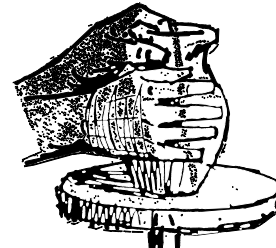


His Workmanship at Westside

"For we are His
workmanship, created in
Christ Jesus for good works."
—Ephesians 2:10



Isaiah 64:8

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Church Leaders as Described in the Bible *by Steve Rudd*

The church we read about in the Bible was organized in a very simple way. A general pattern was to have two or more qualified men overseeing each local church. These men were called the "eldership," 1 Tim 4:14. Each elder must meet several Biblical qualifications. Elders are the spiritual leaders of a church; they watch out for the souls of the church/flock like a shepherd.

1. Christ is the head of the church, Eph 1:22-23. There is no human head of the church.
2. The Bible is the only written creed for each local church; there should be no man-made written creed.
3. God designed each local church to be self-governing (autonomous). No outside interference or influence from others should exist.
4. No organizational tie exists between or among local churches.
5. No earthly organization larger than local churches was created by God for spiritual matters.
6. The Bible uses the terms *elder*, *presbyter*, *overseer*, *bishop*, *shepherd*, and *pastor* interchangeably to refer to a single office in the church.
7. A local church appoints its own plurality of elders using 1 Tim 3 and

Tit 1 as qualifications.

8. Elders have authority only over the church which is among them, 1 Pet 5:2, not over Christians from outside churches.

Five Terms Describe an Elder. The Bible uses different terms to give us a fuller picture of one thing. Each term gives us a bit more information about function or relationship. For example, Christians are described as: priests, saints, children, citizens, soldiers, etc. In the same way, we have different descriptive terms for the eldership. These terms are not honorary titles but descriptions of work to be done. In the table on p. 2, you will notice four individual terms (*elder*, *overseer*, *shepherd*, *steward*) and one collective term (*eldership*, which is simply the plural of the term *elder*). All these terms refer to same office because of their interchangeable usage: 1) in Ax 20:17, 28, three terms are used, *presbuteros* (2 English terms, *elder* and *presbyter*), *episcopos* (2 English terms, *overseer* and *bishop*), and *poimen* (2 English terms, *pastor* and *shepherd*); 2) in Tit 1:5, 7, three terms are used, *presbuteros* (*elder*), *episcopos* (*overseer*), and *oikonomo*

(*steward*); 3) in 1 Pet 5:1-2, two terms are used, *presbuteros* (*elder*) and *poimen* (*pastor* or *shepherd*). But people confuse the one position as many distinct positions. They are taught false doctrine that *bishop*, *pastor*, and *elder* are three distinct offices, rather than three descriptive terms for the same one office.

Paul told us to "speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine," Tit 2:1. Why did God use four different terms to describe one position? Each term gives us a fuller and more distinct view of the various functions of that one position. **Elder** was a term used in the Old Testament to indicate an older man with wisdom who was worthy of respect, Job 12:20; Ps 105:22; Lam 5:12. Elders sat in the city gates and pronounced judgment (Is 3:14), gave counsel (Ezek 7:26), and made decisions. They represented the people—of a village or city, Deut 19:12; 21:3ff; Josh 20:4; Ezra 10:14 (of Succoth, Jdg 8:14-16; of Gilead, Jdg 11:5-11; of Bethlehem, Ruth 4; 1 Sam 16:4; of Jabesh, 1 Sam 11:3); of Israel, cf. Ex 18:12-26; 19:7; Lev 4:13-15; Num 11:16-17; Deut 31:9; Josh 8:33;
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“Set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you.” —Titus 1:5

2 Sam 5:3; 1 Kg 8:1-3 (of the land, 1 Kg 20:7; Pr 31:23); of Judah, 1 Sam 30:26; 2 Sam 19:11; 2 Kg 23:1; of the tribes of Israel, Deut 31:28; and of the Jews, Ezra 5:5; 6:7-8, 14. By the time of Jesus, elders were associated with the scribes and priests who had authority to teach in the temple at Jerusalem. Jesus rebuked them for exalt-

Overseer indicates a position of authority, one who is in charge and makes all final decisions for the local church. *“It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do,”* 1 Tim 3:1. Overseers have been charged with looking out for (overseeing) the church: *“Be on*

for the individual Christians to use their spiritual gifts. The other Christians in that church must submit to them. *“Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.... Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they*

watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you,” Heb 13:7, 17. See also 1 Cor 16:15-16 and 1 Thes 5:12. The overseers have the duty of instructing, watching over, and governing the Christians in their midst.

Five terms describing the office of an elder			
Term	Greek word	Definition:	Emphasis, function
Elder or presbyter	<i>Presbuteros</i>	An older man, a senior	Experience, wisdom <i>make decisions</i>
Overseer or bishop	<i>Episcopos</i>	Overseer, guardian, or superintendent	Watchfulness <i>organize, communicate</i>
Shepherd or pastor	<i>Poimen</i>	Metaphoric term (tending flocks)	Protection <i>feed, teach, counsel</i>
Steward	<i>Oikonomo</i>	Metaphoric term (trustee, treasurer of others' funds)	Trustworthy <i>Manage, preserve</i>
Eldership	<i>Presbuterion</i>	Group of older men/elders	Plurality & equality <i>unite in doctrine, judgment</i>

ing their traditions, Mt 15:2; Mk 7:3-5. They rejected Jesus, plotted against Him, and persuaded the multitudes to crucify Him, Mt 27:20; 28:12; Mk 8:31; 15:1; Lk 9:22; 22:52. These elders also persecuted the early church, Ax 4:5ff; 5:21; 6:12; 23:14; 24:1. Yet the centurion sent them to Jesus to ask Him to heal his servant, Lk 9:2-9, and the term was so deserving of respect that the early church used it to describe its leaders, first in Ax 11:30; then elders in every church, Ax 14:23; specifically the Jerusalem church, Ax 15; 16:4; 21:18, and the Ephesian church, Ax 20.

guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed [shepherd] the church of God which he purchased with His own blood,” Ax 20:28. It is the overseers' function is to rule: *“The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing,’ and ‘The laborer is worthy of his wages,’ ”* 1 Tim 5:17-18. They organize the church body so that it functions well. They provide opportunities

Christians have a duty to submit to them. The Spirit said *“submit yourselves.”* Milligan says, *“If it is the duty of the elders to teach, it is also manifestly the duty of the other people of the church to receive their lawful instructions; and if it is the duty of the elders to rule, it is equally the duty of the church to submit to their acts of discipline which do not violate the law of Christ.”* (pp. 380-381).

Shepherd is a metaphoric term that indicates the men are to show love, care, dedication, and self sacrifice for the flock/church as sheep. The men
continued on p. 3



Psalm 133:1



Fill your can-teen in 2013
“...filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.”

Church Leaders, from p. 2

are not literally shepherding sheep, but are doing so in a metaphorical sense—they feed (teach the word, advise, counsel) and protect the flock from false teachers, Mt 7:15; Ax 20:29. They go after straying sheep; they use their rod and staff to bring them into the protected places. **Steward** indicates a man who can be trusted with great treasures. Of course, the greatest of these treasures are the souls of the Christians whom he has been commissioned to keep for the Master. Stewardship also indicates that the men are charged with keeping the word of God. And in the most literal sense, stewards oversee church's financial assets and how they are used in service to God.

The Limit of the Elders' Authority.

The authority of the elders in a local church is given by Christ's authority. Elders have no authority to make law or to change even “a jot” of the law. Rather, their place is to see that the perfect law of liberty, which has already been given by the Lord, is kept as completely as possible. In other words, they rule the local church under authority already given by Christ, our Lawgiver. Pastors, for example, have the right to decide the best time for the church to worship on the Lord's Day. However, they have no authority to decide the day of worship. That has already been established by the Lord.

Discipleship Here At Home

In matters of conduct, when they pertain to church discipline and sin (see 1 Cor 5; Rm 16:17-18; 2 Thes 3:6-15), everyone of the local church must be subject to the elders. In order to serve the church as shepherds/overseers they must have a knowledge of individuals' private lives. But in matters of personal liberty or acts that do not pertain to church discipline, the pastors have no authority. For example, elders have no right to insist that a person rent or buy a type of house or work in a certain job. It is not their place to involve themselves in others' personal decisions unless there is sin or some harm to their influence or work in the church. However, anything that endangers a Christian's soul or the reputation of the church is their business, and they have a responsibility to help, to counsel, and to correct.

Overseers' authority in the Bible was limited to within one local congregation, Ax 20:28; 1 Pet 5:1-3. One bishop/elder is never over other bishop/elders in rank: all are equal. One bishop/elder is never over more than one local church. (The Roman church over several hundred years left the Biblical pattern and eventually, by the Nicene Council in 325 A.D., set one archbishop over a group of other bishops who were over many different churches in an area.) The pyramid-type organization is contrary to the Bible pattern. The Biblical pattern is for two or more men to serve as elders. Never do you find a church in the New Testament with only one elder/pastor /overseer. God's pattern is best.

Memory verse: "For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.'" —Acts 13:47 [Paul quoting and applying Is 49:6]

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help, and comfort here & away

Madge Wallace—lung cancer spreading
Gary Boyd's sister Gail Storatz—fluid in her lungs; cancer
Brittany Tope's mother Gayle Shrull—return of breast cancer; radiation
Brett Witherington's 5-mo-old nephew Emory Moore—skull surgery Mon am
Alexander Gintchin's classmate, Jack Miller—2 brain tumors; age 6
Frank Savarese—pneumonia recovery
Mina Gonzalez's uncle Charles Hawkins—colon cancer

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Logan Corray; Carter Hayes; Rocco Sangellino Jr; Addison Tope—asthma
Autumn Hadders—epilepsy
Pearl Chapman—leg pains; pancreatitis
Nell Free—heart; spinal pain
Jonathan Hadders—RA
Kirk Johnson—worsening MS; house-bound in cold weather and needs help
Menards—age; **Lloyd**, diabetes, ear cyst drained; **Virginia**, eye problems, BP
Sandra Perry—neuropathy from diabetes
Cheryl Reames—diverticulitis; fibro
Lynda Szymanski—COPD, lung

Travel **Cheryl Reames** is traveling to FL Monday to be with daughter Amy for delivery of a baby boy.
Larry Campbell is in FL for work M-F. The **Kenny Boyd** family is out of town.

Job concerns **Andrew Tope** and **Frank Savarese** are seeking jobs.

Directory change: Bless Chris and Sandy Hayes as they begin to work and worship with the Smoky Hill church.
Expecting **Marie Carlson**—late June
Bereaved **Justin Hambrick's** grandmother **Marie Cowart** passed away Friday; he and Charity are in TX until Tues for the funeral Mon.



Exposing current thoughts & trends

Are We Obsessed with Our Pets? *By Jim Daly*

Is it possible to love your dog or cat too much? A provocative article in *World Magazine* tells of a veterinarian who likes to ask people: given the choice between saving the life of a stranger in a burning building or their beloved pet, which one would they save? "You'd be surprised," he said, "how many would save their pet."

Dogs and cats are increasingly becoming more and more part of the family. Take note of how many photos in the Christmas cards you received last year contained the mug of the family dog, sometimes even wearing a Santa hat or a red bow tie.

Here in Colorado, people take their dog with them wherever they go. I'm always encountering dogs on Saturday morning trips inside the home improvement store.

Naturally, there's an economic impact to it all. According to the American Pet Products Association, consumers will spend nearly \$53 billion on their pets this year—up from \$17 billion in 1994.

Do those statistics shock or surprise you?

We've all seen cases where people have clearly gone overboard. Maybe you've read about the New York woman who spent \$50,000 to clone her dog. Or perhaps you've followed the efforts to have pet owners reclassified as "guardians." Last year the San Francisco Animal Control and Welfare Commission was reportedly considering even banning the sale of goldfish, claiming it leads to "inhumane suffering." Those may all be over the top, but let me ask you, where do you draw the line when it comes to your pets? Would you go into debt to prolong the life of your dog? See Deut 15:6-8; 28:12. Do you spend more on Fido each year than on, say, charitable giving? See 2 Cor 8:6-15. Do you invest more time and attention in your pets than in your neighbor? See Lev 19:18; Mt 22:36-40.

Dogs, cats, and other pets can bring an enormous amount of pleasure to our lives, but the Bible makes it clear that animals are for man's use and to be considered as property and food, e.g. Gen 9:3; Ex 21 & 22; Lev 11:47; 1 Tim 4:3-5. Nevertheless, there is no place for the mistreatment of animals, see Ex 23:4-5; Deut 22:1-4; Pr 12:10; Mt 12:11-12. However, in our affinity for pets, have some of us gone too far?

Westside church of Christ

meets at

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Pastors

Larry Campbell
(303) 462-4987

DeWayne Howell
(303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover
(303) 973-5102

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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Salida evangelism: Jeff Wilkes is teaching and preaching today.

Grounded in Authority Series

this afternoon at 1:30 PM:

"The Authority of Elders" by Kory Tope

GOALS: Did you participate in a Bible study with other Christians last week? Did you pray for 5 people who need the gospel? Did you read the Bible every day? What good new habits are you developing? Did you invite 2 people to join you in worship last week? Did you mention something about morality or the Bible to anyone last week? Did you pray for our upcoming gospel meeting March 10?