

Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" JOHN 20 : 27 & 28



Current Link

Elders from a Biblical Perspective

On consecutive Sunday mornings last month our Pastor, Daniel Ashby, spoke on Elders and Deacons in a local church. First, he considered -



1. The Role of an Elder

"How firefighters are deployed to fight a fire is similar to how elders are deployed in the local church," said Daniel in his introduction. Some are full-time pastors and others are part-time, but both in the same way are called of God and equipped to lead and shepherd the church.

Pastor Ashby noted four points on how an elder guides the flock:

1.1. By Teaching

It was Peter to whom Jesus said, "Feed my sheep" John 21:15ff. Elders feed by teaching. In Mk 6:34 Jesus' example supports this. Eph 4:11-13 shows us the reason for it, emphasised the pastor, "so that the body of the local church might be built up resulting in spiritual maturity." An elder is a teacher "to some degree... at a Sunday service... at a mid-week, in a Bible class, in a small group or one-to-one."

1.2. By Guarding

"There are wolves, there are dogs, that will want to get in among the flock" and attack and cause chaos. Acts 20:28-30 sees Paul exhorting the elders in this respect. "False doctrine, and false belief, and false behaviour" will hurt and wound the sheep, as could a "problematic book that's doing the rounds." These must be refuted from the Word of God. Elders will "keep their eye on who is teaching and what they're teaching at every level of church life." They will draw alongside folk with correction at times. They have a guarding role.

1.3. By Caring

When the sheep wander, are hurt, are fighting and attacking each other, elders care for them. The pastor quoted Heb 13:17 "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account..." Also Acts 20:28.

He added, "Elders are to care for their local church; they have been appointed to spiritual leadership over it." They are to visit, pray with, draw alongside, encourage, challenge, rebuke, cry with, and laugh with their sheep.

1.4. By Example

This is clear from 1 Pet 5:3 and Phil 3:17. Elders are not to be domineering and "should never be accused of saying, 'do what I say and not what I do.'" Elders should be "calling others to imitate them, showing how they live their lives."

2. The Character of an Elder

In 1 Tim 3:2 "an overseer must be above reproach". Elders, like any Christian, are not perfect, but "they should be in a way unblameable" as regards their character. In verses 1-7 there is a list of positive character traits to be seen in an elder, including being "called to open their lives... and homes to the sheep" - as one book "describes it very well, 'shepherds should smell like sheep.'" Another list in the same verses gives negative qualities of what an elder should not be.

3. The Responsibility and Reward of an Elder

Every Christian suffers as they follow Christ, and Peter is essentially telling his fellow-elders in 1 Pet 5:1 that "there will be distinct suffering and stresses and pains that come with shepherding the flock." With eldership comes responsibility as James 3:1 and Heb 13:17 make plain. "Each elder will give an account some day of how they have taught, and how they have watched over the souls of the flock that they have been entrusted to... But there is also great reward." 1 Pet 5:4 "And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory."

4. The Relationship between an Elder and the Church

4.1. The Flock are called to submit to their Under-Shepherds

1 Pet 5:5 and Heb 13:17. In applying this, the pastor stated, "As the elders of local churches prayerfully cast vision and direction for the flock, as they lead and

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rebuke, correct and encourage, the flock are called to submit to their under-shepherds, to follow the Great Shepherd along with their elders, as they each follow Christ."

4.2. The Elders are not to domineer the Sheep

1 Pet 5:3 "An elder should never drive the sheep harshly. They're not to be heavy handed. But they're to lovingly and firmly call the sheep to follow their leading and direction as they all follow Christ. That's why here at Lisburn Baptist we practice elder-led congregationalism; it's not just whatever the elders say goes. The elders lead, but they call the membership to back them and to follow. They do not domineer, but they gently call the sheep to follow."

4.3. The Under-Shepherds (pastor & elders) are still Sheep

"The elders of a local church are not superhuman; they are not perfect." And the relationship between elders and a congregation isn't just the elders doing all the giving and the sheep all the receiving." It's to be mutual edification through ministry, prayer, and pastoral care.

CONTINUED OVERLEAF...

Quote of the month:

“ The cross does not rob Jesus of His Glory, the cross shows us His Glory. ”

Daniel Ashby (Sunday 14th March 2021 PM, online service) reading from Mark ch 15 v 16 -32, speaking on the topic 'The King on the Cross - Jesus is Mocked'. Ask for a CD or listen online at <https://lisburnbaptist.org/live>

4.4. The Under-Shepherds need to know who are their Flock

From all the biblical references quoted, it's clear that elders have been made overseers by the Holy Spirit and are responsible for the flock of God among them – those in church membership, who have recognised their gifting and appointed them. That doesn't mean "that an elder won't pray or visit or care for someone who is not a member." Under-Shepherds need to know who their sheep are. That's "an encouragement to someone to think through church membership and to commit."

4.5 The Sheep need to pray

Our Pastor concluded, "Pray for our serving elders... for wisdom and guidance as we lead the church." And that for Lisburn Baptist "God would raise up more... those gifted and qualified by their character to bear the responsibility and look to the reward of being an Under-Shepherd of Christ's sheep."

Deacons from a Biblical Perspective

On Sunday morning, 14th March, Pastor Ashby followed up on the previous week on Elders, with a look at the Role and Qualifications of Deacons from Scripture.

Beginning with a quote by Matt Smethurst,¹ and an illustration from the positions of offensive tackle in American football, our pastor emphasised that "elders and deacons are on the same team" but "vary in gift and

role as they serve in the church. Deacons stand side by side with the elders, and they help the elders focus on what God has called them to do."

1. A Pastoral Problem which results in a Pioneering Pattern
2. The Christian Character that qualifies
3. The Success found in Servanthood

Bible passages expounded were: Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tim 3:8-13.

¹Deacons - rightly defined and deployed - are an irreplaceable gift to Christ's people.

BOOK and ONLINE Recommendations:

Church Elders (9marks) by Jeramie Rinne

What Is a Healthy Church? (9marks) by Mark Dever

Listen/read online. Search "Desiring God Elders"

"Deacons" 14/03/2021 is at www.lisburnbaptist.org/live Sermon begins at 30:10

OR direct to www.youtube.com/watch?v=BA2XxU4snw&t=1810s

"Elders" 07/03/2021 at www.lisburnbaptist.org/live Sermon begins at 32:25

PLUS on 06/10/2019 www.lisburnbaptist.org/messages/6-church-leadership-elders

VICTOR WATSON

Fellowship Link

Deaths:

As a church fellowship are deepest sympathy goes to Chris Laird and the wider family circle on the loss of Chris' brother Alistair.



Have you appreciated the broadcasts during lockdown?

Sunday 21st March 2021 was exactly one year since the church went online. By then, a total of 180 videos, including online services were published. A big shout out and "Thank You" to David Wasson and the rest of the broadcast team – some just learning. You can see a big improvement from the first one! During Premiere live, up to about 50 devices are tuned in. Others watch later making it 105 views on 21st Mar. Even a couple of broadcasts have more than 200 so far!

Please pray for the sound, projection and website teams. May the Lord use this ministry for His glory. We don't know who is tuning in!

SERMON TITLES FOR APRIL:

EASTER SERVICES:

2/4/21 - Good Friday Service

- 7.30pm: Good Friday Service in the Main Hall (The Lord's Table will be celebrated at this service)

4/4/21 - Easter Sunday Morning Service

- AM: Easter Sunday Morning Service (The Lord's Table will be celebrated at this service as usual)
- PM: **There will be no Sunday evening service broadcast on 4/4/21**

11/4/21

- AM: College Sunday - Andrew and Sarah Dalrymple
- PM: College Sunday - Tim Huston (IBC student)

18/4/21 - Pastor Daniel Ashby

- AM: Gathering To Worship (1) 'What Is Worship?'
- PM: Encounters With Jesus (1)

25/4/21 - Pastor Daniel Ashby

- AM: Gathering To Worship (2) 'Why Does The Church Gather And What Should Happen When It Does?'
- PM: Encounters With Jesus (2)

"Physical services with online provision have resumed in the building from 24/3/21 for Midweeks and Sunday morning services. Social distancing measures will continue for the moment. Sunday evening services will continue online only."

Insight

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