

“And He Gave Some . . . as Pastors and Teachers”

Study One – Biblical Eldership

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*“And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and **some as pastors and teachers.**” (Ephesians 4:11)*

Read Ephesians 4:7-16

As I consider the idea of Pastor/Shepherd, I am overwhelmed by the biblical material for two reasons: its abundance and its weight. In this initial article, I would like to consider the idea of Pastor as it exists in the context of the local church.

I believe Ephesians 4:7-16 provides for us one of the distinguishing structures that differentiate the Local Church from the Universal Church. In Ephesians 4, Paul calls the Local Church to “diligently preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (4:3). He assures the people of God that there is only . . .

- One Body (4:4)
- One Spirit (4:4)
- One Hope (4:4)
- One Lord (4:5)
- One Faith (4:5)
- One Baptism (4:5)
- One God and Father (4:6)

He seeks to reassure the people that there is no reason for the present division marking the body of Christ. He points out in verse 7 how each member within the body of Christ has a functional role (1 Pet. 4:10, 2 Tim. 3:17). To assist the Local Church in addressing the need for and cultivation of body unity, God placed people within His body who would possess certain gifts/abilities and who would occupy certain offices/positions.

Verse 11 sights four of these gifted officers.

- Apostles
- Prophets
- Evangelists
- Pastors and teachers

Ephesians 2:20 might suggest the gifts of “Apostles and Prophets” were foundational and have since ceased to exist. However, this will be left for another study. This leaves the Church with two identifiable offices that of Evangelists and Pastor/Teacher. Let us consider these two ideas.

- The Evangelist

Today both offices appear to be a mere shadow of how the Bible portrays these positions. A biblical evangelist is someone, like the apostle Paul, who gave himself to planting Local Churches. The biblical evangelist is to be a part of every Local Church ministry. Evangelism

encompasses the entire process of leading an individual to Christ, training them in the priority of Christ, and seeking to facilitate the planting of a Local Church. For many, the modern day Evangelist is our present day missionary.

- The Pastor

The second office is that of Pastor/Teacher. Some split the office into two distinct positions that of Pastor and Teacher. Our purpose is not to argue this point (yet), but to see that God has given His Church those who would function in the office of Pastor.

The word “Pastor” is from a root meaning “To protect.” “Jesus said the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:11) and called himself the Good Shepherd. In Hebrews 13:20 Christ is the Great Shepherd (cf. 1 Peter 2:25).” (Robertson’s Word Pictures, Ephesians 4:11).

Only in Ephesians 4:11 are elders termed “Shepherds” (Latin **pastores**) in the New Testament. The verb “To feed/shepherd (taken from the same root word for ‘Pastor/Shepherd’),” is employed by Jesus to Peter (John 21:16), by Peter to other ministers (1 Peter 5:2), and by Paul to the elders (bishops) of Ephesus (Acts 20:28).

It is only in the Local Church context that we have “Pastors.” Many may possess the gift of pastoring or shepherding, but there is a distinct office or position for one who possesses the gift and who functions as a pastor or shepherd of a distinct, local, “flock” of believers.

Since the noun “Pastor” is only used once to identify the office, of necessity, we need to see where the verb is used with other identifying words. There are four primary passages bringing this to light (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:1, 2; Titus 1:5, 6; 1 Pet. 5:1).

“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers (**episkopos**), to shepherd (**poimaino**) the church of God which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28).

¹ “It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer (**episkope**), it is a fine work he desires to do. ² An overseer (**episkopos**), then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach” (1 Tim. 3:1, 2).

⁵ “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders (**presbuteros**) in every city as I directed you, ⁶ namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion” (Titus 1:5, 6).

¹ “Therefore, I exhort the elders (**presbuteros**) among you, as your fellow elder (**sumpresbuteros**) and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, ² shepherd (**poimaino**) the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness” (1 Pet. 5:1, 2).

Some initial observations

The "Bishop (A)" is to function as a "Pastor (B)."

The "Bishop (A)" and the "Elder (C)" are the same.

The "Elder (C)" is to function as a "Pastor (B)."

If $A = B$ and $A = C$ and $C = B$, then all three must be working synonyms.

Some concluding remarks

- The words "Bishop, Overseer, Elder, Pastor, and Shepherd" are all interchangeable terms. There is no hierarchy suggested within the words themselves. Any such hierarchical construction is something that comes into the thought outside of the Scripture.
- It is interesting to see how the word "Bishop" is also translated "Visitation" and "Overseer." This suggests the function or activity of one who is designated a "Bishop."
- The word "Pastor (noun)" and "Feed (verb)" come from the same root word. Again, the one who is engaged as a "Pastor" or "Shepherd" is being called upon to "feed" the people of God.
- It is important to keep in mind that an individual may have the gift of visiting or teaching and not occupy the office of an elder.
- The term "Elder" appears to designate an individual who is occupying a position of authority and leadership within the fellowship of God's people.
- Initially a Bishop signifies the activity of overseeing and visiting. An Elder is one who leads, guides, and directs the church and a Pastor is one who feeds and protects the people of God through the teaching ministry.

APPLICATION: (Making the Transfer)

God has given to the Local Church individuals who are to assist in administrating and serving His body. Those who are so gifted are to occupy the office of leadership. Though many will receive the gift, not all will function in the office of "Pastor/Elder."

There are those within the Local Church who are to be identified by the term, "Pastor, Elder, and Bishop." Who is to occupy the office and what are the functions inside the Local Church for such a position? These two questions will occupy an additional study.

The biblical words used to describe the leadership in Local Churches

BISHOP "Episkope"	BISHOP "Episkopos"	ELDER "Presbuteros"	PASTOR "Poimen"	FEED "Poimaino"
<p>Lu 19:44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.</p> <p>Ac 1:20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take.</p> <p>1Ti 3:1 This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.</p> <p>1Pe 2:12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.</p>	<p>Ac 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.</p> <p>Php 1:1 Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:</p> <p>1Ti 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;</p> <p>Tit 1:7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;</p> <p>1Pe 2:25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.</p>	<p>Ac 14:23 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.</p> <p>Ac 15:4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.</p> <p>Ac 20:17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.</p> <p>1Ti 5:1 Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren;</p> <p>Tit 1:5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:</p> <p>Jas 5:14 Is any sick among you? 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:</p>	<p>Eph 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;</p> <p>Heb 13:20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,</p> <p>1Pe 2:25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.</p>	<p>Joh 21:16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.</p> <p>Ac 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.</p> <p>First Peter 5:2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;</p>

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