

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: Early Church Leadership?****Early Church Leadership? - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/9/2 8:59**

Quote:
-----Church governance was never like this in the biblical record. There were no 'pastors', no 'bishops', no 'first presidents'. Just 'beloved brethren'.

Brother Ron stated the above and I think this would be a good discussion topic to see in the scriptures what is said about church leadership and spiritual authority in churches.

Ephesians 4:11-12 - And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

clearly the word apostle and pastor is used to categorize people with certain giftings. And if men called people "Apostles" and also "Prophets" then I don't see why they wouldn't call people as titles "evangelists, pastors or teachers".

Re: Early Church Leadership? - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/2 9:27

Hi Greg

Quote:
-----clearly the word apostle and pastor is used to categorize people with certain giftings. And if men called people "Apostles" and also "Prophets" then I don't see why they wouldn't call people as titles "evangelists, pastors or teachers".

My whole point is that they did not 'call people'...apostles or prophets. I may describe you as a webmaster but I don't call you that. I want to distinguish between descriptions and titles. There is no biblical evidence that 'terms' such as apostles ; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; were ever used as 'offices' or 'courtesy titles'. The words draw attention to function not an authority position in a local church.

I love the way in which Peter refers to Paul;our beloved brother Paul . This tells us who Paul was in Peter's affections, but gives no courtesy title.

I personally disapprove of all formal titles in the Christian community and do not use them. eg Rev, Dr, Pastor, Evangelist, Saint!!. To be consistent which should use all or none. As it is unlikely that I shall ever be addressed as Saint Ron I request that other descriptions be omitted too. ;-) I allow others freedom of conscience and hope they will do the same for me.

Re: - posted by 5nva (), on: 2004/9/2 9:37

Ron:

I wanted to make sure I understand what you are saying here. The way I understand what you are saying is that God did give the gift of these offices but they do not need to be verbally expressed. Would you also say that they don't even necessarily need to be known other than by the one to whom the gift is given.

Curious.

Mike

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/9/2 9:47

Quote:

-----My whole point is that they did not 'call people'...apostles or prophets.

Yes. Ok now we are on the same page definitely I see where you are coming from and I don't totally agree because I believe after reading these scriptures the terms at least (elder, apostle) were used as descriptive titles. But in essence you are right and I agree with you that men even though of high spiritual calling were usually just greeted and called upon as a "brother" or "beloved brother"! very good I learn something new everyday.. this just confirms my using "brother" and "sister" when talking with a lot of you on SI.

I do recall also that Jesus Christ said that we should call no man teacher because we have one teacher that is (the spirit of God).

Romans 1:1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

• In the passage above Paul calls himself a 'servant of Jesus Christ' as a title and states 'an apostle' as a spiritual calling.

1 Corinthians 1:1 - Paul called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

• In the passage above Paul calls himself 'an apostle' as a spiritual calling. Not as a title.

2 Peter 3:15 - And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

• Paul is referred to by Peter as 'beloved brother' as a title.

Acts 15:2 - When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

• Even though it does not appear that they would call someone 'apostle peter' etc the term apostles and elders are used specifically towards people as a 'title' or 'office'.

Paul, an apostle

appears in: 2 Corinthians 1:1, Galatians 1:1, Ephesians 1:1, Colossians 1:1, 1 Timothy 1:1, 2 Timothy 1:1, Titus 1:1.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/2 10:00

Quote:

-----I wanted to make sure I understand what you are saying here. The way I understand what you are saying is that God did give the gift of these offices but they do not need to be verbally expressed. Would you also say that they don't even necessarily need to be known other than by the one to whom the gift is given.

Hi Mike

Even the concept of 'office' has no biblical basis. The word 'office' in the sense of an official position is used 46 times in the KJV version and NEVER in the originals. The words translated 'office' always speak of function not status.

The KJV is my Bible of choice but it has some latent problems and the whole issue of spiritual authority is one of its greatest problems. Here is an example; Take heed therefore unto your selves, and to all the flocke, whereof the holy Ghost hath made you Overseers, to feede the Church of God, which hee hath purchased with that his owne blood.

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(Act 20:28 GB - the Geneva Bible was predominantly Tyndales Translation)

The KJV translators of 1611 altered this vital verse; 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.

(Act 20:28 KJV)

Can you see the difference in emphasis between 'the church whereof the Holy Spirit has made you overseers' and 'the church over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers'. The word that the 1611 translators translated 'over' is the Greek preposition meaning 'within'. The original says that the elders are within the church, the KJV says elders are over the church.

This slanting of the text towards the 'status quo' is through much of the KJV. It has a historical background in English history and King James' translators built 'hierarchy' into their translation. They did not want to encourage egalitarianism of any kind; ultimately it means the death of any monarchy.

The idea of a hierarchy (priestly pecking order) is not the only idea that the translators infected the KJV with.

What I was saying is that the use of words like 'pastor' 'apostle' 'evangelist' as a title or official position has no basis in the Bible. And that we would get a better understanding of the nature of spiritual authority if we did not so use them.

Hope that is a little more clear.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/9/2 10:08

Quote:
-----The word that the 1611 translators translated 'over' is the Greek preposition meaning 'within'. The original says that the elders are within the church, the KJV says elders are over the church.

Very good and "interesting" here I do think that we have to realize these bible were translated in an catholic church atmosphere with all its hierarchy as Ron stated. Myself going to a protestant "presbyterian" church which its name being derived from the greek word I believe for order or hierarchy. I really think its wrong how they classify different offices in the church and I guess that clearly doesn't make me a genuine presbyterian for that's one of the major tenets of being one to agree to the offices and order interpreted in the bible by the presbyterian church.. ohh well.

Ron the scriptures I showed in the earlier post doesn't that at least show that the titles elder and apostle were used at least in **some** situations and for us not to want to use them even for good intentions goes against the balance of how the early church used them. But I do agree now with the uses of other titles classifying spiritual authority. Man this is an eye opener for me, I hope others are blessed by this thread.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/2 10:12

Quote:
-----Yes. Ok now we are on the same page definitely I see where you are coming from and I don't totally agree because I believe after reading these scriptures the terms at least (elder, apostle) were used as descriptive titles.
Â• Paul is referred to by Peter as 'beloved brother' as a title.

Hi webmaster Greg!!!

were getting closer at any rate...

my view is that they are not titles at all, but descriptions/functions. ;-) Why would I give you a title. You are Greg; webmaster is what you do. I know that the world used this pattern of speech as with President George W Bush, or Vice President Cheney, but I understand that Mrs Bush calls him Bushie; she knows what he does.

It was important in Paul's letters to make it plain that he was not writing in a private capacity as a 'beloved brother' but as an emissary of God with divine authority; an apostle. But that does not mean he was introduced in the meeting as Apostle Paul; he was 'beloved brother'- not a title a relationship.

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We are to give honour to whom honour is due, but that does not mean, that in the church, we have to use honorary titles to do so.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/9/2 10:16

Quote:
-----Hi webmaster Greg!!!

gack.. that sounds awful.. perhaps apostle greg has a nicer ring to it.. ;-)

Quote:
-----my view is that they are not titles at all, but descriptions/functions.

But surely you must concede that in the scriptures the word 'apostle' is used to distinguish and classify people. Like if I came into the early church room with all the 'apostle' I might welcome them by saying 'greeting apostles in the Lord Jesus!' I do think there is a place to use this sort of 'titling' and I don't think it should be dis-allowed for the scriptures seem to feel use it on occasion. Another example would be addressing 'saints in the Lord' etc.

Re: - posted by 5nva (), on: 2004/9/2 10:19

Ephesians 4:11-12 - And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;
12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Ron, I like what you said. "Why would I give you a title. You are Greg; webmaster is what you do."

If verse 12 in Ephesians 4 is not being fulfilled then the doing is not been done and therefore some have apparently appointed themselves to these positions/titles.

Thank you both for this thread. I have gained a lot in just a few minutes.

Mike

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/2 10:37

Quote:
-----perhaps apostle greg has a nicer ring to it

The people who would give it to you would want to put the ring through your nose. It is all about control.

Quote:
-----But surely you must concede that in the scriptures the word 'apostle' is used to distinguish and classify people. Like if I came into the early church room with all the 'apostle' I might welcome them by saying 'greeting apostles in the Lord Jesus!' I do think there is a place to use this sort of 'titling' and I don't think it should be dis-allowed for the scriptures seem to feel use it on occasion. Another example would be addressing 'saints in the Lord' etc.

There is sometimes a quaint formality among the colonies that is very attractive. :-D Would you really say 'hi apostles, hi prophets, hi evangelists, hi shepherds and teachers'? Is this how you will greet them in heaven? When I get the chance I am not going to say 'greeting Apostle Paul', I'm going to give him a great bear hug and say 'thank you, beloved brother'

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Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/9/2 10:57

Quote:
-----When I get the chance I am not going to say 'greeting Apostle Paul', I'm going to give him a great bear hug and say 'thank you, beloved brother'.

That wasn't what I asked even though that might be a good personal preference, does the scriptures or the early church use the word "apostle" as a title for some people at some times and scenarios. I would say **yes** because the bible says so. Certainly you are correct that it's not a rule of thumb and not used often therefore our personal preference as George Fox maintained was to treat all men partial without preference.

But I would ask also were the 'saints' that treated the 'Apostle' Paul like an angel showing personal preference to him over others? YES what that sinful or wrong? NO because I would feel inclined to pluck out my eyes for Paul but not for Ron even though I love Ron dearly speaks something to the esteem and authority spiritually given to the 'Apostle' Paul. As Paul said you don't have many fathers in the faith.

If I am rambling too much here (blames Mike) then let me know. I am agreeing with you here much Ron, and have learned a lot but I think I will need more convincing if you will persuade me to call all saints (brother and sisters) and that's it.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/2 11:26

Quote:
-----That wasn't what I asked even though that might be a good personal preference, does the scriptures or the early church use the word "apostle" as a title for some people at some times and scenarios?

I want to be sure we are not talking past each other here. Can you give me a quotation where the word 'apostle' is used as a title in the manner of 'president Bush'?

Quote:
-----But I would ask also were the 'saints' that treated the 'Apostle' Paul like an angel showing personal preference to him over others? YES what that sinful or wrong? NO because I would feel inclined to pluck out my eyes for Paul but not for Ron even though I love Ron dearly speaks something to the esteem and authority spiritually given to the 'Apostle' Paul. As Paul said you don't have many fathers in the faith.

Surely this was not because they esteemed his spiritual authority but because they loved him. I know people for whom I would give my eyes who have no spiritual status.

Did you get to read this week's Abraham, My Friend? They loved this man. He had poured out his life for them and now he was reaping what he had sown.

And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship. (Act 20:37-38 KJV)

Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. (Act 21:13 KJV)

This kind of behaviour was not caused by their esteem for Paul or for the spiritual authority given to him, it was because they loved him.

...our be-love-d brother Paul.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/9/2 11:39

Quote:
-----I want to be sure we are not talking past each other here. Can you give me a quotation where the word 'apostle' is used as a title in the manner of 'president Bush'

As in my post on the first page of this thread with all the scriptures: "Paul, an Apostle"

ie George Bush, president of the United States.

Quote:
-----This kind of behaviour was not caused by their esteem for Paul or for the spiritual authority given to him, it was because they loved him.

I shall pursue this installment of 'Abraham, My Friend' thank you for the correction you are right it is a matter of love. But wouldn't his status of 'apostle' play into that at all? and the other brothers who saw the Lord in the flesh wouldn't they be admired beyond proportion for that fact possibly?

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/3 2:38

Quote:
-----As in my post on the first page of this thread with all the scriptures: "Paul, an Apostle"

All the salutations from the beginning of the epistles are the equivalent to our letter endings. As these documents were originally scrolls it was the normal pattern to place them at the beginning, otherwise the reader would have had to unroll the whole scroll to find out who was writing to him. If you received a letter you would almost certainly turn to the last page to see where it came from. Consequently these are simple self introductions. In the way that you might sign yourself;
Greg Gordon
Webmaster; Sermonindex.

That tells me who you are, but it's not your title. Let's illustrate from the present age. You know those little drop down boxes where you have to choose

Mr
Mrs
Miss
Mss
Dr

...my point is 'Apostle' would never have been in a drop down box, nor evangelist, not prophet, nor shepherd/teacher. They were not titles, nor handles, just explanatory descriptions.

For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: (Rom 11:13 KJV) This is our beloved KJV again. See the focus on 'office'.

Here is the ASV

But I speak to you that are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I glorify my ministry; (Rom 11:13 ASV)

and here is Youngs Literal (even better):

For to you I speak--to the nations--inasmuch as I am indeed an apostle of nations, my ministration I do glorify; (Rom 11:13 YLT)

You may notice too that the ASV and Youngs correctly translate 'an apostle' rather than 'the apostle'. 'The apostle' could conceivably be a specific role like 'the pope' or 'the president' but 'an apostle' leaves the door open to be 'one of many'.

Re: - posted by riki (), on: 2004/9/3 3:46

Great discussion, I like it. I just wanted to add something. Perhaps it's obvious, but anyway...

Concerning all these titles that we are so fond of using in our days, isn't that because we always tend to associate a person with what he is doing?

I mean, if you are introduced to a new person somewhere, you (speaking generally here) always ask: "So, what do you do (for a living)?" In this modern world, to a very large extent, we are what we do. In the Bible, people are often identified as being "the son of". Like "Joshua, son of Nun" and "Caleb, son of Jephunneh". We, on the other hand, have our true identity in Christ and that gives us a new perspective of who we are to each other.

I believe that this tendency to add titles to everything and everyone may have a lot to do with us still thinking in a "worldly" way, if you see what I mean.

Just my thoughts on the subject, make of it what you will. :-)

/Rikard

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/3 6:10

Quote:
-----Concerning all these titles that we are so fond of using in our days, isn't that because we always tend to associate a person with what he is doing?

Hi riki
I think you are right. At one point in my life I was the manager of an 'Executive Job Club'. These were senior management folks, out of work and completely disorientated. Their whole lives had been defined by their job titles and when the job title was lost they had no identity.

Re: - posted by Delboy (), on: 2004/9/3 12:11

Riki, your post is spot on reference

Quote:
-----"So, what do you do (for a living)?" In this modern world, to a very large extent, we are what we do.

I think this applies to men. What does anyone else think?
Also, how can we overcome these sort of barriers in the church :-)

Re: Terms for 'Leaders' in the Bible - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/3 16:02

How about a little tour of terms used to describe God's servants in the Bible?
The New Testament terms all have a slightly derogatory derivation. Here's an example. An under-rower. minister hup EretEs Strongs 5257

Mt 5:25,26:58 Mr 14:54,65 Lu 1:2,4:20 Joh 7:32,45-46,18:3,12,18

Joh 18:22,36,19:6 Ac 5:22,26,13:5,26:16 1Co 4:1

ὑπηρέτης
hupēretēs

Thayer Definition:

1) servant

1a) an underrower, subordinate rower

1b) any one who serves with hands: a servant

1b1) in the NT of the officers and attendants of magistrates as - of the officer who executes penalties

1b2) of the attendants of a king, servants, retinue, the soldiers of a king, of the attendant of a synagogue

1b3) of any one ministering or rendering service

1c) any one who aids another in any work

1c1) an assistant

1c2) of the preacher of the gospel

The trireme was a powerful Greek fighting ship. Its specifications are impressive.

- * Overall length: 37 metres (121 feet)
- * Overall beam: 5.5 metres (18 feet)
- * 170 oarsmen in 3 files on each side: top file 31, middle and bottom 27 each
- * Oarsmen spaced at 2 cubits (0.888 metres/2 feet 9 inches)
- * One man per oar
- * Oar length 4.2m (13 feet 8½") and 4.0m (13 feet) - short oars at ends of ship
- * Speed: able to cover 184 sea miles at about 7.5 knots without stopping

Note the fact that there were three files of rowers. Rowers were usually slaves and the most expendable were put on the bottom file. In the event of the ship being badly damaged or sinking, these men chained to their oars, were the first to die. They never got any medals or laurel wreaths, they were happy just to survive. They were known as 'under-rowers' - huperEtEs.

It's the word used to describe Paul's career path!! But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister (huperEtEs) and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; (Act 26:16 KJV) Do you still want to be an apostle?

The word came to mean someone who carried the baggage for a man at arms. Those who attended a senior officer to serve him. In the British army this would be called a 'batman'; the lowest of the low. It's the word used to describe John Mark's role in 'carrying the bags' of Barnabas and Paul. And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister (huperEtEs). (Act 13:5 KJV) Do you still want to be a minister?

Later still it came to refer to someone in a position of delegated authority. So it moved 'up-market'. But never lost its prefix 'uper' meaning 'under'. It was always a man 'under' the authority of another. Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers (huperEtEs) of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. (1Co 4:1 KJV)

And yet I somehow feel that Paul never forgot its origin.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2004/9/3 18:57

So what place does this have in the "contemporary" church, where somebody is appointed over an entire congregation, or over a specific ministry within that congregation (e.g. Sunday school director)?

Re: so what now? - posted by Delboy (), on: 2004/9/3 19:26

I agree with jim,

where do we go from here?

It seems that we are to live with these titles in the church, even after so many centuries of it being so.

OR NOT...?

:-)

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/6 17:04

Quote:
-----So what place does this have in the "contemporary" church, where somebody is appointed over an entire congregation, or over, a specific ministry within that congregation (e.g. Sunday school director)?

with my emphasis...

Somehow we have to get past this whole concept of leaders being 'over' others. I can only see 'elders' as a specific biblical recognition within (not over) a local assembly. 'Leaders' is not really a bible term. There were those who took the lead but that does not mean they were 'the leader'. Acts 15 is a fascinating example; you will see that Peter took the lead, then Paul, and Barnabas then James. I believe 'leadership' is a moral power rather than a legislative one in the local church.

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ch and the world wide church.

If 'leadership' had been formal and legal Paul would not have said; Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. (1Ti 4:12 KJV). he would have said use your power to remove the opponents.

There is an interesting comment on early church 'leadership' from the First Epistle of Clement. Clement was probably an elder in the church at Rome; there were no monarchical bishops or single rule churches at this time. Trouble had broken out in Corinth and Clement wrote from Rome to admonish them. Apparently the cause of the trouble was that they had dismissed their elders. I am not advocating such behaviour but it is interesting that such a thing was possible at this time. Leadership was due to moral power not legal right.

Of course, it is possible for men to create roles like director of music or director of evangelism or some such. God's silence must never be taken for his approval. Such men, even though appointed by men, may still serve in the spirit of the early church.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2004/9/6 20:01

Quote:

Somehow we have to get past this whole concept of leaders being 'over' others. I can only see 'elders' as a specific biblical recognition within (not over) a local assembly. 'Leaders' is not really a bible term. There were those who took the lead but that does not mean they were 'the leader'. Acts 15 is a fascinating example; you will see that Peter took the lead, then Paul, and Barnabas then James. I believe 'leadership' is a moral power rather than a legislative one in the local church and the world wide church.

Great example. Especially since many often just point out the authority of James in this council.

Quote:

If 'leadership' had been formal and legal Paul would not have said; Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. (1Ti 4:12 KJV). he would have said use your power to remove the opponents.

Wonderful insight.

Quote:

I am not advocating such behaviour but it is interesting that such a thing was possible at this time. Leadership was due to moral power not legal right.

Indeed. But, such is not totally without basis even in today's modern church. In some denominations, all the leaders remain in their office only by election, and likewise can be removed by election.

Quote:

Of course, it is possible for men to create roles like director of music or director of evangelism or some such. God's silence must never be taken for his approval. Such men, even though appointed by men, may still serve in the spirit of the early church.

One of my professors a year ago is a youth pastor at a church. He mentioned that biblically speaking, there is no basis t

o his ministry of youth pastor. Yet, I like how he did point out that there is freedom in Christ. Granted, perhaps his quotation of 1 Cor is a little out of context, but I cannot flatly reject his proposal.

This past Thursday when I went to UNC Charlotte, I ended up praying for a man when the Lord prompted me to. When I did, almost instantly 3 other believers came from the middle of nowhere and surrounded this man in prayer as well. It dawned on me later that this was a great example of Biblical leadership. I was not appointed by any as "the" intercessor to go about praying for folks, but, the Lord used me as one to spearhead what occurred, and others ended up following my leading by God. Btw, if you aren't aware of what occurred, you can read about it at: http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id=2953&forum=35#19046

--great thoughts philo...

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/7 3:56

Quote:
-----This past Thursday when I went to UNC Charlotte, I ended up praying for a man when the Lord prompted me to. When I did, almost instantly 3 other believers came from the middle of nowhere and surrounded this man in prayer as well. It dawned on me later that this was a great example of Biblical leadership.

Hi Jimmy

I think this is a great illustration. I do recognise the unique responsibility of elders in a local church, but in the gathering of the saints I think that 'leadership' is an event rather than a role. I think what we have in Acts 15 is 'leadership' as an event rather than a role.

Re: - posted by Nasher (), on: 2004/9/7 7:52

How does this fit into the equation:

1 Timothy 2:12

But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/7 8:38

Quote:
-----1 Timothy 2:12
But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

The word 'over' just isn't there in the original.

Young's Literal Translation is interesting and provocative...

and a woman I do not suffer to teach, nor to rule a husband, but to be in quietness, (1Ti 2:12 YLT)

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/10/6 13:51

Hi Greg

Quote:
-----Myself going to a protestant "presbyterian" church which its name being derived from the greek word I believe for order or heirarchy.

I missed this earlier. The Greek word presbuteros (the latin would be senator!) is the word for elder. The Presbyterian system of church government has 'elders/presbuteros' governing the church in contrast to the Episcopal system which has a single bishop.

Perhaps this little list will help.

The word 'elders' meaning those older, and often by virtue of that in a role of counsellor or advisor, is presbuteros in Gre

ek.

The word 'overseer' in Greek is episkopos. This is the word that the English word 'bishop' derives from. HOWEVER... the English word 'bishop' is now used of a monarchical bishop at the head of a church structure known as hierarchy. (originally hieros-priest rule) It now usually means a 'chain of command' structure or a gentile power structure of the kind that the Lord said was not to be the pattern for his church!?!)

the word for pastor (Latin) or shepherd in Greek is poimein, meaning a herdsman. The only person specifically referred to in the New Testament as a 'pastor' is Christ Himself. The verb 'to shepherd' is used in Acts 20:28 where in the KJV it is translated 'feed'. This passage refers to a group of men earlier described as 'elders' (Acts 20:17). So we see that they were 'elders' or 'overseers' and that their responsibility, corporately, was to 'shepherd' the flock in which the Holy Spirit had placed them.

The concept of a single pastor with leading responsibilities was not present in the early church but was seen to be pushing in by the end of the 1st century. It seems to have begun with a single elder representing the oversight at wider gatherings. This person gradually became the head of the local assembly and then as things grew the head of a district. He was then called a 'the bishop/overseer' and the head of the local assemblies became known as priests... it was all downhill after that.

Re: - posted by jeremyhulsey (), on: 2005/10/5 12:24

bump

Ron had placed a link to this in one of his replies. It was so good I decided to bump it back to the top for others to read.

Re: Early Church Leadership - posted by sdidde (), on: 2005/10/5 18:15

I heard a Pastor defend the singular leadership by referring to Rev. 2 and 3, where our Lord Jesus mentions the phrase "...to the Angel of the Church of...". Can someone explain.

In His Love,
-Stephen

Re: Early Church Leadership, on: 2005/10/6 13:51

Hello. I am new to SermonIndex; please pardon this intrusion in to your discussion.

I have been reading several different discussions on various topics posted and am a bit confused, both with content and purpose – please bear with me for a moment.

Regards this particular posting and related contributions, I get the impression that there is the need to define terms, i.e. accountability and decision making vs. leadership and example setting; and who is responsible for each. Without term definition, it is difficult to stay focused and come to a conclusion.

With any organization (including churches) there is a need for legal/organizational delegated authority and accountability for establishing and maintaining of doctrine, direction, and application of resources (Jerusalem council) – policies and procedures that align with and support the organization's purpose. This position (office/title) carries with it by necessity the attributes and responsibility for carrying out the stated and agreed upon policies and procedures as set forth by a "council of elders" or board of directors. If you look closely in Acts, you will notice that all of this is encapsulated in chapter 15.

The single Authority for the Church of Christ is God, and He delegates, as He wills, certain authority and holds accountable men whom He has selected (ordained/called) for such responsibility within the church organizational structure. While each believer (including those of the church organizational structure) has the responsibility to be a true and faithful witness of Jesus Christ to everyone they come in contact with (example setting), whether by word or deed (1 Timothy 12-16), church organizational office holders/staff members have a peculiar additional set of responsibilities in relationship to the organizational office/position they hold for which they are held directly accountable – both to God and to man.

The Apostles, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, established the church organizational structure, doctrine and appli

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cation. They in turn set an example, as leaders in living out (setting an example) that which the Holy Spirit spoke to the m Ā– again see Acts chap 15.

Husbands and wives do this very same thing in the establishing of the family. Rules/guidelines are developed and then parents communicate those to their children by word and hopefully by deed (example). They teach and instruct (train), and also live out through leadership by example (disciple) those rules/guidelines to their children.

Shalom.
YĀ'shua haMeshiach!

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2005/10/6 16:31

Quote:

I heard a Pastor defend the singular leadership by referring to Rev. 2 and 3, where our Lord Jesus mentions the phrase "...to the Angel of the Church of f...". Can someone explain.
In His Love,
-Stephen

Actually, Rev 2-3 is full of writing against such a notion. In Rev 2-3, Christ mentions the doctrine of the Nicolaitians infecting the churches. No description is ever offered of what exactly this doctrine was. However, the greek word for this group of individuals means "people conquerers."

It would seem the problem of 3 John, where an individual had jumped to the forefront by putting others down, had infected the churches of Asia-minor. If you study closely the writings of the early church fathers, you will find the development of a single pastor rule accompanying a group of elders took place earliest in these regions, and was by no means a universal practice of the early church. The apostle John was indeed fighting this developing trend in the early church. It is interesting to note though, that he simply did not assert his "authority" to fix the problem though.

It cannot be proved who the 7 Angel's of Rev 2-3 are. It's even a further stretch to assert they are the single pastor of a church.