

Sunday, November 30, 2008
Living Hope EFC

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Letter to a young pastor on conduct in the church!
The importance of having the right leaders.
1 Timothy

Q: Where will Living Hope be 10 years from now?

- What will be our distinguishing characteristics? Mission?
- What will be our values, our purpose, our ministries?

[1 Timothy is an important book in the N.T. in answering these Q's!](#)

3:14-15. God has given the church instruction on how the church is to conduct itself (function)!

“Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know *how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household*, which is the church of the living God, ***the pillar and foundation of the truth.***”

Q: WHY? > **1:5-7** SOME will wander away from faith & purity!

- **1:19** SOME, due to bad conscience, will shipwreck their faith!
- **4:1** SOME will listen to deceiving spirits & abandon the faith!
- **6:10** SOME by φιλαργυρια (love for \$) will wander from faith!
- **6:21** SOME listening to “false knowledge,” wander from faith!

Q: Will you be one of these?

- Paul, now with some 30 years of ministry experience in planting churches, knows that all who name the name of Christ will not persevere in their faith! He is warning Timothy, the pastor at Ephesus, that certain “conduct” is necessary if the church is to carry out her mission.

Therefore Paul exhorts Timothy, pastor of the church in Ephesus:

- **1:3**, “Command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer.”
- **1:18-19**, “Fight the good fight, 19holding on to faith and a good conscience.”
- **4:6**, “If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus.”
- **4:11-16**; “Command and teach these things. 12Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. 13Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching...15Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. 16Watch your life and doctrine closely.”
- **6:11-12**, “But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. 12Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called.”
- **6:20**, “Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, 21which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith.”

POINT: Paul knows that the church is the one entity on earth entrusted as “**the pillar and foundation of the truth,**” and some – even in the church - will distort this truth and teach “false knowledge!” Timothy must be on his guard. And Paul takes one whole chapter to focus on the important role of “leadership” in keeping the church on track.

NOTE: [The Church – is different from all other organizations.](#)

- **IT IS the “pillar” & “foundation” of truth!**
- Here is insight into its primary purpose & stewardship.
- There is “absolute” truth & the church has it in God's Word!
- Central to keeping on track is the church's LEADERSHIP!

ILLUS: Americas First Colleges

88 or the first 100 colleges founded in America were organized to promote the Gospel & the claims of Jesus Christ.

- Every college founded in the colonies prior to the Revolution- ary War, except the U. of Penn, was established by some branch of the Church.
- The first college, **Harvard**, was established for “Christ & the Church.” Its *Rules & Precepts* adopted in 1646 read: (1) Every one shall consider the main end of his life & studies to know God & J.C. which is eternal life.’ - Lee Tan # 246, 250
- 52% of the 17th century grads became ministers!

Read: 3:1-13. The kind of leadership will determine our future.

In contrast to worldly standards for leadership: forcefulness, shrewdness, wealth, entrepreneurs, the loudest, the best looking, “who-you-know,” the most gifted, in the Church Christlike character is the standard for leadership.

- The reason churches go astray – is due to bad leadership, or to those in the church who will not let the leaders lead.

JOKE: *Guy jumping out of a plane.*

Pulled ripcord on his parachute; nothing happened. Pulled the emergency chord, nothing. The ground is quickly approaching.

He sees another guy coming up toward him. “Hey, do you know anything about parachutes?” Answer: “No; do you know

anything about gas ovens?” **POINT:** The time to find out about parachutes/ ovens/ leadership in the church = before you jump!

God tells us who, what, how of leadership for HIS Church

1. **Acts 20:17,25-32. Overview: who are leaders & what they do.**

(1) Note the nature of the church. It is “bought with blood.”

- The church **is not** a business, a corporation, or a building.
- **The church is God's people**, supernaturally chosen, over which J.C. is the Head, & in which the H.S. is the divine Agent.

(2) Identification of Leaders: (Elders, overseers, shepherds).

- All three terms refer to the same office/ person.
- **Both in Acts 20, and 1 Peter 5:1 & 2 the same three words are used of the same office, interchangeably. WHY 3 titles?**

(3) The word “elder” (20:17) has its origin in O.T. Jewish structure

- Ex. 3:16,18; 12:21 -They were responsible for leading the nation.
- Ex.19:7- For giving God’s word out. Num.11:16-17 Bearing burden

(4) This concept of leadership, teaching God’s Word comes to NT

- “Elder” is used 55 times to refer to leaders in the N.T.
- Leaders of Israel: Mt.15:2; 16:21; 26:3
- Leaders in the Church > **Acts 11:30 > 14:23 > 15:6.**
- The office of “*elder*” naturally carried over from the O.T. first – to leaders of the nation Israel, then to the new form of God’s people.
- **WHY? Because the early church was mostly Jewish.** They would fully understand this concept of leadership.

(5) The word “overseer”(20:28) comes from the Roman world.

- “**Episkopos**.” is only used 7 times in the N.T. & comes later as the church begins to grow and Gentiles are brought into the church.
- It was a term used for those appointed by the Emperor to oversee a city or province. As Romans came into the church – the term **Episkopos would communicate the concept of leadership to them.**

(6) Poimen: (Shepherd) describes how elders function as leaders.

(1) Verb used 11 times; “rule, feed, shepherd.”

(2) Noun used 16 times, all but Eph.4:11 = “shepherds.”

POINT: Elders are appointed by God to lead & shepherd HIS Church.

2. Responsibilities of Leaders.

- (1) Protect from false teaching v.29-31; **1 Tim.**-False teachers!
- (2) Shepherd, feed; “able to teach,” 20:32.27; **1 Tim.3:2.**
- (3) Oversee, “rule, direct the affairs, manage,” 20:28; **I Tim.5:17, 3:5.**
- (4) Lead by example (20:33-35), **I Pet.5:3.**
- (5) Promote unity of the body (Eph.4:1-16).
- (6) Carry out discipline when necessary (Titus 1:10-13a).

3. Qualifications for Leaders: I Tim.3:1-7.

Different qualifications are required for different assignments in life.

- **Elders are to keep watch over the church’ mission & spiritual maturity. They must keep the Church on it’s Great Commission!**
- They must be men who have learned to walk with the Lord in their private life, and are committed to His mission.
- NOT supermen, but men supernaturally governed by God!

POINT: These are **supra-cultural directives**, given to the church for every age, which must be followed to grow Christ’s church in any culture and time. **They will work in China, Russia, Iraq & in Colorado.**

- **Ignore these – and Satan gains control of the church.**

ELDER: is a Bible-wide position of leadership for God’s people.

- It is not a form of leadership Paul made up.
- It is not a new invention, or a denominational preference.
- **It is the biblical description of leadership for God’s household.**
- It is a supra-cultural position to keep the Church on course.

Harry Truman once commented on the importance of polls & leadership with the following insight: "I wonder how far Moses would have gone if he'd taken a poll in Egypt? What would Jesus Christ have preached if he'd taken a poll in Israel? Where would the Reformations have gone if Martin Luther had taken a poll? It isn't the polls or public opinion of the moment that counts. It is right & wrong and leadership – men with fortitude, honesty, and a belief in the right – that makes epochs in the history of the world!" - Green, 215

Where will the church be 5 – 10 years from now?

The answer will be determined by the character and faithfulness of leadership in the church!