

Biblical Principles for Elder Leadership in the Church
(Acts 20.17-35; 09-20-20am)

Elder: Elders are spiritual leaders in the congregation who provide comprehensive leadership for the church.

Central Thought: Elders are called by the Holy Spirit, and affirmed by the church, to care for God's church.

I. Paul's Example: showing the marriage between character and commitment (18-21)

- A. Interactive in lives of congregation (18) *lived among you whole time*
- B. Humble servant of God (19) *served God; with humility and tears [despite trials and opposition]*
- C. Faithful teacher of God's word (20) *declared all that was profitable; publicly and privately*
- D. Gospel-focused priority in ministry (21) *declared gospel of repentance & faith to Jews and Gentiles*

II. Paul's Plans: rehearsing the responsibilities of leadership (22-27)

- A. Elders model obedience to God in every circumstance (22-23)
follow spirit's leading [even when know struggles are coming]
- B. Elders serve with a willingness to sacrifice and endure – for the sake of the gospel (24) (Mk 10.45)
[to testify to grace] that I may finish my course and the ministry that I rec'd from Lord Jesus
- C. Elders build relationships that are grounded in a shared commitment to the gospel (25-27)

III. Paul's Exhortation: preserve doctrine & pursue discipleship (28-35)

- A. Elders guard their own lives (28) *Pay careful attention to yourselves*
 - 1. Elders persevere in faithfulness by guarding their own sanctification (cf. 31)
 - 2. Implication: Elders must be learners of truth; guardians of truth; teachers of truth
- B. Elders will also guard the lives of the sheep (29-31)
 - 1. Protect the flock (29-30) *fierce wolves will come in (outside) & twisted teaching will arise (inside)*
 - 2. Their calling is also to love the flock (31) *admonish w/tears*
- C. Elders will guard discipleship in the church (32-35) *two hints about how to encourage elders*
 - 1. Encourage elders by remembering that their calling and gifting is from God (32)
commend you to God and to the word of His grace this will aid you in submitting to them
 - 2. Encourage elders by appreciating their sacrifices on your behalf (33-35)
working hard in this way this will aid you in imitating their faith

IV. Drawing principles from the account of Paul's farewell to the elders (17-35)

A. Paul's chronicle of faithfulness (17-21)

1. Elders will first be good disciples (or learners), to show their potential to become good leaders (17-19)
2. Elders will keep the gospel at the forefront of everything they do (20-21)

B. Paul's example of trusting the Holy Spirit (22-27)

1. Elders must learn to obey the Holy Spirit, no matter the cost (22-23)
2. Elders will sacrifice for the sake of the gospel (24)
3. Elders are willing to pay the cost of serving – and testify that the gospel is worth that cost (25-27)

C. Paul's priorities for the elders and the flock (28-35)

Note four priorities from vs 28

1. Elders will guard their own faith (28)
2. Elders will watch over the faith of the flock (28)
3. Elders will remember that their calling & gifting comes from the Holy Spirit (28) (affirmed by church)
4. Elders will remember that the church belongs to *God* & it was *obtained by the blood [of Christ]* (28)
5. Elders will shepherd the flock (29-30) shepherds protect the sheep & provides for the sheep
6. Elders will keep a long-term perspective (31) *be alert* (to Paul's example of endurance)
7. Elders will lean hard on grace (not for laziness or inaction) (32-34)
8. Elders will give of themselves to serve the church; and not for selfish gain (35)