

Watchmen on the Wall—Guards for the Church Body

Building His Church—The Commission Wall: Part 10

| May 22, 2022

Elders are appointed.

- **Acts 14:23** (WEB) *And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they believed.*
- **Titus 1:5** (WEB) *I left you in Crete for this reason, that you would set in order the things that were lacking and appoint elders in every city, as I directed you.*

Elders willingly serve.

- **1 Peter 5:2** (WEB) *Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion, but voluntarily.*

Elders are task-driven, and the task is noble.

- **1 Timothy 3:1**
 - *If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.* (ESV)
 - *Someone who seeks to be an overseer desires a good work.* (WEB)

Elders are shepherds.

- **1 Peter 5:1-2** (WEB) *So I exhort the elders among you ... shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight.*
- **Acts 20:28** (WEB) *Take heed, therefore, to yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the assembly of the Lord and God which he purchased with his own blood.*

Elders rule.

- **1 Timothy 5:17** (WEB) *Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and in teaching.*

Elders are decision makers.

- **Acts 16:4** (WEB) *As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered the decrees to them to keep which had been ordained by the apostles and elders who were at Jerusalem.*

Elders give instruction (teach).

- **Titus 1:9** (ESV) *He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.*

Elders bless by the laying on of hands.

- **1 Timothy 4:14** (WEB) *Don't neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the elders.*
- **James 5:14** (WEB) *Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the assembly, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.*

Elders are examples of faith.

- **Hebrews 13:7** (WEB) *Remember your leaders, men who spoke to you the word of God, and considering the results of their conduct, imitate their faith.*

WHY IS THIS SO CRITICAL?

Leaders equip the Body of Christ.

- **Ephesians 4:11-13** (NIV) *So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

Leaders are guards and watchmen on the wall for the Body of Christ.

- **Acts 20:28-29** (NIV) *Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. ²⁹ I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock.*

This church IS the Body of Christ.

- **1 Corinthians 12:27** (NIV) *Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*

Digging Deeper

(for group study and conversation, and for personal reflection)

With your group, review the points made today in the sermon and talk through any application pieces that need to be discussed and clarified. *(10 minutes)*

As a group, take the time to look carefully at the following passages about leaders in God's Church.

Read Acts 20:17-31 together. As you read through this story of Paul's instructions to the elders from the Ephesian church, contemplate these questions: *(15 minutes)*

- As church leaders, what were they instructed to "keep watch" over, and why was it so crucial? (20:28)
- What does it mean to "shepherd the flock of God"? How is this valuable? (20:29)
 - Who are some of the "shepherds of the flock" for us today?
- What and/or who are the "savage wolves" that are out there attacking the Body of Christ? (20:29)
 - What are some examples of the "savage wolves" for us today?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-30 together. As you walk through this passage, remember that Paul is addressing the *Ekklesia* in Corinth on how to live out their ministry in *Gentile* territory as a witness to this broken world. He is addressing *spiritual gifts* and their value and variety in the Body of Christ. *(15 minutes)*

- Why are the "weaker" parts of the Church Body also "indispensable"? (see 12:22)
- What are spiritual gifts, and why is there such a variety of them?
- Look carefully and talk through the leaders of the Church Body, and their functions and values. (see 12:27-30)
- Why does 12:31 end with the phrase, "eagerly desire the greater gift"? (see 1 Corinthians 13)

Read Ezekiel 33:1-20 together. As you walk through this passage, recognize that it is the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel speaking to the covenant people of God. This is very much the equivalent to the Body of Christ present today. *(15 minutes)*

- Who is the watchman in this story?
- How is the negligent watchman held accountable and why? (see 33:6-9)
- Why isn't God pleased to see the wicked die? (see 33:11)
- Why is the task of the watchmen so urgent? (see 33:11)

LIFEWAY CHURCH TEAM STRUCTURE AND ROLES TO CARRY OUT GOD'S WORK

- Elder team
- Pastoral team
- Ministry team leaders
- Ministry team members

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

- Write the names of some of LifeWay's leaders beside the teams list above. Use this list and your notes to pray for the leaders regularly.
- Pray over the next few months about who should be a LifeWay elder.
- Are you part of any of these teams? Pray over the next month if you believe God is leading you to be part of a ministry team.