

The Tanner St Church of Christ meets each Lord's Day beginning with Bible classes at **9:30 AM**. We continue with our worship at **10:20 AM** and again at **5:00 PM**. We also meet each Wednesday evening at **7:00 PM** for Bible study and worship. Our meeting place is located about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from I30 at 1512 Tanner St in Malvern, AR.

If you have questions about what we believe and teach, please visit our website, **TannerSt.com** to listen to sermons or read past articles from our bulletin. Or you can contact us and we will be glad to find a convenient time to study with you.

Phone: (501) 332-8806 Email: preacher@tannerst.com

Needed News

Phyllis Jackson is dealing with continual knee pain. She is wearing a brace and staying off of it as much as she can.

Chris Wright is recuperating from his recent surgery. He has an appointment the 29th to determine what they will do about the remaining bits of kidney stone.

Joyce Venable continues to deal with aches and pains made worse by recent weather conditions.

Paula Laubach has had continued issues with dizziness this past week.

Thelma Echols has been suffering from back pain recently. The **Simpson** family is out of town this weekend.

Worshipping together should benefit each of us. Our songs are to be a means of not only giving praise and honor to God, also a method to uplift each one present with sound teaching from God's Word. Our prayers should provide opportunity for brethren to demonstrate concern for both God's work and the well being of one another. The fellowship together with our Lord in the Supper offers a time to become closer to one another as we remember the sacrifice made on our behalf. Eagerly seek to come together.

Seeking His Righteousness

"...seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.." Matthew 6:33

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Elders In The Church Of The Lord

Clem Thurman

God specially selected Paul and Barnabas to go among the Gentiles to preach Christ, and even directed where they were to go (Acts 13:1-4). When they were completing their tour of preaching, the Scriptures tell us that on their return they visited the churches that had been begun, "Confirming the souls of the disciples...And appointed for them elders in every church" (Acts 14:22-23). The apostle Paul wrote to Titus later, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city" (Titus 1:5). That was, and is, God's plan for the church: "Elders in every church."

Various religious groups use such terms as "elders, pastors, bishops, deacons, presbyters, priests," etc. with regard to various governing bodies in the religious world. Many of these terms are rooted in the Bible, but the denominational use of them is not. When we speak of elders, we are discussing those who meet the qualifications that are listed in 1Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-11. And please note that the Lord's plan is, "Elders in every church" (Acts 14:23). That is plural. And there is no authority in Scripture for having one elder (or pastor, or bishop) over one church or over a number of churches. When we speak of elders, we are speaking of a group of men in a local church (1Peter 5:2), having the qualities of character and life listed in 1Timothy 3 and Titus 1, and selected by the

congregation in which they serve.

The Terms Used For These Church Leaders: The Scriptures use three distinct terms to apply to elders of the church, each with its own unique connotation. The term "**ELDER**" is from the Greek "presbuteros" and simply means "an older man." But its use in the Scripture is rooted in God's governing of Israel. They had "seventy elders" selected during the time of Moses, who were charged with making various decisions about the nation's government (Numbers 11:25, etc.). The husband of the "worthy woman" was one of the elders of the city (Proverbs 31:23), who had the responsibility of governing the city. In the time of Jesus, "the chief priests and the elders" were the ones who decided that Jesus should die and then took Him before Pilate for the sentencing (Matthew 27:20,41). Peter and John were arrested and tried before a court of "rulers and elders and scribes" of the Jews (Acts 4:5). It is no accident that God chose the term "elders" to apply to those who were to make decisions in the local congregation of believers.

The apostle Paul called to him the "elders" of the church in Ephesus, and told them they were "bishops" in the church (Acts 20:17,28). These two terms, "elders and "bishops", are also used interchangeably in 1Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-11. The term "**BISHOP**" is from the Greek "episkopon" which means "overseer." The idea of this word is that of "one who guards, protects, cares for" (Thayer's Lexicon). The apostle Peter told elders to "take the oversight" of the church, which parallels what is stated in Hebrews 13:17, "They watch in behalf of your souls." These men as bishops are "overseeing" or watching over the church, protecting members against all spiritual dangers. They are particularly charged to guard against "wolves in sheep's clothing" (Matthew 7:15) whose

false teaching would subvert the faith of some: "Whose mouths must be stopped" (Titus 1:9-11). Bishops must tend to, and care for, the souls entrusted to them.

The third term used in Scripture for an elder is "**SHEPHERD**" which is from the Greek word "poimeen" and is also translated as "pastor." This word is used with regard to the elders in Ephesians 4:11; 1Peter 5:2, etc. Jesus refers to Himself as "the good shepherd" and says, "The good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep...I know mine own, and mine own know me" (John 10:11-14). The psalmist wrote, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside still waters; he restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness" (Psalm 23:1-3). This tells us much of the work of elders-shepherds. They tend to the spiritual needs of the flock of God: providing food, protection and guidance. They must know the flock, and the members are urged, "Know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work's sake" (1Thessalonians 5:12-13).

Peter writes, "The elders I exhort...Tend the flock of God which among you, exercising the oversight" (1Peter 5:1-2). The word for "tend" (or "feed" in KJV) is the Greek "poimanate," which is a verb form of "shepherd." Note that all three of our terms are in this one passage. "Elder" is from "presbuteros" (v. 1), "oversight" is from "episkopon" (v. 2) and "tend" is from "poimeen" (v.2). The elders is a bishop is a shepherd. All three terms are applied to the same group of men, without distinction among them. Whoever is an elder is a bishop, and every shepherd of the Lord's church is an elder.

Gospel Minutes - January 10, 1986

(This article will be continued in next week's bulletin. DLH)