

“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...” (1 Peter 4:11).

ELDERS NEEDED IN THE CHURCH

John Edwards

The New Testament calls for “elders in every church” (Acts 14:23). This brief essay takes a look at the kind of elders needed in the church.

MEN WHO ARE SCRIPTURALLY QUALIFIED. Individuals must meet all of the qualifications revealed by the Holy Spirit in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. The church does not need men in the eldership who lack any of these abilities or qualities.

MEN WHO ARE GOOD SHEPHERDS. The church is referred to as “the flock of God” and elders are shepherds (Acts 20:28). A good shepherd is one who knows the sheep (Jn. 10:14), leads the sheep (Jn. 10:3-4), protects the sheep (Acts 20:29-31), goes after lost sheep (Lk. 15:4-7), feeds and waters the sheep (Gen. 29:7; 1 Pet. 5:1-2) and is tender toward young and feeble sheep (Is. 40:11). The church badly needs good shepherds!

MEN WHO ARE SATISFIED WITH THE AUTHORITY THEY’VE BEEN GIVEN. That elders have authority, none can really deny. But, some elders abuse the authority the Lord has given them. Elders do not have

unlimited authority. They cannot make laws for, “*There is one lawgiver*” (Jas. 4:12). Neither can they change laws. The authority of elders is limited to “*the flock of God which is among you*” (1 Pet. 5:2). Elders are not “*lords over God’s heritage*” (1 Pet. 5:3). All elders would do well to remember Christ is “*the chief Shepherd*” (1 Pet. 5:4).

MEN WHO ARE EXAMPLES. The work of an elder is that of an example-setter. The apostle Peter wrote concerning elders, “*being ensamples to the flock*” (1 Pet. 5:3). Since the church is admonished to “*follow*” elders (Heb. 13:7), it is important that elders be good examples. Elders would do well to ask themselves the question, “What kind of an example am I setting for the flock to follow?”

The church suffers from a lack of leadership without Scripturally qualified, authority-satisfied, example-setting, good shepherds. Won’t you help fill this void by desiring “*the office of a bishop*” (1 Tim. 3:1)?

MEMBERS NEEDED IN THE CHURCH

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The Lord’s church is made

up of members (Rom. 12:4-5). Membership in the church occurs as one hears, believes and obeys the word of God (Acts 2:37-38). This writing explores the kind of church members needed.

WELL EDUCATED MEMBERS. God has always expected His people to know. Hosea 4:6 records, “*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...*” Jesus said, “*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*” (Jn. 8:32). To know requires study on our part. Paul penned, “*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*” (2 Tim. 2:15). How well do you know the Bible?

FINELY CLOTHED MEMBERS. How we dress ourselves from a spiritual standpoint is ever so important. There is a real need for us to put on “*bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering...And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness*” (Col. 3:10-14). Don’t forget to “*be clothed with humility*” (1 Pet. 5:5).

RICH MEMBERS. There’s a great demand for members of the church who are “*rich in good works*” (1 Tim. 6:18), “*rich in mercy*” (Eph. 2:4) and

“rich in faith” (Jas. 2:5). Fortunately, how much money we have really makes no difference. But when it comes to good works, mercy and faith, our pockets need to run deep.

CARING MEMBERS. Isn't it nice to know someone cares? The church is in need of members who *“have the same care one for another”* (1 Cor. 12:25); the kind of care where brethren *“Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep”* (Rom. 12:15).

STANDING MEMBERS. We need members with backbone who are unafraid to stand for the truth and against error. Paul taught, *“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness”* (Eph. 6:13-14). Are your feet on the ground, spiritually?

MEN NEEDED

John Edwards

Men have always played an important role in God's scheme of things. Consider the kind of men needed in the world today.

MEN LIKE NOAH WHO ARE RIGHTEOUS BEFORE GOD. God told Noah, *“...thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation”* (Gen. 7:1). Noah was *“a preacher of righteousness”* (2 Pet. 2:5). John wrote, *“...he that doeth righteousness is righteous”* (1 Jn. 3:7). This involves keeping God's commandments (Ps. 119:172).

MEN LIKE ABRAHAM WHO COMMAND THEIR HOUSEHOLD. God said concerning Abraham, *“For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment...”* (Gen. 18:19). We are taught, *“For the husband is the head of the wife...”* (Eph. 5:23); *“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”* (Eph. 6:4).

MEN LIKE MOSES WHO ARE UNCOMPROMISING. Many

just want to go with the flow. There's a great demand for men who take a stand like Moses did when he answered Pharaoh, *“there shall not an hoof be left behind”* (Ex. 10:26). We must not concede truth and right.

MEN LIKE JOSHUA WHO CHOOSE TO SERVE THE LORD. I am impressed with Joshua when he said, *“choose you this day whom ye will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord”* (Josh. 24:15). So many are afraid to let others know where they stand. Each of us must make up our mind as to whom we will serve and not *“halt between two opinions”* (1 Ki. 18:21). Jesus taught, *“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other...”* (Mt. 6:24). Again it is written, *“If any man serve me, him will my Father honour”* (Jn. 12:26). Dare to stand like Joshua!

LET'S PUT FIRST THINGS FIRST

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