

Shepherding the Flock

*"Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood."
(Acts 20:28)*



Meaning of Eldership

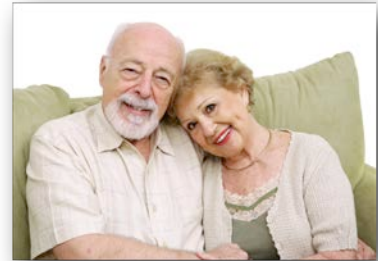
This is meant to be a discussion oriented lesson based upon lesson 3. In the previous lesson, we discussed the Greek words that refer to the eldership. They were the Greek words *presbyteros*, *episkopos*, and *poimen*. Each of these words describe a function of the eldership rather than being a title for these men. In this discussion time we want to look in a bit more detail at these functions or descriptions.

1. Presbyteros -- Literal translation is "an older man."

A. Do you think we as a society respect age and experience as much as we should? Explain your answer.

B. What is gained by age and experience?

C. Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Which of these qualifications of an elder indicate that he is not a young man?



While physical age is one aspect of maturity, it is not the only criteria of importance. Not only must an elder have a degree of physical maturity, he must also be spiritually mature. Just as physical maturity does not come quickly, neither does spiritual maturity.

D. Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Which of these qualifications of an elder indicate that he is spiritually mature?

E. In what areas does 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 indicate the elder has experience?



2. Episkopos -- Literal translation is "overseer."

Titus 1:7 calls an overseer, "God's steward." The Greek word for steward is *oikonomos* and literally means one who manages a house. Overseers are men who manage God's house.

F. What are overseeing and stewardship related? (Titus 1:7)

G. What is the church called in 1 Timothy 3:15?

H. What is the difference between a steward and an owner?

3. Poimen -- Literal translation is “shepherd.”

Shepherd may be the easiest description for us to visualise and understand. A shepherd feeds, waters, and protects the sheep.



I. Describe the shepherding style found in 1 Peter 5:2.

J. What joys and challenges might face shepherds of the flock?

In our last lesson, we also discussed the fact that the words elders, overseers/bishops, and shepherds/pastors are the same position as the words are used interchangeably. This means there is no distinction in the church between elders/pastors/overseers/bishops/shepherds. One part of restoring the Church to the pattern found in the New Testament, and providing a Scriptural foundation for what we do, is to use the terminology of the Bible. We also discussed that there is always a plurality of elders and that they share leadership.

K. Which of the following terms are used correctly and which are incorrect usages according to the terminology of the New Testament.

- (i) The head elder will confer with the rest of the board.
- (ii) We thank God for our pastors.
- (iii) Our shepherds love the Lord and they love the church.
- (iv) The pastor preached a good sermon.
- (iii) The elders spoke to the pastor.
- (iv) The overseers direct the church well.
- (v) The elders are responsible to feed the flock.