

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 ¾ 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.

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Needed News

Phyllis Jackson is still dealing with continual knee pain. She has surgery scheduled in a couple weeks.

Chris Wright will return to work later this week. He will have other procedures done at a later date.

Joyce Venable has been suffering with a fever and sore throat this week.

Thelma Echols is still suffering from back pain from time to time.

Ricky Ragsdale is doing very well with his new physical therapy.

The right talk is no substitute for the right walk!

When you get tired talking to your friend about God--, talk to God about your friend.

Your temper may get you into trouble, but it is your pride that keeps you there.

Some people worry more about where they will spend a two weeks' vacation than where they will spend eternity.

Opportunity may knock once, but temptation bangs on your front door forever.

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

Lead -- "Elders that rule well": Elders are "rulers" in the church, but their rule is not that of authoritarian-type rule. They rule by the fact that they are leaders whom the people are willing to follow. Paul wrote, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor" (1Timothy 5:17). Again we read, "Remember them that rule over you...Obey them that have the rule over you" (Hebrews 13:7,17). The marginal reading has instead of "rulers" either "guides" or "leaders." The elders' rule is not like that of a king, but like that of a loving, caring "elder brother." The warning is given to them "Exercising the oversight...not lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves examples to the flock" (1Peter 5:2-3). As elders they are to lead people in the same way a shepherd leads sheep -- not by trying to drive them, but setting the pattern of the right path to take. Much of the elder's leadership results from his example of faith, purity and dedication.

The apostle writes, "Know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves" (1Thessalonians 5:12-13). Then he says to the elders, "And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the fainthearted, support the weak, be longsuffering toward all" (v. 14). To do this work, it is vital that an elder be "able to teach" (1Timothy 3:2). And elders must care enough to warn, encourage and support those in the church who need help at various problem-times in their lives.

Guard -- "They watch for your souls": I have always had the highest respect for the work of brain surgeons, judges,

policemen and such like. They must make decisions, and take action, that vitally affects people's lives. But the work of elders is even more serious, for their work affects souls! "Obey them that have the rule over you...they watch in behalf of your souls" (Hebrews 13:17). Jesus showed us the comparative value of the physical person and the soul: "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul...For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 10:28; 16:24).

The shepherd leads his sheep to those areas where there is grass, water and protection (Psalm 23:1-6). He guards them against predators, diseases, and all other enemies. So elders, as the Lord's shepherds over His people, watch over the Lord's people. Paul warned that elders must, "Hold to the faithful word...able to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers. for there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers...whose mouths must be stopped" (Titus 1:9-11). Because they care for the sheep, the shepherds take all necessary action to "watch for their souls."

Nurture -- "Feed the Church of the Lord": Christians are to "long for the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1Peter 2:2). The elders, as shepherds, are to "feed the church of the Lord" (Acts 20:28), or "tend the flock of God" (1Peter 5:2). It is the responsibility of the elders to see that members of the body of Christ are properly fed -- that is, with the word of God. At various times, people need different kinds of physical nourishment, because physical needs change from time to time. So it is in the spiritual realm. Jesus, "the master teacher," always used the teaching that applied best to the people who were present, depending on their present need. For those who mourned a death, He had one type of lesson; but for impenitent sinners, He had a different one!

Elders, in order to provide the nourishment which the members need in the spiritual realm, must know their weaknesses and strengths, their problems and triumphs. Paul exhorts elders, "Admonish the disorderly, encourage the

fainthearted, support the weak, be long-suffering toward all" (1Thessalonians 5:14). When people are "disorderly" (or "unruly") they are literally "out of step" and need to be warned, or admonished. Others may be timid, and they just need to be encouraged to do what they have learned. Still others may be weak in knowledge, weak in faith, weak in commitment: they need the support and help of the elders to become strong. And the command that undergirds all three of these is: "Be long-suffering toward all." Elders cannot be impatient, for spiritual growth and development take time and all people will not progress at the rate we would like to see.

Jesus answered the question about the great commandment with these words: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God...A second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30). When the lawyer questioned, "Who is my neighbor? Jesus answered with the story of "the good Samaritan" (Luke 10:30-37). Churches of Galatia were told, "As ye have opportunity, work that which is good toward all men, especially toward them that are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). We must care about others, and strive to help them with whatever problems they may have. Jesus did. And elders must lead us as we practice the same thing.

The one passage, I think, that really shows elders what they should be is one that tells about "the good shepherd," Jesus Christ. The people followed after Him. to see His miracles and hear His teaching: "When he saw the multitude, he was moved with compassion for them because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd" (Matthew 9:36). Jesus cared. He felt for the people. He suffered with them. They were without direction in their lives, and He felt that lostness. It is that quality that elders must have, if they would be the kind of shepherds God wants for His people. May God give us such elders, men who care for His people and really watch for souls. And may we all cooperate and show our appreciation for such. "That they may do this with joy, and not with grief" (Hebrews 13:17).