roman Kaufman came through our... That was long before I left that church. And I called him and asked him if Roman can preach there.

And he got excited about it and he let Roman preach there. And the church was pretty full and it was a blessing. But I just desire that kind of relationship.

Just to have a relationship. Thank you for the message, Brother Denny. Let's see, we have about 80-90 families divided by 8 pastors.

10 times 3 calls a week, 30 calls a month. Thank you, Brother Sam. You might not get 3 calls from each one of us.

But we do want to have relationships with each one. I know it's a blessing. But maybe we can encourage others among us to do that also.

Thank you very much. Yeah, I was really blessed this morning. Thank you, Brother Denny, for your laboring in the word.

I was just challenged as you were saying something about praying for the elders. I was just challenged by that. I know that some mornings I can just come to church and, well, I'm just a young man.

There's not much I can do. But I was just challenged to pray for my elders and take the road where you're not seeing. Just yesterday also I was challenged.

We were in a store and I saw this little saying. It was just something for people to stick in their garden. But to me it meant a lot more.

It said, bloom where you're planted. And I was really challenged by that. I want to do that.

To bloom where I'm planted and just be what God wants me to be. Even if it's hidden away somewhere out of sight. Thank you, Brother Denny.

I too want to bless our elders this morning. I also want to bless our congregation here, the church families here, for the example that you've been to us in highly esteeming our elders. Something I wasn't so used to.

In some of the settings we were, when we talked about our ministers, why we often tore them down. We kind of looked at them like a lot of people today look at politicians. And just picked apart everything they said and every mistake they might have made or those types of things.

We don't see that here. And we are blessed with that. Just highly esteeming our elders.

And I guess the challenge that comes to my heart is we as parents highly esteem our elders. It's going to pass off to our children. They're going to see that and they're also going to do it.

And then we're going to have youth that highly esteem their elders too. And we see that here. Just want to bless you for that.

Keep it up. Thank you, Brother. We are blessed as elders.

Of course, we sense your honor. It's like Brother Demian said, it makes the ministry so much easier when there is confidence, when there's joy and when there's a blessing. When there's accusations and a lot of heavy things, our heart kind of does this and we wrestle through those things.

Thank you all for your support. And I think I speak for Brother Aaron as well and the other elders here. Do we have any from the sister's side you would like to share this morning? Oh, I have one here.

I speak for my family. We're new here. And see the goodness of God in bringing us for this ordination time.

It's a family time. Thank you all for your welcome. We feel welcome.

It's easy to feel at home here. And we had a little head start. We were here for several weeks last winter.

But it's easy to feel at home. I think one of the things that's spoken most to me is the love of Jesus. You've been the heart and the hands of Jesus for us.

We come needy in many ways. And we thank you. Thank you for the expressions of encouragement and your prayers.

And with that, I might just say pray especially for Jayden at this time. I think he's probably at a crossroads, a critical point. So you think of him.

Pray for Jayden today. Thank you for the groceries. That was an encouragement.

I know that to come to a place like this and receive so much means that there have been many who have labored in small things, been faithful in little things over many years. And so your resources, it means a lot to us. God bless you all.

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