

## ELDERS #2: NT Designations of Elders

### INTRODUCTION:

1. Three Greek terms translated into 6 terms in the English NT.
  - (a) Elder or Presbyter, Bishop or Overseer, Pastor or Shepherd
2. Each of these terms describes in some way the man and his work. For example, gospel preacher not only says who or what I am, but also what I do.

### DISCUSSION:

#### I. Elder / Presbyter (Presbuteros)

A. An adjective of comparison – the older of the two.

**Luke 15:25** Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing.

**Acts 2:17** And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

**1 Timothy 5:1-2** Rebuke not an elder, but intreat *him* as a father; *and* the younger men as brethren; 2 The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.

B. It is used 4 ways in the NT.

i. Older man with reference to age, **1 Tim. 5:1-2**

ii. Leaders of Israel

**Matthew 15:2** Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread

iii. Most often use to refer to the office of elder in the local church.

**James 5:14** Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

iv. The 24 elders around the throne of God in **Rev. 4:9-10**.

C. Summary: A technical term denoting the office, does not describe function, but rather is descriptive.

## **II. Bishop / Overseer (Epikopos)**

A. Literally “overseer”.

i. In the Septuagint it is translated “watchman”.

**Ezekiel 3:17** Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

ii. Oversees and superintends the affairs of the local congregation. The right things done, the right way by the right persons.

B. A function to be accomplished

**Hebrews 13:17** Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

C. Their authority is not legislative, but rather practical in the carrying out of the work of the Lord.

### III. **Pastor / shepherd (poiman)**

A. One who keeps sheep, ie Christ, **Psa 23**

**1 Peter 2:25** For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

B. It is definitive of the work of Elders, **1 Peter 5:1-3**.

C. A two-fold responsibility: Lead and feed.

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. The various terms help us to understand the nature of the men to occupy the office and their work.
2. This also helps us understand our responsibility, cf. **Heb. 13:17**
3. Continue to study and pray: **1 Tim. 3:1-7**, **Titus 1:5-11**, **1 Peter 5:1-4**.