

MATCHING PARTS

- A. If **elders** are going to function as the Lord would have them to, then they must be working within a congregation that is willing to cooperate with the nature of their work.
1. You wouldn't take an elder & put him on the board of General Motors, because an elder's unique traits & skills wouldn't match those required of a worldly business executive.
 2. But neither would you place an elder within a congregation of idealistic individualists who liked to be in charge of their own affairs & didn't like anybody ever telling them what they ought to do.
 3. In other words, a congregation must first be qualified if it is to have qualified leadership.
 4. And just as there are good congregations languishing without spiritual leadership because no one is qualified to serve in that capacity,

...there are also congregations that are not qualified to have the type of leadership that our Lord has commanded, simply because they would not subject themselves to leadership.

- a. In such a case, the congregation's attitude toward leadership is wrong: envy, malice, pride, refusal to submit.

[What is the responsibility of a congregation to its elders (bishops, overseers, pastors)?]

I. THE HONORED & THE HONORERS

1 Tim 5:17 – Let the elders who rule well **be counted worthy of double honor**, especially those who labor in the word & doctrine. (1 Thess 5:12-13)

- A. **This passage** does, in fact, relate a few things about the work of elders, but does this passage mainly address the work of elders? No, it does not.

1. This verse is mainly about the congregation's, response to the work of elders; *this verse is addressed to those who work under elders.*
2. The congregation is to show elders, who rule well, double honor, especially to those who have given their full attention to teaching God's word.

[Double honour] Duplees times – time (tee-may'); a value, i.e. money paid, or valuables; by analogy, esteem (especially of the highest degree), or the dignity itself (Thayer's). It signifies reward, stipend, wages. Let him have a double or a larger salary who rules well; & why? Because in the discharge of his office he must be at expense, in proportion to his diligence, in visiting & relieving the sick, in lodging & providing for strangers; in a word, in his being given to hospitality, which was required of every bishop or presbyter. (Adam Clarke).

B. **Getting back** to the “rule” of elders, what does that word “rule” mean in this verse?

1. Proistemi (pro-is'-tay-mee): To stand before, i.e. (in rank) to preside (Strong's); elders are leaders.
2. And what must you have if you're going to have leaders? People who are willing to be led.

3. What if a congregation has men who are considered to be capable leaders, by God's standard, but no one will allow them to lead? – *You have a congregation that is not qualified to have elders.*
4. Because elders do not carry a shepherd's crook in order to keep everyone in line, elders rely on the fact that the sheep will follow their lead as they follow Christ.

[So a church cannot have elders worthy of honor unless the church can agree to honor worthy elders.]

II. THE FAITH LEADERS & THE FAITH FOLLOWERS

Heb 13:7 – Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, **whose faith follow**, considering the outcome of their conduct.

- A. **The word “rule”** in this verse is a different word than the one in 1 Timothy 5:17.

1. Hegeomai (hayg-eh'-om-ahee): This word indicates a stronger form of leadership the just standing before or presiding over.
2. This word means to go before as a guide, to command, & to have authority over.

ASV – Remember them that **had** the rule over you, men that **spake** unto you the word of God; & considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith.

- B. **The author** most likely had in mind those men who introduced them to the faith & were their first leaders: apostles, deceased elders.
- C. **But the instruction** given is not just “remember” the men who taught you the gospel, but also follow or imitate their faith.
1. It is difficult for us to accept the idea that we are to have a relationship with elders to the extent that we must follow them, because we have always taught that we do not follow men, we follow Christ.

2. But here is direct command that we are to follow the men who have demonstrated faithfulness to the Lord by their teaching & life patterns.

[So a church cannot have elders who are faith leaders unless the church can agree to be faith followers.]

III. THE RULERS & THE OBEDIENT

Heb 13:17 – **Obey** those who rule over you, & **be submissive**, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy & not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you. [The word “elder” is not used here, but it is his work that is being considered; elders, pastors, bishops “watch out for souls”.]

- A. **As in all** the passages we have considered thus far, the emphasis in this verse is not on the work of elders, but on our responsibility to them.
1. The apostle used the words “obey” & “be submissive” to the “rule” (same, vs. 7) of elders.

- a. “Obey” is peitho (pi'-tho): to listen to, comply with (Thayer's).
- b. “Be submissive” is hipeiko (hoop-i'-ko): to yield to authority & admonition (Thayer's).
- c. Both words carry the idea of setting aside our personal opinions & judgments & relegating those to a level of lesser importance than the judgments of the elders.
- d. This can only work when a congregation respects its elders enough to follow their lead, AND ALSO when elders understand the fine line between being Lord's & being Leaders (explain).

[So a church cannot have elders who rule unless the church can agree to obediently submit to their rule.]

IV. THE EXAMPLE SETTERS & THE PATTERN FOLLOWERS

1 Peter 5:1-3 – The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder & a witness of the sufferings of Christ, & also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being **examples** to the flock;

A. The word **Peter** used for “examples” has to do with stamps & patterns.

1. Stamps are used to make impressions on objects, & patterns are followed in order to stay true to precise details.
2. “Examples” is tupos: the mark of a stroke or blow; print ([John 20:25](#)); the pattern in conformity to which a thing must be made ([Acts 7:44](#)); a model (for imitation) or instance (for warning).

Phil 3:17 – Brethren, join in following my example, & note those who so walk, as you have us for a **pattern**.

2 Thess 3:7-9 – For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor & toil night & day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, 9 not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an **example** of how you should follow us.

[So a church cannot have elders who are example setters unless the church can agree to be pattern followers.]

CLOSING

A. **How do we** match up? Are we a church qualified to have elders?

1. Will we honor them, follow them, obey & submit to them, & follow their pattern of life?

B. **This matter** shouldn't be a problem for us, because we have already learned that it was necessary for us to match up to our Chief Shepherd Jesus Christ.

1. And as long as our (future) elders (if we are to have elders) match up to our Lord's style of leadership, & His manner of life, then any respect we show them – we show to Him.

2. How do you match up with Him today?

1 Pet 2:24-25 – who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that **we, having died to sins**, might live for righteousness — by whose stripes you were healed. 25 For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd & Overseer of your souls.

3. Have you died to your sins by being baptized into the death of Christ (**Rom 6:3-4**)?

4. Are you ready to return to the Shepherd & Overseer of your soul – and to begin living for righteousness?

5. He bore your sins at the cross to make it possible for your soul to begin a new & endless life.

GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR SALVATION:

Hear the gospel of Jesus Christ; read it in your Bible: Acts 2; 3; 13; 17; Rom 10:17

Believe Jesus to be Lord and Christ, the Son of God and Savior: Acts 2:36; John 3:16; 8:24; 20:30-31; Acts 4:12; Titus 1:4

Repent of your sins: Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; 1 John 3:4

Confess your faith in Jesus Christ: Matt 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; Rom 10:9-10

Be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins: Acts 2:38; Rom 6:3-4; Gal 3:27; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet 3:21

Be obedient to the Lord, He will be your Judge: Titus 2:11-12; Heb 5:9; 2 John 9; Rev 2:10; John 12:48