

Pastor: Spiritual Shepherding

Observations from 3 Passages

Heb 13:7,17, 1 Peter 5:1-5, Acts 20:28

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INTRODUCTION: Is it proper and biblical that one person be in a position of authority over other people within the body of Christ? Yes. That is the design of God. We will examine 3 passages, and see a recurring theme in all three.

Heb 13:7 *Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. 17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*

1Pe 5:1 *The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 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; 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. 5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*

Acts 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.*

I. Spiritual Oversight is biblical

God has placed certain men in a position of overseeing over the body of Christ. They must give account to God for each Christian under his responsibility. These people “rule” over the church, and are doing what they are doing because God has design His church to function this way.

Heb 13:7 *“they which have the rule over (2233 hegeomai) you 17 Obey (3982 peitho) them that have the rule over (2233 hegeomai) you, and submit (5226 hupeiko) yourselves*

2233 hegeomai “rule” – to lead, i.e. command (with official authority), figuratively, to deem, i.e. consider, esteem, govern, judge.

3982 peitho “obey” – to convince (by argument, true or false). By analogy to pacify or conciliate (by other fair means). To assent (to evidence or authority), to rely (inward certainty).

5226 hupeiko “submit” – to yield, be “weak”, to surrender, to submit one’s self.

1Pe 5:2 “taking the oversight” Acts 20:28 “Holy Spirit hath made you overseers”

1983 episkopeo (Episcopal) “oversight” – to oversee, by implication, to beware, look diligently, take the oversight.

II. Biblical oversight is example based

If you cannot say **“I want to emulate the spiritual life of my pastor”** then either your heart is not in the right place, or your pastor is not what he is supposed to be.

Heb 13:7 *whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.*

1Pe 5:3 *being ensamples to the flock.*

Acts 20:28 *Take heed therefore unto yourselves*

- God links the teaching and preaching of the word of God with the character of the person doing it. **(He must act according to what he says.)**
- More is caught than taught.
- God’s power only works best through living example.
- There is a spiritual qualifying before a man can be an overseer. He must be an “elder” – a wise, prudent, experienced member of the group.

1Ti 4:16 *Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.*

III. Biblical oversight involves spiritual feeding

Heb 13:7 *have spoken unto you the word of God* **17** *as they that must give account*

1 Pe 5:2 *feed the flock of God which is among you*

Acts 20:28 *to feed the church of God*

- The spiritual growth, life, and welfare is supposed to improve because of the overseers work and ministry.

ANALOGY OF SHEPHERDS AND SHEEP – God compares this overseer-church members relationship to that of a shepherd with his sheep. It should be noted that God has designed both the reality of a shepherd with sheep, and the design He wanted in the church of His redeemed and their pastor.

- **FEEDING** – Shepherds feed sheep by taking them to where the food is, and the sheep on it themselves. Sheep can’t always distinguish between weeds that cause sickness and death and good grass, so the shepherd must be an expert in this.
- **LEADING** – Shepherds don’t drive sheep from behind, but simply walks in front of them, and the sheep know their shepherd (his character, his person) so they follow after him, wherever he goes, they follow because of their emotional link and bonding.
- **DEFENDING** – Sheep are a passive type of animal that do not attack and defend themselves against predators. Shepherds must interpose themselves between the sheep and the danger, risk their own welfare and life for the sheep, and fiercely attack and defend the sheep. The sheep often don’t even know the danger that is around them.

IV. Biblical oversight is a calling that is willingly received

Heb 13:17 ... for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

1Pe 5:2 ... taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; **4** And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Acts 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...

- God calls a man to take the oversight of a church, yet that man must take it willingly. No man can be compelled into this oversight except by God.

1Ti 3:1 This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

V. Biblical oversight is not an opportunity for enrichment

Heb 13:7 Remember them ... whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.

1Pe 5:2 ... taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; **4** And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

REQUIREMENT FOR OFFICE – the pastor must exhibit a life free from covetousness. While these requirements (1 Tim3, Titus 1) are goals we as Christians ascribe to for all Christians, the pastor must manifest a life that complies with them before entering office.

DISQUALIFIER WHILE IN OFFICE – the man must not use his office to get unjust gain. The pastor must guard himself against taking the opportunity of his position of oversight to enrich himself, or hold that “stability” of money as one of his highly esteemed goals. He must be an example of frugality, and living by faith on humble means, just as our Lord did.

1 Tim 3:3 “not greedy of filthy lucre ... not covetous” **Titus 1:7** “not given to filthy lucre”

DEFINITION OF COVETOUSNESS – the undue goal of personal enrichment. Covetous people are not always rich people, but they are people who are given over to procuring luxury, riches, and the deceptive appearance of stability that these things appears to bring people.

1Ti 6:17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

THE MARK OF A FALSE PROPHET IS COVETOUSNESS

Ro 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. **18** For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

2Pe 2:1 *But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. 2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. 3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. 14 beguiling unstable souls: **an heart they have exercised with covetous practices;***

Jude 1:4 *For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, **turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness** (out of control, desiring), and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. 11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and **ran greedily** (gush, run greedily after) **after the error of Balaam for reward** (pay for service, hire, reward, wages), and perished in the gainsaying of Core.*

God desires just pay for the man of God (“*the workman is worthy of his meat*” **Mat 10:10**; “*the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel*” **1 Cor 9:14**), but some are not satisfied with that, but rather place that economic factor of money as a high priority in their own personal lives and in their mindset (sometimes also placing that as a church goal).

VI. Biblical oversight is not ownership

Heb 13:17 *as they that must give account*

1Pe 5:2 *Feed the flock of God which is among you 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear*

Acts 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.*

Pastoral leadership – is one of a **living example, not of vested authority**. Pastors are **not more or less cherished** in God's eyes than the members, just **more responsible, more accountable** (for themselves, their church people, and the church's entire direction and welfare).

Pastor's attitude – laborer in the vineyard of the Lord. Must give an accounting to the Master one day. **He is a worker, not owner! Doesn't matter what he thinks, but what God thinks.**

Mt 20:25 *But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. 26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; 27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:*

Not a corporate chart type authority structure, but authority/responsibility based on the **example of personal service**. Christ's example demands a respond from people

CONCLUSION: The office of pastor, as leader and living example of Christ is a biblical office. We as Christians are obligated to be submissive to that design of God, support him, and desire to emulate his spiritual walk with God.

Heb 13:7 *Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.*