

ELDERS

1 Peter 5:1-3 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: **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; Neither as being Lords over Gods heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

I. What is an **Elder** (greek - **presbuteros**)

The term can mean older person or it can mean an officer in the church as in I Peter 5.

Elder is used 9 times in N.T.

6 of those are an older person

2 of those refer to an individual officer in a church

1 time as co-elder (**sumpresbuteros**) 1 Peter 5:1

Elders are used 60 times in N.T.

25 times in the Gospels referring to leaders in the synagogue before the Church

8 times in the book of Acts referring to this same group

1 time in the book of Hebrews referring to O.T. leaders

12 times in the book of Revelation referring to those around the throne

The remaining 14 times all refer to a **group** of men who were leaders in **a** local church. (Acts 11:30;14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4; 20:17; 1 Tim 5:17; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; 1 Pet 1:5) As you can see by these references, **the leadership of the local church was always a plurality of elders.**

In John MacArthur's book The Master's Plan for the Church, pp. 180, he states, "Nowhere in Scripture do we find a local assembly ruled by a majority opinion or by one pastor."

Scofield's notes on Titus 1:5 agree, "There is no one instance of one elder in a local church."

II. What is a **Bishop** (greek - **episkopos**) - overseer

Philippians 1:1- "with the bishops and deacons" (more than 1 leader at the church of Philippi)

Bishop and elder are the same person. In Titus 1:5 & 7 the titles are interchangeable.

Elder is **who** he is. Bishop is **what** he does (overseer).

1 Peter 5 tells us the elders (presbuteros) are to take oversight (episkopos) of the flock.

III. What is a **Pastor** (greek - **poimen**) - shepherd/feeder/caretaker

Ephesians 4:11 is the **only** place in the King James Version where **poimen** is translated "pastor." Every other time it appears in the Greek text it is translated "shepherd." In fact, the texts listing the qualifications for "pastor", universally accepted by the "single pastor authority" proponents, never mention the word "pastor" (**poimen**) in the text. The texts use elder and bishop, but not pastor (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).

1 Peter 5:1-3 The elders (**presbuteros**) which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder (**sumpresbuteros**= co-elder), and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed (**poimaino**) the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight (**episkopeo**) thereof, not by constraint but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

Acts 20:17-28 -

Verse 17- And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the **elders** (presbuteros) of the church.

Verse 28- Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you **overseers** (episkopos), to **feed** (poimaino) the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

As seen by the texts bishop, elder, and pastor are different terms describing the same person.

Elder is **who** he is. -- Person

Bishop is **what** he does. -- Oversees

Pastor is **how**he does it. – Shepherding, caring, feeding