

5th Elders, deacons, and a job description for pastors in relation to ruling elders (for discussion 5-2-2010)

Review: elders are overseers by the appointment of the Holy Spirit

1) How do the work of Christ and the appointment of the Spirit give solemnity, encouragement, and motivation to elder care of the flock? cf. Acts 20.17-31: **Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. 18 And when they came to him, he said to them...28 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. 29 I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 Therefore be alert...**

2) How can we support the claim that a plurality of elders is not necessary for the existence of local churches, but that it is necessary for their well-being?

3) How does having a *plurality* of elders contribute to the well-being of the church?
cf. wisdom in counsel of many; ordained for definition and good order; guard the gospel by learning and attending to the flock.

4) How does this text help us form an eldership job description? **[The cue here is the avoidance of twisted words in the things of God's word for discipleship. The core duty is spiritual regarding themselves and on behalf of the flock to promote growth in the word by prayer.]**

4A. Acts 5.42-6.7

5:42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

6:1 Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. 2 And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. 3 Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. 4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." 5 And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. 6 These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them. 7 And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

Consider how this text helps us develop an eldership job description. [At its core is the preaching of the word and prayer]

Deacons (though not named as such) did particular work to free up the leaders for their work more directly and efficiently.

How should we make application from apostles to the office holders today? **[We make application by considering the historical-redemptive structure of apostolic vs. post-apostolic times. Thus, what apostles did by preaching and prayer pastors now do but pastors do not lay the foundation of the apostolic word, they build upon; thus, pastors preach a text, the NT text added to the OT text and in that way they enter into the works of the apostles and carry their message to the ends of the age. Central is faithfulness to the text for ministry to the people of God through prayer.]**

How do we further make application of the previous point to the distinction between ruling elders and preaching elders? **[We have to account for the fact that ruling elders do not preach the word; they have the duty of the word and prayer in an analogous way, a supportive way (that does not remove parity) in which they give balance to the pastor by interaction.]**