

Speaking Truth In Love

Preachers in churches of Christ face a frequent occurrence. We are often called *pastors* or *reverends*, when that is not who we are. Basically, we are gospel preachers, and as such we are to pattern our work after men like Timothy and Titus. These men were not *pastors* or *reverends*; they were preachers, evangelists, ministers and teachers (2 Tim 4:2, 5; 1 Tim 4:6, 11; 6:2; 2 Tim 2:2, 24) – and these were not their titles, but descriptions of their service. Since Jesus taught against wearing religious titles (Matt 23:8-12), we preachers would just prefer that you call us by our given names.

The terms “pastor”, “bishop” and “elder” are merely different words describing the same office or service (Acts 20:17, 28). These men had to meet certain criteria in order to serve (Titus 1; 1 Tim 3). The work of an evangelist is a different kind of service, and he is subject to the elders where he works so long as they are subject to Jesus Christ “the Chief Shepherd” (1 and 2 Timothy; Titus; Heb 13:17; 1 Pet 5:4).

Paul and Peter used the verb form of “pastor” metaphorically—shepherds caring for sheep—when they spoke and wrote to the elders about their duties to the flock of God, i.e., the church (Acts 20:28-29; 1 Pet 5:1-3). So the New Testament term “pastors” (Eph 4:1) doesn’t refer to a single ruling preacher in a congregation, but to the overseers or elders in a local church.

The term “reverend” is a religious title similar to the ones Jesus commanded His disciples not to wear. Religious titles exalt, separate and make unnecessary distinctions between members. By contrast Jesus said, “whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Matt 23:12). Remember David’s description of God, “Holy and reverend is His name” (Psa 111:9).

3438 Green Meadow Dr.
San Angelo, TX 76904; (325) 224-2848
Sunday: 9:30; 10:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday: 7:00 p.m.