

The Congregation, the Elders and Deacons

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Titus 2 describes the qualities of a Sound Church.

*most of Titus 2 is covered in the connected Excel Doc.

1 Peter 5:5 says to submit one to another and be clothed in humility.

* There was argument about circumcision

Acts 15:2:

Apostles and Elders make decisions for the church regarding doctrine.

*remind them that an Apostle is architect who builds the church and oversees

* 1 Tim. 5:1-2 says do not rebuke and Elder, but treat him as a father. Treat the younger men as brothers, the elder women as mothers, the younger as sisters with all purity.

1 Tim. 5:17-21:

- Elders deserve to get paid and deserve double honor when they labor in the Word and in doctrine. "Do not muzzle the ox."
- *If you labor in the word and doctrine, you should be fully equipped to teach, train, equip. etc.
- Do NOT listen to an accusation against an Elder without 2-3 witnesses.
- If an elder sins, rebuke them openly, in public, so it will set an example to others.
- **Titus 1:5** – Appoint elders in every city, or every church body.

By looking at the Greek and Hebrew throughout the Bible, we can see that women are not excluded from being Queens, Prophetesses, Deacons, and also Elders. Women should always seek to have men in these positions, but when needed, and ordained by the Lord, it is biblical to put women in these positions.

Elder - 4245 – presbuteros – older, senior, specifically an Israelite Sanhedrist, member of the celestial council, a Christian Presbyter. (see Titus 1:5 for this word Elder)

Definition of Presbyter – n. noun

1. a member of the governing body of an early Christian church
2. a member of the order of priests in churches having episcopal hierarchies that include bishops, priests, and deacons

Bishop – 1985 – episkopos – a superintendant, Christian officer in general charge of the church, overseer. (see Titus 1:7 for this word Bishop)

1 Peter 5:2-3 – Elders "2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight... "

- NOT by compulsion but willingly
- NOT for dishonest gain but eagerly
- NOT as Lord over the people but as examples to the flock

Elders in the book of Revelation

The same Greek word, Presuteros, is used in the book of Revelation.

- 24 elders around the throne of God. Intimacy. Closeness to God.
- The fall down before the throne and cast the crowns of gold at His feet, as the sing "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."
- Rev. 5:5-14 – Elders have supernatural knowledge of Heavenly things. Kingdom minded
- Each one holds a harp and a golden bowl full of incense. They are consumed with worship and prayer.
- They fall on their faces and worship God.
- They sing a new song: they operate in the prophetic anointing.

Philipp. 2:3-8

"Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, ² make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, **united in spirit**, intent on one purpose. ³ Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. ⁵ Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but **emptied Himself**, taking the form of a **bond-servant**, and being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He **humbled Himself** by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

Just as Jesus did, we must empty ourselves out and become a servant to others. We have been given incredible power from God to do His work, but we do not consider ourselves as anything special. We must be diligent to remain humble, but yet we must walk confidently in authority. Those who run the church must know who they are in Christ, and be able to walk boldly in this. Being an elder is so much more than having a key to the building or making decisions for the church. Being an elder is an incredible responsibility to spend time daily sitting at the feet of Jesus so that one can hear the voice of God, which will empower one to properly govern the church.

Philippians 1:3-11 – Paul's prayer for the Saints, Elders and Deacon's at Philippi.

"³ I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴ always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all... ⁶ For I am confident of this very thing, that **He who began a good work in you will perfect it** until the day of Christ Jesus... ⁹ And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be **sincere and blameless** until the day of Christ; ¹¹ having been filled with the **fruit of righteousness** which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."

Luckily, we do not have to rely on our own strength to be “blameless.” Our righteousness is but filthy rags. We are made holy through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Though the call to be an elder can seem like an overwhelming call, God will see it through to completion. He knew our weaknesses when he called our name. The Lord is not surprised by anything. No elder or deacon is perfect. When we see weakness and mistakes in others, we must give grace and compassion. Most importantly, we need to lift up our leaders in intercession!

*The connected Excel Document tells all of us to be **blameless**. How do we become blameless?

Philipp. 2:12-18 : "So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure. ¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or disputing; ¹⁵ so that you will prove yourselves to be **blameless and innocent**, children of God **above reproach** in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not **run in vain nor toil in vain**. ¹⁷ But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. ¹⁸ You too, *I urge you*, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.

A Servants Heart

* The mother of 2 sons, wants her sons to sit at the right hand of God. Jesus says, "you know not what you ask..."

Matthew 20:24-28 ²⁴ And hearing *this*, the ten became indignant with the two brothers. ²⁵ But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and *their* great men exercise authority over them. ²⁶ It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; ²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

The Kingdom of God is an upside-down kingdom. Those who are wealthy and famous in this life have already received the fullness of their reward here on the earth. If they do not have a real relationship with Jesus Christ, they will die and go to Hell for eternity. Many here on the earth who may be poor financially or unknown to anyone but their family, may very well end up being the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.

God does not judge us by earthly standards, but by the standards of His everlasting kingdom. There is an even higher standard for those who teach, preach or run the church. Elders have a heavy responsibility to carry. But when we live by these Kingdom standards we will be filled with peace, love, joy and fulfillment.

Jesus Washes Our Feet

John 13:2-16 - Before the Feast of Passover, Jesus knew it was time to be betrayed by Judas and crucified. "...² During supper, (He) got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself.⁵ Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded....⁸ Peter said to Him, "**Never shall You wash my feet!**" Jesus answered him, "**If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.**"⁹ Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, *then wash* not only my feet, but also my hands and my head."....¹² So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined *at the table* again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?¹³ You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am.¹⁴ If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, **you also ought to wash one another's feet.**¹⁵ For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.¹⁶ Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor *is* one who is sent greater than the one who sent him."

We have Jesus as the ultimate example of an Elder. Though an Elder has substantial power in the church and can sometimes be a public figure, the main call of the Elder is to serve the people. When looking for an elder, we have a very clear picture of how to choose someone to fulfill this structure and authority position within the church. We also can see what expectations we already have of the elders we already have in place. But we must give grace and compassion to those who may be struggling or just having a bad day. Above all we must respect and honor our elders, giving double honor to those who labor in prayer and in the word.

{Scripture in this document is taken from the NASB}