

**God's Leadership Plan for the Local Church:
God's Pattern for Multiple Leaders (1 Timothy 5:17-18)**

Today we look closely at an often-ignored, sometimes misused passage relating to elders. This passage gives significant insight into elders in a local church.

God's PURPOSE for Leaders (Ephesians 4:11-16)

¹¹ And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, ¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

God gives leaders to the local assembly for the purpose of equipping each assembly for ministry, maturing each assembly in the truth, and building the saints together into a functional, self-caring body.

God's PROCESS for Making Leaders (2 Timothy 2:2)

² And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit (x!) these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

This is a biblical requirement for pastors of local churches to be working to be bringing up more teachers (pastors) who, once fully trained, continue the accurate teaching of the Word and replicate themselves through faithful men who then are taught to do the same (over and over). This expands present leadership and also provides leadership into the future.

God's PATTERN for Multiple Leaders (1 Timothy 5:17)

¹⁷ Let the **elders** who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. ¹⁸ For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages."

I. We see multiple elders as God's principle:

1. Indicates **multiple** elders (plural; pastors/overseers)
2. Based on **established** performance (perfect tense "have come to rule well")
3. Based on **present** effort (present tense "laboring")
4. Suggests **levels** of capacity, ability, responsibility, etc.
5. Some rule **well** – implies people rule at different levels
6. Some **labor** intensely – implies others cannot or do not

7. Suggests some will get **less** honor / pay
 - a. Differences in **ability** (God gives as He sees fit)
 - b. Differences in **capacity** (based upon health, age, season of life, energy levels, economic pressures, etc.)
 - c. Differences in **competency** (training)
 - d. Differences in **maturity** (age, experience and spiritual growth)
 - e. Differences in **necessity** (needed more for what they do)
 - f. Differences in **responsibility** (assigned or appointed)
 - g. Differences in **urgency** (driven versus "job") or intensity
8. Suggests the **priority** of proper study (2 Tim 2:15) and proper teaching (Acts 6:2,4), and those that do so.

II. We see multiple elders (pastors/overseers) as God's pattern:

Acts 14:23 So when they had appointed **elders** in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Acts 20:17-28 – ¹⁷ From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the **elders** of the church. 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 which He purchased with His own blood.

Phil 1:1 Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the **bishops** and deacons:

1 Tim 5:17

Titus 1:5 – For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint **elders** in every city as I commanded you

James 5:14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the **elders** of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

1 Peter 5:1-3 – The **elders** who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: ² **Shepherd** the flock of God which is among you, serving as **overseers**, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; ³ nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being **examples** to the flock

III. God's plan for multiple elders provides many benefits:

1. Breadth and Depth of Leadership (shared roles, but distinct expertise)
2. Support and Safety of Key Leadership (accountability; counsel)
3. Developing and Reproducing Leadership
4. Flexibility and Continuity of Leadership
5. Availability of Leadership (Acts 13:1-3)