

Who Do Our Elders Think They Are?

1 Peter 5:1-5

INTRODUCTION

- A. Elders often must make difficult decisions.
 - 1. Scripture gives them the right to make those decisions.
 - 2. But, many would want to ask an elder, “Just who do you think you are?”
- B. Peter wanted to tell his readers who elders think they are.
 - 1. Peter himself was an elder (v 1). Thus, he knew the challenges of the role.
 - 2. Peter was a witness of the sufferings of Christ (v 1). He, therefore, knew how much God loves the church.
 - 3. Peter was a partaker of the glory that will be revealed (v 1). He had the same hope of heaven as his readers.
- C. Therefore, Peter is greatly qualified to write about the elders of the church.
 - 1. “Who do our elders think they are?”
 - 2. Let’s examine the text to see what Peter tells us:

ELDERS ARE SHEPHERDS, vv 2-4

- A. Elders are to shepherd the flock of God, v 2.
 - 1. This means that they should care for the church.
 - a. Acts 20:28.
 - b. Just as a shepherd would take care of his sheep, the elders need to take care of the flock.
 - 2. They are to tend the “flock of God.”
 - a. The church belongs to God, not the elders.
 - b. The elders should make sure that they care for the church as God’s & not their own.
 - 3. That’s what “serving as overseers” means—they are to watch & care for the church.
 - 4. “They [elders] watch out for your souls, as those who must give account” (Heb 13:17).
- B. They are not to serve by compulsion, but willingly, v 2.
 - 1. An elder must desire the office (1 Tm 3:1).
 - 2. There isn’t much to be gained from forced service.
- C. They are to tend the flock eagerly, not for shameful gain, v 2.
 - 1. In New Testament times, many elders were paid for their service.
 - a. 1 Tm 5:17-18.
 - b. An elder is not to accept his position for material gain.
 - 2. An elder is not to use his position for any type of gain.
 - 3. He is to serve eagerly, happily. Attitude has much to do with how God sees us.
- D. They are not to domineer the flock, but be examples, v 3.
 - 1. “Lord it over” refers to the misuse of authority.
 - 2. “Lording it over” means an elder says, “It’s my way or the highway.”
 - a. It needs to be God’s way or the highway.
 - b. When elders make decisions, they need to do what they believe is in the best interest of the church.
 - 3. They are to serve as examples.
 - a. That’s biblical leadership.
 - b. An elder should always do before he asks the church to do (Acts 1:1).
 - c. An elder should never say, “Do as I say, not as I do.”
- E. They are really sub-elders, v 4.
 - 1. Jesus is the Chief Shepherd.

- a. Elders act under Jesus. It is he whom they serve.
- b. They will give an account as to how they have served (Heb 13:17).
- 2. When Jesus comes, they will receive the crown of glory.
 - a. This crown of glory does not fade; it is eternal.
 - b. This crown of glory refers to a garland given to the winner of an athletic competition.
 - 1) Those crowns faded; the flowers died.
 - 2) The crown Jesus gives will never fade.

THEY ARE AUTHORITIES, v 5

- A. In our brotherhood today, it is unpopular to talk about elders as authorities.
- B. But, Scripture says that they are (1 Thess. 5:12; Heb. 13:17).
 - 1. “Younger” causes us to think of elders being older members of the congregation, but we are still talking about elders as church leaders.
 - 2. Those who are not elders are to submit themselves to the authority of the elders.
 - a. This subjection is to be voluntary; we should want to submit ourselves to the elders because that’s God’s way.
 - b. This doesn’t mean we don’t disagree, but it does mean that we follow.

THEY ARE HUMBLE MEN, v 5

- A. All Christians are to be clothed with humility.
 - 1. Being humble means that one doesn’t think more highly of himself than he ought.
 - 2. Elders are to be humble.
 - a. They cannot consider themselves infallible.
 - b. They cannot live above correction.
 - 3. Members are to be humble.
 - a. Humility allows us to follow the elders.
 - b. When we are humble, we don’t insist on our own way.
 - c. When we are humble, we accept correction.
- B. God does not accept the proud.
 - 1. The proud do not have fellowship with God (Prov 6:16-17).
 - 2. But God accepts the humble.