

# PLEASANT VIEW PROCLAIMER

October 2, 2022

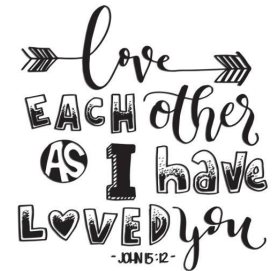
## The Mission of the Church

### Lesson 3 - To Protect and to Serve

This morning we continue our series called "The Mission of the Church", by looking at the local leadership of God's church. During last week's lesson, we discussed that there are no longer Apostles today as their mission has been completed and no one alive has seen the risen Jesus. If there are no longer Apostles of Jesus Christ today, then who are the local leaders of the church?

**The \_\_\_\_\_** - The New Testament clearly points out leadership roles, and the first of these are "elders." This position is an "office" (**1 Tim 3:1**) and is referred to by many different names in scripture such as pastors, bishops, overseers, shepherds, etc. This office comes with significant qualifications (**1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9**). When elders are mentioned in the New Testament, there is always a plurality and never a single elder of any one congregation (**Acts 15:4; Eph 4:11; Phil 1:1**). When elders are appointed, they are given leadership responsibility over their own local congregation (**Acts 14:21-23; Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:1-2**). There is no example in the New Testament of a higher-level elder who has responsibility at multiple, local churches.

When Paul met with the Ephesian elders at the end of his third missionary journey, he gave them final instructions that can be viewed as a mandate or "mission statement" for the primary responsibility of the eldership (**Acts 20:28-30**). In businesses today, it is common to have a "mission statement." The Oxford Languages Dictionary defines a "mission statement" as a formal summary of the aims and values of a company, organization, or individual. Paul's "mission statement" for the elders is this, "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock...to care for the church of God..." He adds to this, "after my departure fierce wolves will come...from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things..." Paul is calling on the elders at Ephesus to be protectors of the truth of Jesus Christ. If Christ governs with His truth, and His church is built upon His truth (**Eph 2:19-22**), then the church must be about upholding this truth (**1 Tim 3:14-15**). This is the primary responsibility of the eldership. Today, many elderships function more like a business board of directors, dealing with every decision and matter that is facing a congregation. My fear is that in doing this, they often lose sight of their true mandate to be protectors of the truth. To be protectors, they must know



*"The Lord reigns; Let the earth rejoice; Let the distant shores rejoice!"*

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*I know it's the Spirit  
Who's at work within me  
'Cause I can't do these things  
by myself  
I have tried and I've tried  
But it's always the same  
Everything is a mess  
I give praise to my Lord  
I give praise to my King  
I give glory and honor to God  
For it's Him and not me  
This I clearly do see  
It's His grace  
that enables me*

the truth (**Titus 1:9**), ensure the truth is taught, and that the ekklēsia (the called out / the church) is instructed in the truth. Peter adds to this that elders should fulfill their responsibility "...not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly;" (**1 Peter 5:2**)

When it comes to the eldership, the ekklēsia also has a responsibility. Paul clearly tells Timothy that elders should be treated with "honor," especially those who teach (**1 Tim 5:17**). The Hebrew writer tells the church to "obey" and "submit" to their leaders. He also says that as they serve, "let them do this with joy and not with groaning."

**The \_\_\_\_\_** - Another role that is clearly defined within a local congregation in the New Testament is that of a deacon. While this is never referred to as an "office," it is clearly an expectation that deacons will be a part of a local congregation (**Phil 1:1**). The word translated "deacon" simply means "servant," and this was the mandate given to the seven men who were selected in **Acts 6:1-6** to "serve tables" so that the apostles of Jesus Christ could continue focusing on the preaching of the "word of God." In today's church, these would be men who would focus on the day-to-day activity of the ekklēsia so that the eldership can continue to focus on their primary mission as protectors of the truth. In **1 Tim 3:8-13**, Paul lays out qualifications for deacons that are like those of elders given earlier, but without emphasis on the ability to teach.

**The \_\_\_\_\_** - The final role is that of an evangelist or teacher (**Eph 4:11**). These individuals work with the elders (or could even be an elder - **1 Tim 5:17**) to "build up the body of Christ." Their mandate can be found in Paul's instructions to Timothy and Titus. To Timothy he says to "preach the word", "reprove", "rebuke", and "exhort". He goes on to explain that teaching the truth is critical, because "the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching..." (**2 Tim 4:1-5**). To Titus he simply says "teach what accords with sound doctrine" (**Titus 2:1**). Evangelists are teachers of the truth. In this role, Paul also argues they should receive their financial support for this work from the church (**1 Cor 9:14**).

## PRAYER LIST

- Elizabeth's grandmother **Carol Saling** was diagnosed with cancer
- **Bill Gillock** is home now
- We rejoice with **Kristine Garrett** as her cancer continues to improve
- **Maria Hunter Harrington**, a friend of the Billingsleys, has breast cancer
- **Forshia Pennington, Carolyn Pennington** and **Judy Grissom**, relatives of the Reeds, have breast cancer. **Vicki Reed** has been diagnosed with Myeloma as well
- **Donna Rawls Head** has cancer
- Continue to pray for: those in **Ukraine**; the **Brown** family, **Kim Waller, Delores Coleman**, the **Krantz** family, **John Hayes, Nick Phifer, Gaynell Walker, Rosemary Douglas, Isabel Johnson**, and **Jim Sims**

## SERVING TODAY (October 2, 2022)

### SUNDAY SCHOOL

**Read:** C. Baker  
**Prayer:** R. Mayo

### WORSHIP

**Read:** M. Reed  
**Wait On Table:** J. Walker  
**Serve:** J. Buchanan, J. Demonbreun  
**Prayer:** J. Gupton