

# THE EXAMINER



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## The Role of Elders in the Local Church- Concluded - By Weldon E. Warnock - Akron, Ohio

Some elders hardly ever bother with absentees or problems among brethren, unless the problem stinks to high heaven. In fact, they do not even miss the absentees until they have already petrified and ossified, spiritually. Then, its too late. Brethren, those elders who are not going to shepherd need to resign. They are a hindrance to the church and the spiritual welfare of the souls under them.

(3) Protect the flock from predators. Paul told the Ephesian elders, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch. . ." (Acts 20:29-31).

Elders must be very careful as to what preacher they secure to fill the pulpit. Good churches have been ruined by preachers. Furthermore, elders need to choose faithful teachers and also be familiar with the subject matter in each class. Our present crisis in the church over institutionalism, liberalism, fellowship, etc., would never have happened, or at worst, would only

have been minimal, if elders had been doing their job. May elders have the courage to carry out their Godgiven duties of being shepherds over the flock of God

### The Role of Being An Example

The Bible teaches that elders are to be examples to the flock. Peter exhorts elders, "Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (1 Pet. 5:3). In the epistle to the Hebrews, the inspired writer declares, "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" (Heb. 13:7). Elders must, therefore, go before the flock, showing and demonstrating how New Testament Christianity is to be practiced. The flock is to walk in their paths as they walk in the path of righteousness. Elders should not drive but rather lead. So much more can be accomplished by this procedure. Let us notice some things wherein elders are to serve as examples.

(1) Serving the Lord. Christians are "not to be slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord" (Rom. 12:11). Enthusiasm must be generated

in reaching the lost, edifying the saints, helping the needy, visiting the sick, worshipping God, yea, in anything that involves serving the Lord and doing his will. Elders must be examples in this zeal and fervency for the things of God.

(2) Domestic life. Elders are to be examples as husbands and fathers. They are to love, honor and provide for their wives and their wives are to be in subjection unto them (cf. Eph. 5:22-33). Many elder's effectiveness is destroyed by insubordinate and worldly minded wives (cf. 1 Tim. 3:11). Those who are elders must .have taught their children to honor and obey their parents and to be faithful Christians (cf. Eph. 6:1-4).

(3) Hospitality. One of the qualifications for an elder is hospitality (1 Tim. 3:2). He should open his home for the lodging of visiting preachers or at least have the preacher in his home for a meal. He should have brethren in for meals and entertainment and lodge deserving brethren who are passing through town. There are some elders who never put themselves out to have anybody in their home. Their example is not becoming to the work.

(4) Community life. An elder is to have a good report of them which are without (1 Tim. 3:7). A boorish, selfish person would have little influence for the Lord. An elder must exemplify kindness, courtesy and concern for others.

(5) Disposition. Elders must demonstrate how to get along with people. They must be willing to listen

to others when they have suggestions or problems, and respond with respect and appreciation. They must show that there can be matters of disagreement over opinions without losing their temper and becoming angry. Elders are not to be soon angry (Tit. 1:7). Some elders cannot be differed with or they become indignant and accuse you of being insubordinate to the eldership. Such attitude is wrong, being self-willed.

(6) Generosity. Paul told the Ephesian elders "to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Elders should be liberal with their own money, and the Lord's as well, using it to promote the Lord's work. Men who are misers or covetous should never be appointed elders. Yet, some are appointed and retard the progress of the church by hoarding the money. Let elders be an example in giving and spending for the Cause of Christ.

In conclusion, I quote from the pen of H. E. Phillips. "The responsibility of the elders is continued from day to day in the congregation over which they rule. They have not been appointed to 'let another do the work' of overseeing and tending the flock, because only elders can do the work of elders. The sooner bishops can realize their duties and respond to them the sooner the church will begin to grow spiritually and numerically in every city of this great country" (Scriptural Elders and Deacons, p. 189). ---- Via Truth Magazine XXI: 27, pp. 424-426, July 14, 1977

{Let us strive to have men appointed to the Eldership, young men who have a heart of preparation to one day be an elder of the church preparing themselves daily to serve in the Kingdom of God - and older men desiring to take up this appointment for the good of the congregation - JC}

### **Devoted Disciples - By Stan Cox**

The Lord's church today needs devoted disciples! Webster's New World Dictionary, in describing the nuances of the term "devote", states, "Devote suggests the giving up or applying of oneself or something with the seriousness or earnestness evoked by a formal vow (to devote one's life to a cause)." Consider the Apostle Paul's sentiment as recorded in **Galatians 2:20**, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." It must be stated that the only true disciple of Christ is the devoted disciple of Christ. What constitutes true devotion? I fear that many may lack understanding of what constitutes genuine devotion to God. Many are content with a 15 minute morning "devotional", which consists of a short passage of scripture on a particular theme, a morning prayer, and a thought for the day. They feel that after they have spent their quiet time with God, they have shown their devotion to Him, and have fulfilled their spiritual duties for the day. God is forgotten as the more pressing

matters of the day present themselves. Perhaps an appeal to scripture will help to remind us of what true devotion is all about.

First, recognize that Christ is to rule our life. Our existence must be centered in service to Jesus. Jesus stated, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (**Matthew 16:24**). We must come to God on His terms, not our own. Any practical suggestions on how to develop devotion to God will not be effective unless we each come to grips with the necessity of giving ourselves totally to Him. Paul said, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." True devotion requires the crucifixion of self. Consider the following suggestions:

#### **Bible Study and Meditation**

The root definition of the term disciple is "a learner". Thus, a devoted disciple of Christ diligently studies. Not a 15 minute devotional, but a systematic and thorough examination of God's will. David said, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night." Paul instructed Timothy, "Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (**1 Timothy 4:13**). Further, he stated in **verse 16**, "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you." The Bible is

our road map to eternity. It is the precious communication of God's will to man. It is the only way we can know what He would have us to do, and what He would have us to be. Bible study alone is not enough. This truth is seen in the broken lives of so many who fall into sin despite having a knowledge of right and wrong. How many elders, preachers and deacons we hear of who know what is right, but do not do what is right. They are as the Jew of **Romans 2**. Paul says, "Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things." Knowledge must be yoked with application. Meditation is important — the filling of the mind with truth. After we have learned a concept, heard a sermon, participated in a class, we need to mull it over in our minds. Ask ourselves, how we can apply it to our lives? What practical things can we do to implement it? How can we use it to avoid the pitfalls that the adversary has placed in our path? As James stated, "If anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of a man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does" (**James 1:23-25**). Study the word, meditate on it, and then apply it to be devoted to God.

#### **Prayer**

Prayer is an important aspect of the life devoted to God. Notice David's words in the Psalms. "Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me in my distress; Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer" (**4:1**). "O Lord, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth, who have set Your glory above the heavens!" (**8:1**). "How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me?" (**13:1**). "To the end that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to You forever" (**30:12**). Prayer is communication with God. It is a privilege afforded us as His adopted children. The poignancy of David's petitions to God touches the heart. He poured out his needs, his praise of the Almighty, his despair during difficult times in his life, and his thanks for God's providential deliverance. These are sentiments, which if expressed, will increase our own devotion to the Lord.

#### **The Practice of Pure Religion**

James expressed what a devoted disciple is when he wrote, "Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." This verse reveals two main areas of the disciple's life — moral purity, and compassionate concern for others. As children of a righteous God, our lives, dress, speech and conduct must be of the highest standard. We must not conform to the mores of the day, but rather transcend them in righteousness! Equally important is a compassion and concern for others. Our Lord is the supreme example for us in this. Paul forcefully stated this obligation on our part when he wrote, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (**Galatians 6:2**). Further on in the text, in **verse 10**, he wrote, "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith." This obligation to "do good" is part of being a devoted disciple. Christians must treat others with love and deference.

Many other practical suggestions could be given regarding devotion. These suffice to illustrate who truly is a devoted disciple of our Lord. A devoted disciple is a Christian who immerses himself in God's word; who applies it daily in his walk; who prays to his God often; who conducts himself uprightly; and who cares for and actively helps others. Now for the more difficult question, "Are you a devoted disciple?" God and His church need you to be! — **Via - Sound Teaching - JULY 29, 2017**