

# New Testament Shepherds

# I. Unorganized Local Churches Redefines N.T. Elders

## Assertions

“He shepherds sheep who are in proximity to him” ... “The phrase ‘among you’ in 1 Peter 5 points to the sheep being in their proximity so as to be overseen, watched, and served. After all, they live in the same community. ...the language does not require the formation of an institution to which the sheep may come for feeding as when people ‘go to church’.”

- Why not say ‘flock’?
- Hb.10:25

## Straw man

“Do we honestly think that sheep require a good weekly meal and one mid-week snack? Such a spiritual condition is close to a Jewish concentration camp during Nazi persecution.”

- Straw man. Who believes sheep should exist on such meager rations?
- If prisoner had hidden food, should he not eat it? 1 Pt.2:2

## Wishful thinking

“...The local church is a reference to saints in that city rather to a local organization meeting at a particular place. Again, this does not necessarily mean that they never gathered unless it was a city-wide gathering of all Christians. Instead, it merely, represents the called out individuals in one city (singular).”

“The church in Jerusalem was simply the saints living at Jerusalem.”

- Why call it a body? 1 Co.12:14, 19, 26
- 1 Co.12:27 – not ‘disconnected parts’

# Prejudice

“There is nothing in Acts 9:26 that suggests Paul requesting to be a member of the church in Jerusalem as if the church was an organization to which you must submit an application for membership and considered at the review board”

- Why prejudice?
- Was Paul requesting permission merely to live in Jerusalem?
- 1 Co.12, members
- Ac.20:28-32

## Question (1/2)

“One does not place membership in the body any more than our hand places membership in our human body.” “We are questioning whether a governing body should exist at all.”

- Tell Luke, Paul, Spirit: Ac.9:26 – to begin an association with someone... – to join ...join oneself to...become a part of –L-N.
- Ac.5:13 (cf. 5:36); 10:28.
- Ac.9:28, *was with them* (received into their fellowship . . . went in and out...1:21).

## Question (2/2)

“One does not place membership in the body any more than our hand places membership in our human body.” “We are questioning whether a governing body should exist at all.”

- 1 Co.12:27, *you are the body of Christ...* – a collectivity of members acting together.
- Ep.4:16, body, joined, knit together...

Car

Book

House

Chain

Body

- 1 Co.5:1-2 . . . 6-7

I. Unorganized Local Churches Redefines Elders

II. Local Churches  
(Assemblies, Congregations)

# Every position has consequences

THD → Direct operation of Holy Spirit

Faith alone → no repentance / baptism

Church ≠ collective → no elders; no first day of week assembly; no treasury, etc.

# “Church” (1/4)

- [Call out] assembly – of a specific Christian group assembly, gathering ordinarily involving worship and discussion of matters of concern to the community; Mt 18:17...*when you come together as an assembly* 1 Cor 11:18... *in each individual congregation or assembly* Ac 14:23 – BDAG, 303f.

## “Church” (2/4)

- prop. *a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place; an assembly*; so used
  1. among the Greeks [Ac.19:39];
  2. in the Sept. often equiv. to קָהָל, *the assembly of the Israelites*.
  3. in the Christian sense,

## “Church” (3/4)

3. in the Christian sense,
  - a. *an assembly of Christians gathered for worship*: in the religious meeting, 1 Co. 14:19, 35...
  - b. *a company of Christians*, or of those who, hoping for eternal salvation through Jesus Christ, observe their own religious rites, hold their own religious meetings, and manage their own affairs according to regulations prescribed for the body for order's sake.

## “Church” (4/4)

3. in the Christian sense,

aa. those who anywhere, in city or village,  
constitute such a company and are  
united into one body: Acts 5:11; 8:3;

1 Co.4:17; 6:4; Phil.4:15; 3 Jn. 6 –Th. 195f

I. Unorganized Local Churches Redefines Elders

II. Local Churches (Assemblies, Congregations)

**III. Authority And  
Function Of Elders**

## Acts 14:23

- Appointed – lit., ‘stretch forth the hands’ ... appointment of elders –Vine.
- We cannot ‘appoint’ someone to become an ‘older / elder’ man.

“Observe (1) that elders were not appointed as soon as the churches were planted; time must be taken so as to know what men were fitted for the office; (2) that elders were not appointed to preside over a district, but in every church; (3) that there was a plurality”

– B. W. Johnson

## Acts 15:4...

4: the church and the apostles and the elders

6: apostles and elders gathered to consider the matter

22: apostles, elders, church wrote...

- Today, same thing happens: Ep.4:11

# Acts 20:17...28

17: elders of the church

28: **first** take heed to themselves...

**second**, to all the flock 'in which' or 'among which' Spirit made you overseers. One reason: v.29

If flock is threatened, shepherds protect it, Jn.10.

**third**, to shepherd

Watch

Feed

Protect

Tend

## Eph.4:11

Pastors – one who herds sheep, *shepherd*,  
*sheep-herder* – BDAG

Verb – 1 Pt.5:2, to act as a shepherd – Vine

# 1 Tim.3:1

Bishop / overseer – religious role involving both service and leadership – L-N.

Verb – 1 Pt.5:2, to exercise the oversight, to visit, care for – Vine.

1. RULE: 1 Tim.3:5; 5:17; 1 Th.5:12 –

‘labor among you ... and are over you in the Lord’: exercise a position of leadership, *rule, direct, be at the head (of)* – BDAG. To preside, rule – Vine.

# 1 Tim.3:1

Bishop / overseer – religious role involving both service and leadership – L-N.

Verb – 1 Pt.5:2, to exercise the oversight, to visit, care for – Vine.

1. RULE: 1 Tim.3:5; 5:17; 1 Th.5:12 –

2. OBEY: Hb.13:17

Obey, follow – BDAG. Obey – L-N.

Acts 5:39, 'they yielded to him' - Vine.

This is not rule only by example.

# 1 Tim.3:1

Bishop / overseer – religious role involving both service and leadership – L-N.

Verb – 1 Pt.5:2, to exercise the oversight, to visit, care for – Vine.

1. RULE: 1 Tim.3:5; 5:17; 1 Th.5:12 –

2. OBEY: Hb.13:17

3. SUBMIT: Hb.13:17

Yield to someone's authority, *give way*, *submit* – BDAG. Submit to orders or directives of someone; ref. Tit.2:9 – L-N.

I. Unorganized Local Churches Redefines Elders

II. Local Churches (Assemblies, Congregations)

III. Authority And Function Of Elders

IV. What About Mt.20?

## Mt.20

20-21, sit on right / left hand in kingdom  
(Mk.10:37)

22, Cup?

23, Cup: yes . . . Sit: no.

24, others are indignant

# Mt.20

## 25-26a, Gentile rulers

1. Lord it over, master

2. Exercise authority over, reign over

>Nu.21:24, Israel **defeated** Sihon...

>Ac.19:16, demons **overpowered** Jews...

>1 Pt.5:3, elders cannot **lord it over** . . .

## Mt.20

Apostles must not seek . . .

1. Preeminence / bullying, 3 Jn.9-10
2. Legislative authority (as kings, sons);  
God's word is standard...
3. Worldly motives (as selfish gain, 1 Pt. 5:2)

## Mt.20

25-26a, Gentile rulers

1. Lord it over, master
2. Exercise authority over, reign over
  - >Nu.21:24, Israel **defeated** Sihon...
  - >Ac.19:16, demons **overpowered** Jews...
  - >1 Pt.5:3, elders cannot **lord it over** . . .

26b-27, different standard.

28: NOT . . . BUT: follow example of Jesus

# Conclusion

1. Mt.20 condemns capricious, insensitive rule (such as Ahab and Jezebel).
2. Mt.20 does not contradict other passages that authorize / command elders to rule and congregation to obey / submit.
3. Mt.20 speaks of apostles. 2 Co.1:23-24. Phm.8-9.

Proper use of authority:  
2 Co.10:8-9; 13:10