

## The Office of Elder

Acts 20:28-31 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 *For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.* 30 *Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.* 31 *Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.*

This is a special occasion this morning as we will be ordaining and installing Bobby Duncan as an elder. I do want to express appreciation to Elder Emil Broers for coming to be with us from Garner Iowa this morning for the purpose of participating in the ordination of Bobby Duncan to the office of elder. Also on behalf of that part of the congregation of Peace Reformed Church that meets and worships here in Bentonville, Arkansas I want to ask you to express our appreciation to our oversight Consistory and the Congregation in Garner for their willingness to elect Bobby Duncan as an elder to serve the mission work here in Northwest Arkansas. We do believe it will be most beneficial to the work here and again please express our deepest appreciation to our brothers and sisters in Garner, Iowa.

This morning then we will bring a topical sermon on the subject matter of the office of the elder. We will first discuss the office and then give a charge to the elder elect and then a charge to the congregation under these headings, 1. The Biblical Basis of the Office of the Elder; 2. The Responsibility and Duty of the Elder; 3. The Responsibility and Duty of the Congregation toward the Elder

### A. The Biblical Basis of the office of the elder

#### 1. The Office of elder is an office of antiquity

##### a. It existed in the church of the Old Testament

*Ex 3:16 Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, 'The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me, saying, "I have surely visited you and seen what is done to you in Egypt;*

*Num 11:16-17 So the Lord said to Moses: "Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tabernacle of meeting, that they may stand there with you. Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will **take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put the same upon them;** and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone.*

*2 Sam 5:3 Therefore all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord. And they anointed David king over Israel.*

##### b. Clearly the practice of the church in the New Testament

*And when they had ordained them ELDERS in every Church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed; Acts 14, 23.*

*And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the Church, and of the Apostles and ELDERS. And the Apostles and ELDERS came together to consider of this matter; Acts 15, 4, 6*

#### 2. The Church is a Theocracy not a Democracy

##### a. God is the only sovereign over the church acknowledging Christ as the Head of the Church.

*Col 1:18 And He is the **head of the body, the church,** who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things **He may have the preeminence.***

##### b. His law is the only and the absolute authority in the Church therefore the elders serve under Him and are subject to His law. The Scriptures then are the only rule for faith and practice - "*But we know that the Law is good, if a man use it lawfully*" (1 Tim. 1:8).

##### c. Therefore Elders rule under Him and are subject to Him and to the Scriptures, any judgment or direction given must be founded upon the Word of God. Example: Acts 15:13-17

#### 3. The office is not self-created or self-assumed, but derived from her gracious and almighty Head

1 Cor 12:28 And **God has appointed these in the church:** first apostles, second prophets, third teachers.

1 Thess 5:12-13 And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are **over you in the Lord** and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.

4. Bobby you have been elected to serve by the congregation but it is God who has chosen you to serve in His church. - *Acts 20:28 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which **the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God.***

#### B. The Responsibility and Duty of the Elder

1. As noted, it is important to understand that the office you hold is given to you by the Holy Spirit
2. You are to watch over, shepherd the flock - *to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*
  - a. The importance of your responsibility is enhanced by the means the whereby the church has been brought into existence. - *which He **purchased with His own blood***
  - b. This means you are responsible for caring for the eternal souls of men.

*Heb 13:17 for **they watch out for your souls**, as those who must give account.*

- c. It is the responsibility of the shepherd to protect his sheep.

3. Protect the flock from false teachers and from erring doctrine.

*For I know this, that after my departure **savage wolves will come in** among you, **not sparing the flock**. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.*

***Therefore watch, and remember** that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.*

*Feed the flock - teach the Word of God*

1. It is the responsibility of the elders to guard against false teachers and erring doctrines
2. We should not be surprised - we have been warned
3. We should definitely be aware and therefore always be on guard - *Therefore **watch, and remember***
4. Some will come from outside the church some may even rise up within the church, the elder cannot be too careful.

*29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.*

5. The office of elder is an office of certain authority - *Remember those who rule over you (Heb. 13:7)*
6. They are to exert a biblical rule over the flock

#### C. The Responsibility and Duty of the Congregation toward the Elder

1. As it was important to understand that the office of the elder was established by Christ, even so it is important as members of the church to understand that the church has been established by Christ
2. It is also necessary as members to be mindful that the officers of the church have been established and ordained of God.
3. Therefore the church is to be subject in the Lord to the elders of the church.
  - a. As members of this congregation you are to recognize and esteem the office and those who serve in that office.

*1 Thess 5:12-13 And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.*

- b. Remember that is be mindful of their rule and be faithful to be subject to their teaching and discipline in the Lord.

*Heb 13:7 Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.*

- c. Therefore as members of the church one is to be obedient to the rule of the elders and are commanded by scripture to be submissive to that authority.

*Heb 13:17 **Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive,***

- d. The reason given, for the watch out for your souls. *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.*

#### CONCLUSION:

Bobby your ordination today to the office of elder places upon you grace and eternal responsibilities

Dear flock this message gives to you an opportunity to think upon the great blessing God has given us by making you a part of His church.

And since the responsibility of the elder is great - being of eternal value

Therefore let us covenant to pray for our new elder, and seek God's blessing upon him.