

1 Timothy
D.) The Church and its ministry to its self
2. 5:17-20 Ministry to leaders
3. 5:21-25 Ministry's do's and don'ts
5:17-25
"Take me to your leader"

I. Introduction

II. Vs. 17-18 Compensating elders

III. Vs.19-21 Correcting elders

IV. Vs. 22-25 Commissioning elders

I. Introduction

Hamilton airport recently had an antique fly-in and one of the planes on display was one that they had removed some of the panels so you could see all the inner workings of the plane. I had no idea that all of that engineering lay behind the metal panels hidden out of sight. That's what Paul is doing for us in this letter to his young "son in the faith"

Timothy as he is writing about the hidden under workings of the church that most folks never see and some may not care too much about. No one enjoys chaos be that a cluttered store, a highway that has ground to a halt or an institution that doesn't function. Paul is dealing with church leadership that can become dysfunctional. The most important thing to correct in this world today, is not our government, our schools, our health care, or even our economy....No the most important thing that must be corrected in the world today is the operating of the church. All of the things mentioned above were very dysfunctional in the first century but God didn't go about fixing those things He made the establishment of His church the priority and maintaining its functionality is what most of the New Testament letters are about. We now have countless years of history that concur with this as we can see that a healthy functioning church regulates the society but a dysfunctional church is regulated by the society.

II. Vs. 17-18 **Compensating elders**

Paul has some words for Timothy in his relationships to elders in three areas:

- Vs. 17-18 **Compensating elders**
- Vs. 19-21 **Correcting elders**
- Vs. 22-25 **Commissioning elders**

Vs. 17-18 **Compensating elders**: The nature of the early church made it a necessity to have itinerant or traveling Bible teachers instead of each fellowship having one full time pastor/teacher. These men devoted themselves to full time service and had no time to earn a living. The “elders” Paul is referring to here are the same ones he mentioned in chapter 3 verses 1-7. The difference is that in chapter 3 Paul emphasized their “*work*” calling them “overseers” and here he emphasizes the “*worker*” calling them an “elder”! The word Paul uses to define their work is an unfortunate translation as, “RULE” makes it sound as if these individuals are “Bosses” over the people. The right translation would be “LEADS” and is the word translated elsewhere as “*leadership*”. **The elder is not driving the church**, he is “*leading*” the church and is worthy of “honor” Paul says. There were **two types of leadership** at this time and for sake of clarification they were:

- **Leading elders**
- **Teaching elders!**

Though according to Paul in chapter 3 verse 2 they all needed to be “*able to teach*” not all elders were called upon to teach all the time, their primary responsibility was to lead the church and most of them had full time jobs outside the church. Teaching elders were those that because of God’s call, gifting and the Holy Spirit’s clear anointing had been given the task of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry. The church needs both

those who help keep it organized and those who help keep the church feed in the word of God. To have those who are in leadership without the teaching is like trying to organize a room full of two year olds. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God, thus the 2 work in tandem. If the teaching elder is faithful in feeding and leading the people Paul says they are worthy of “**double honor**” and the word honor is where we get the word “*honorarium*”. It is Jesus’ plan that the needs of His servants be met by their local fellowships and God blesses the churches that honor Him by doing so. To show that this wasn’t just a New Testament idea Paul quotes an Old Testament passage out of Deut. 25:4 where Moses said that the ox that was being used to thresh the wheat were not permitted to be muzzled from eating while they worked. In 1 Corinthians chapter 9 verses 9-10 Paul interprets the meaning of that beyond just oxen to pastors and works in the church as well, because as far as we know oxen can’t read. Paul also quotes Jesus when He said something very similar to His disciples as He sent them out 2 by 2 into the villages in Luke chapter 10 verse 7 saying for them to “*remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages.*” In 1 Corinthians chapter 9 verses 9-10 Paul interprets the meaning of that beyond just oxen to pastors and works in the church as well, because as far as we know oxen can’t read. Paul also quotes Jesus when He said something very similar to His disciples as He sent them out 2 by 2 into the villages in Luke chapter 10 verse 7 saying for them to “*remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages.*” That being said the teaching elder must never choose this as a way of making a living, this is not a career path it is a calling.

III. Vs.19-21 Correcting elders

Vs. 19-21 **Correcting elders**: Church discipline is a challenging situation and like many families usually goes on to two extremes:

- No discipline: Which cause the church like the family to be unruly and in disarray
- Extreme discipline: Which cause folks to be stifled in their creativity and bound in legalism instead of grace

The balance is what is needed and this is especially true with leadership. The lack of correcting the leaders causes many within the church to become disillusioned with the church. The purpose of all Christian discipline is restoration not revenge and this is true with the elder as well. The word restore is a medical term that means to set a fracture and this takes patience and tenderness to accomplish. To set any bone the first thing you will need to do is ascertain all the facts and this usually today requires an x-ray. Paul tells Timothy to make sure that he takes the time to do a thorough examination of the facts by hearing the offence from multiple credible witnesses and if that is not brought forward he is not to even hear the matter. Rumor, opinion and accusations are not enough unless supported by many witnesses. Some folks just like to have “*shepherd’s pie*” for lunch and those cases are not what Paul has in mind. The accused has the right to face their accusers in the court of law and the church as well. You would handle this situation much as you would in Jesus’ admonition in dealing with sin found in Matthew 18. There Jesus says, “*If your brother sins against you, go to him and tell him his fault, between you and him alone; if he repents, you have gained your brother.*” End of story nothing else needs to be said it’s settled. Paul also says when dealing with correcting leadership that it needs

to be open and aboveboard, no back allies or under the counter politics have any place in the church. If the leader is guilty then he should be disciplined publically and his offence known. He should be given the opportunity to repent and if he does he should be forgiven and if forgiven the matter ought to be forgotten. If the matter requires removal then forgiveness doesn't necessarily mean instant reinstatement, instead it means a process by which restoration needs to be applied and evaluated over time. Paul warns against prejudice and partiality in dealing with elders as there ought to be no sense of reading into the situation or offence. I know this to be true with regards to myself: "***I'm never as good as people believe me to be and I'm always a great deal worse than people say that I am.***" But thank God that **His love never fails, His mercy is knew every moment and His grace is always sufficient.**

IV. Vs. 22-25 Commissioning elders

Vs. 22-25 **Commissioning elders**: The challenge in selecting elders is that only God knows the thoughts and intents of the heart, so Paul tells Timothy to wait on the Lord to reveal where they truly are. The church must not make necessity the qualification in appointing people to positions of authority. It is dangerous to the health and wellbeing to place a new believer or a new member in a place of leadership in the church. Paul goes on to say that, "*some peoples sins are clearly visible while others take time to see and the same can be said of their good works.*" Investigation and patience aid in the appointment and placement of the right people in the right positions. This doesn't do any good after the fact but can sure save a church a lot of stress by applying it ahead of time. Small churches like our self can look for warm bodies to fill spots but when you do that without making sure the person is who the Lord wants you can cause a lot of damage as it is

always easier to get a person into a position than it is to get them out. Oft times the leadership shares in the responsibility of a person's sins as they were the ones that placed them into the position in the first place. To not deal with an offending leader to share in their sins and to pass them on to another unsuspecting fellowship to multiply the sin. We humans have a way of putting our best foot forward when we meet people, trying to make a good impression but you can only really know a person over time and not just seeing them when they are trying to present themselves to you, that's what Paul is saying with leadership, take your time observe them in many situations. Personally **I like to see how people serve to know how they will lead!** In verse 23 Paul gives some personal counsel to Timothy with regards to drinking of wine and we need to remember that **the bible does not demand abstinence, it denounces drunkenness!** *“The very injunction of Paul implies that he regarded wine as a medicine for the sick, and not as a beverage for the well!”*