**What is the Biblical Role of a Pastor in the Church?**

**By Craig Bluemel**

The office of a pastor in the Christian church has been a role that has been accepted without question over the past 400+ years.  Since the days of John Calvin, church government has consisted of the pastor and the elders, who are elected representatives of the congregation.  This governmental structure is almost exclusively pyramid in nature with the pastor as the head and the elder board beneath him.  This is clearly in conflict with the teachings of the New Testament, as I will prove.  The Greek word for elder is “presbyteros”.  The literal meaning of the word refers to an older man, or an elder.  This meaning need not be applied merely to those who are elderly, as is seen in the apostle Paul ‘s letter to Timothy.  It is apparent Timothy was in a position of leadership, or oversight:

***2 Timothy 1:1, 2, 6****Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, my beloved son…I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.  (NAS)*

***2 Timothy  2:15****Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.  (NAS)*

***2 Timothy  4:1-5****I solemnly charge you…preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.  For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.  But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.  (NAS)*

Timothy even traveled with Paul on his apostolic journeys, alluding to a role as an apostle.  Yet in spite of his calling as an elder and leader, he was a younger man:

***1 Timothy 4:11-16****Prescribe and teach these things. Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.  Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching.  Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.  Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to all.  Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.  (NAS)*

So we see that an elder is not necessarily an older man, but his qualifications for this office must reflect his maturity and understanding of the word of God:

***1 Timothy 3:1-7****It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do.  An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money.  He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?); and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.  And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.  (NAS)*

The Greek work for pastor is “poimen”.  The literal meaning of the word poimen is shepherd.  English translations of the Bible only translate poimen as “pastor” only one time in the entire New Testament in Ephesians 4:11:

***Ephesians 4:11****And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers  (NAS)*

Here pastor is listed as one of the God appointed offices in the church, but it is plural “pastors” and rules of Greek grammar here demand that pastors and teachers here refer to one office.  So if we accurately translate poimen to be shepherds, and it is one office, more properly Ephesians 4:11 reads “shepherds as teachers.”

The Greek word poimen is translates as “shepherd” 17 times in the New Testament; below are its various uses:

*4 times it is used of literal shepherds caring for literal sheep;*

*8 times it refers to Jesus as the Great Shepherd of the church;*

*4 times it refers to leadership of true believers, as either true or false leaders;*

*1 time it is used of an office in the church.*

In all contexts, other than Ephesians 4:11, poimen is used **as shepherd** because God’s people are viewed as sheep of the flock.  It is obvious that the bias of contemporary Bible translators influenced their rendering of poimen as pastors in Ephesians 4:11; this bias dates back to John Calvin’s day when the non-biblical concept of pastoral leadership was created.  Scriptures other than Ephesians 4:11 where poimen is used:

***Luke 2:8****And in the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields, and keeping watch over their flock by night.  (NAS)*

***Luke 2:15****And it came about when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the*shepherds*began saying to one another, “Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.”  (NAS)*

***Luke 2:18****And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds.  (NAS)*

***Luke 2:20****And the shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.  (NAS)*

***Matt 9:36****And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a*shepherd*.  (NAS)*

***Matt 25:32****And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the*shepherd*separates the sheep from the goats; (NAS)*

***Matt 26:31****Then Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written, ‘I will strike down the*shepherd*, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered.’  (NAS)*

***Mark 6:34****And when He went ashore, He saw a great multitude, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a*shepherd*; and He began to teach them many things.  (NAS)*

***Mark 14:27****And Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away, because it is written, ‘I will strike down the*shepherd*, and the sheep shall be scattered.’ “ (NAS)*

***John 10:2****But he who enters by the door is a*shepherd*of the sheep.  (NAS)*

***John 10:11****I am the good*shepherd*; the good*shepherd*lays down His life for the sheep.  (NAS)*

***John 10:12****He who is a hireling, and not a*shepherd*, who is not the owner of the sheep, beholds the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flees, and the wolf snatches them, and scatters them.  (NAS)*

***John 10:14****I am the good shepherd; and I know My own, and My own know Me  (NAS)*

***John 10:16****And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock with one*shepherd*.  (NAS)*

***Heb 13:20****Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great*Shepherd*of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord (NAS)*

***1 Pet 2:25****For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the*Shepherd*and Guardian of your souls.  (NAS)*

Another Greek word derived directly from poimen is its verb form poimaino; poimaino is also used in the context of what a shepherd does when caring for the sheep.  Poimaino literally means, “to act as a shepherd,” and is used 11 times in the New Testament.  Poimaino is translated, “feed, “ 7 times and as, “rule,” 4 times in the King James Version. More accurate translations, (such as the New American Standard), translate the same word poimaino as “shepherd, tending, tends, and shepherding.”   Poimaino is a verb, whereas poimen is a noun and therefore poimaino shows **the function of a shepherd**.  Hence, this is why the King James translators mistranslate poimaino as, “to feed.” They make an assumption that feeding is the primary task of a shepherd, when in reality the shepherd leads the sheep to pasture, but has many more important duties.  One of the foremost functions that a true shepherd fulfills includes guarding them and bringing them into the sheepfold.

Since the office of shepherds as teachers, (i.e. - pastors/teachers), is only mentioned once, (in Ephesians 4:11), we must examine other scriptures where we see this office operating or being mentioned.  A close look at the context of where poimaino is used will help.  The following texts are quoted from the Concordant Literal New Testament:

*J****ohn 21:16****“Shepherd my sheep”*

Jesus gave this command to the apostle Peter.  It therefore proves that it is the biblical role of an apostle to shepherd God’s people.

***Acts 20:28****“Take heed to yourselves and to the entire flocklet, among which the holy spirit appointed you supervisors, to be shepherding the ecclesia of God...”*

In this context, Paul is addressing the elders (plural) at Ephesus.  It clearly shows that elders (plural) are those whom God has appointed to be shepherding and supervising the flock.

***I Cor 9:7****“Who is warring at any time supplying his own rations?  Who is planting a vineyard and not eating of its fruit?  Or who is tending a flock and not eating of the milk of the flock?”*

This context is showing that an apostle (Paul) was tending the flock and was worthy of financial support as a laborer for Jesus.

***I Peter 5:1-3****“The elders, then, among you I am entreating (who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a participant of the glory about to be revealed), Shepherd the flocklet of God among you, supervising, not of compulsion, but voluntarily, according to God; nor yet avariciously, but eagerly; nor yet as lording it over the allotments, but becoming models for the flocklet”*

I Peter 5:1-3 is a key passage because it demonstrates that an apostle (Peter) is also a fellow elder.  Second, that elders (plural) are to shepherd the flock of God as supervisors on a voluntary basis, not being overpowering, nor doing so out of greed, but being examples to the flock.  With regard to the office of shepherd (pastor) we can easily conclude that elders (plural), which included apostles, are the ones who fulfill this calling.  They rule as a group of supervisors under God’s direction, not as one man over an entire church.  Their leadership is by example, not putting overbearing demands upon God’s flock.  Any pastor claiming the church assembly is “his flock” needs to be rebuked in love.  The church is GOD’S FLOCK (Acts 20:28).

Now that we’ve determined that the “elders” fulfill the role of “pastors,” we will examine their roles as overseers and also as teachers (since the office is one of pastors/teachers).  After that, we will look at actual events in the Bible, mainly in the Acts of the Apostles, to see how the elders in the Church functioned.  The Greek word for overseer is episkopos.  This word means literally “a supervisor, an overseer”.  The word originates from two Greek words:

*“epi” a preposition meaning “upon or around”*

*“skopos” meaning “to look carefully, to consider”*

Taken together the meaning is “to carefully look upon”.  Hence, the role of an overseer in the church is to carefully consider or look upon the condition of the flock of God even as a true shepherd would his sheep.  This meaning implies more than merely feeding and watering the sheep, but everything that would insure their health, well being, and safety.   Having derived an accurate concept of the word oversight, we can see the correlation of the overseer’s role as a “teacher”.  In I Corinthians 12:28 we read:

***1 Corinthians 12:28****And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.  (NAS)*

Ephesians 4:11 more fully explains this verse by calling them “shepherd/teachers”.  Other verses also show that the shepherd takes care of the church of God through teaching:

***1 Timothy 3:1-2****It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do.  An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable,****able to teach****(NAS)*

***Titus 1:7, 9****For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward . . . holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching,****that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict****.  (NAS)*

Exhorting God’s flock in sound doctrine is how the people are fed nourishment from the Word, but an overseer must also be able to protect the sheep from ravenous wolves who appear in sheep’s clothing, or from deceivers, rebellious men and empty talkers who upset whole families and draw away disciples after themselves:

***Titus 1:7-11****For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.  For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain.  (NAS)*

***Acts 20:28-31****"Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.  "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.  "Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.  (NAS)*

***2 Timothy 2:2****And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. (NAS)*

***1 Timothy 6:2-3****And let those who have believers as their masters not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but let them serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these  principles.  If anyone advocates a different doctrine, and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness  (NAS)*

***1 Timothy 4:6-11****In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.  But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.  It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance.  For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.  Prescribe and teach these things.  (NAS)*

***1 Timothy 1:3-5****As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus, in order that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith.  (NAS)*

***1 Cor 4:16-17****I exhort you therefore, be imitators of me.  For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church.  (NAS)*

At this point in our study we are ready to review the actual events recorded in the Bible that give us an overview of the operation of shepherds in the church. This overview will include a look at apostles (who have been shown to be fellow elders) and prophets (another office in the church) and evangelists. Of course the primary focus will be to see how the shepherds of God’s flock work within their calling.

The following is a verse-by-verse commentary of scriptures related to the topic:

***Acts 11:30****“And this they did, sending it in charge (Greek - by the hand of) of Barnabas and Saul to the elders”*

Two men, Barnabas and Saul (i.e. Paul), were given charge of money and delivered it to the elders (plural). This shows group leadership was in charge of the finances.

***Acts 14:23****“And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the lord in whom they had believed.*

First, both Paul and Barnabas did the appointing of elders; a group effort. Only plural pronouns such as they are used.  Second, elders (plural) were “appointed and ordained” (Amplified Bible) in every church.  In every church, they commended them.   Group leadership is God’s way.

***Acts 15:2****“...the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them, should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.”*

First - several men were sent to discuss the matter of circumcision; apostles, elders and other men.  Doctrine was discussed and decided by a coalition of believers. Second - a group of leaders from one church were sent to the “apostles and elders” of another church to discuss doctrinal beliefs affecting the entire church.  It is clear that the first century believers recognized group leadership. What you don’t see is the modern method of one pastor meeting with another past of a church.

***Acts 15:3****“Therefore being sent on their way by the church...”*

Again, a group is being sent, and sent on behalf of the entire church!

***Acts 15:4****“And when they arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them.”*

First - the church at Jerusalem had it’s own apostles and elders, just like the church in Antioch. It doesn’t say they reported to the pastor at Jerusalem; rather a group of leaders from one assembly met with a group of leaders from another.

***Acts 15:7, 12, 13****(selected quotes) “And after there was much debate Peter stood up and said... And all thee multitude kept silent, and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they were relating... and after they had stopped speaking, James answered...”*

Notice here that a total of four men are on record as publicly speaking when the church was debating a doctrinal issue. The early church resolved matters with group leadership.

***Acts 15:6****“And the apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter.”*

This is a key verse because it involves a doctrinal dispute and dissention within the church. This verse plainly tells us that the leaders in the church were groups of men:  two groups of men from two different churches.

***Acts 15:19****“Therefore it is my judgment (Amplified: opinion) that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles.”*

The point in this verse is that the apostle James states his opinion appealing to the entire group of men.

***Acts 15:22****“Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas*

Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren.”

***Acts 15:24****“...we have heard that some of our number to whom we gave no instruction...”*

***Acts 15:25****“it seemed good to us, having become of one mind, to select men to send to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul.”*

***Acts 15:27****“therefore we have sent Judas and Silas...”*

***Acts 15:28****“For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay no greater burden upon you...”*

***Acts 15:30-31****“So, when they were sent away, they went down to Antioch; and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. And when they had read it, the rejoiced because of its encouragement.”*

This series of verses reinforces the concept of group leadership under the direction of the Holy Spirit. The elders and apostles were the recognized oversight, but the entire church was involved in solving its problems. How much different this method is than our modern day pastors who have the weight of such conflicts on their shoulders alone. Even though Paul was the chiefest among apostles, he too was sent. The final decision in this conflict was made by “the apostles and the brethren who are elders” (see Acts 15:23), not by a lone pastor or a board of elders under pastoral control.

In Acts 15 we see decision for the guidance of church teaching done on a collective basis after they became of “one mind” having done what seemed to the Holy Spirit and themselves. Effective group leadership can only come through much prayer and dependence on God, along with discussing matters openly.

***Acts 16:4****“Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees, which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe.”*

Here again we see further evidence of defined church leadership.  In this context Paul and Timothy are delivering to various assemblies of believers the decisions reached by the elders.  Not only are the elders (including apostles) shepherding the church by producing pure doctrine, but they are also the ones who God uses to bring the message. There is consistent use of plural pronouns, showing more than one man in the leadership and decision making process.

***Acts 20:17****“And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church.”*

***Acts 20:18****“And when they (the elders) had come to him (the apostle Paul) he said to them.”*

***Acts 20:28****(Wuest’s Expanded Translation)  “Be constantly maintaining a careful watch over yourselves with view to guarding yourselves, also do the same with respect to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit appointed you as spiritual overseers, shepherding the church of God.”*

***Acts 20:29-31****“As for myself, I know positively that after my departure (from you now) there shall enter in among you (among you elders) rapacious wolves, not sparing the flock. And from among yourselves there shall arise men mouthing things which have been distorted and corrupted for the purpose of drawing away disciples after themselves. Therefore, be exercising the most punctilious care (i.e. observing carefully the proper forms of conduct, manners, dress, etc), remembering that for three years, night and day, I did not cease admonishing each one with tears.”*

What is Paul saying to the elders in Acts 20?  There are five important points to consider:

Notice in Acts 20:17, Paul calls the elders (plural) to himself from a particular church (Ephesus) where he, as an apostle, had founded a work. He gives them final admonitions before he departs permanently from them. Paul’s warning is to the entire group of men. In verse 28 Paul tells the elders to maintain a careful watch over themselves as a group of leaders.  Later in Acts 20:31 he tells them to carefully observe one another’s conduct, mannerisms, etc. This shows that the shepherds of God’s people are subject and accountable to one another in their leadership positions.  More than one shepherd is needed to prevent deception from creeping in.  In Acts 20:28 Paul tells them to take heed to themselves (i.e. he tells the elders to look after their fellow elders) by making a distinction between the shepherds and the sheep saying, “...also do the same with respect to all the flock”.  Again, group leadership is seen along with group accountability.

Acts 20:29-30 tells us the reason there needs to be group leadership and what type of deception the shepherds can open up to. Paul warns the elder/shepherds that after his departure rapacious wolves would come in among them. Paul’s exhortation became even more sobering when he said prophetically that these deceivers would, “...from among your own selves...arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.”  History is replete with examples of good men of God who have fallen prey to the devil’s lies because they were accountable to no one, because the church leadership was structure to facilitate this kind of deception. It has been said that power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. We find this to be the case more often than most would like to admit.

A careful look at the meaning of some words and phrases in this important passage of scripture would be helpful in seeing God’s wisdom in reworking our churches current pyramid structure of authority with a lone pastor at the top of the heap to an even distribution of the leadership amongst fellow shepherds under the direction of the Holy Spirit. God says elders can become “rapacious wolves.”  Rapacious means given to seizing what one wants; excessively grasping; living on prey as savage wolves. Is it any wonder with this type of potential deception amongst church leadership that the apostle Paul exhorts the elder/shepherds to observe on another’s conduct; to see if there are fellow elders who would prey upon their own sheep?

Another deception elders were to look out for amongst themselves was the men who spoke distorted and corrupted things. (See Wuest’s Expanded translation for Acts 20:30.) “Distort” means to twist aside mentally or morally; to wrest from the true meaning; to pervert.  We see here how elders who were also the teachers would twist the scriptures to their own destruction, changing the true meaning of scripture to pervert the morals or thinking of the flock.  The word, “corrupted,” literally means, “to taint; to change from good to bad; to debase; to draw aside from what is right and proper; to pervert; to falsify as a text.”  Again, this is a clear, deliberate perversion of God’s word.  It is clear from the text that certain elder/shepherds that would pervert, twist and corrupt the gospel, “for the purpose of drawing away disciples after themselves.”  They prey upon sheep who are not discerning.  They do so by changing the true meaning of the Word of God because of greed and lust for power, prestige, sex, etc.  They taint the word, changing things from good to bad, or from that which is right and proper to that which is improper.

***The shepherds*** ***must be a plurality to prevent the aforementioned abuses from destroying the church***.  Today’s church with its one-man leadership not only fails to meet the needs of the individual believer who can never spend quality time with overloaded pastors, but it also puts those pastors in a position of vulnerability to demonic deception. In summary, two things can be observed happening among church leaders:

1.      Rapacious wolves would “enter in” among them; it implies the deception occurs after the church has become established.

2.      The apostle Paul’s exhortation to the elders of the Ephesus church was, ”that from among yourselves men shall arise,” and this indicates there were already certain Ephesian elders in this group that would go astray and attempt to deceive others in the flock.

***Acts 21:17-19****“And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And now the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present.  And after he greeted them, he began to relate one by one the things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.”*

In this chapter the author who penned the Book of Acts (probably the Apostle Luke) writes about a journey taken by himself, Paul the Apostle and others to Jerusalem.  Points to note:

1.      To deal with an issue within the church a group of men (disciples in verse 16) came with the Apostles (Paul and Luke) went to an older more established body of believers in Jerusalem.

2.      The group of men went in with Paul to James (an apostle and obviously a recognized leader in Jerusalem’s church), with all the elders present.

3.      To summarize these verses, leadership is comprised of groups of elders with a few recognized as prominent leaders in the groups.

***Acts 21:20****“And when they (the elders) heard it (Paul’s work among the Gentiles) they began glorifying God; and they said to him, you see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law...”*

***Acts 21:21****“...and they have been told about you...”*

***Acts 21:22****“...What then is to be done?”*

***Acts 21:23****“...Therefore do this that we tell you...”*

***Acts 21:24****“...take them and purify yourself along with them...”*

***Acts 21:26****“...Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purifying himself along with them...”*

Important lessons in these passages (Acts 21:21-26):

1.      Paul went in to James as the presiding figure of the meeting, yet all the elders there participated in giving instructions of purification to Paul (see verse 23).

2.      The elders gave the apostle (an apostle is the highest office in the church, according to 1 Corinthians 12:28) requirements to follow, and the apostle Paul submits to it. (See verses 22, 23 and 26.)

3.      In summary, these verses illustrate that elders work together as oversight giving instructions to other elders through cooperative decisions, and that fellow elders (which include apostles) are willing to submit to the decisions made by their equal shepherds.

***1******Timothy******5:17****“Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, (meaning compensate them monetarily), especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.”*

Paul’s exhortation to Timothy here indicates that elders (plural) are ruling the church, but he makes a distinction between those who work hard at preaching and teaching and those who don’t.  Those who work hard are worthy of being compensated for their labors in the Word.

1.      All elders should be able to teach, but not all are necessarily paid staff in a church body.

2.      Elders rule the church, not just one pastor or a chief elder as is commonly taught, practiced or otherwise assumed to be normal in today’s churches.

3.      Elders rule the church in areas of preaching and teaching:

                  “rule” = prostemi (Greek); to stand before; hence to lead (like a shepherd); to attend to (indicating care and diligence)

                  “teaching” = didaskalia (Greek); that which is taught; doctrine

***1 Timothy 5:19****“Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.”  (NASB)*

***1 Timothy 5:19****“Against an elder do not receive a formal accusation before a tribunal, except it be upon the authority of two or three who bear testimony.” (Wuest’s)*

The word for witness in Greek is martus; it denotes one who can or does affirm what he has seen or heard or knows. (Vines Expository Dictionary)

***1 Timothy 5:20****“Those (elders) who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also may be fearful of sinning.”*

***1 Timothy 5:22****“Do not lay hands on anyone too hastily and thus share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.”*

The verses above explain how the elders are to judge one another when one is accused of wrongdoing.  This is in harmony with earlier passages (1 Peter 5 and Acts 20) that explain how the elders are to watch out for one another’s lives and teaching.  Here are some points to consider from this text:

1.      A formal accusation against an elder brought before a tribunal of elders should not be received unless there are 2 or 3 witnesses whose testimony can confirm such an accusation.

2.      Such accusations are to be formal in nature (which would exclude hearsay or gossip) and must be fairly weighed before a board of elders with witnesses present who had seen, heard, or known of the truth of said allegations against the elder in question.

3.      Discipline for an elder who continues in unrepentant sin is harsh because of his position and influence as a leader in the church.  1Timothy 5:20 in the Amplified reads, “As for those who are guilty and persist in sin, rebuke and admonish them in the presence of all, so that the rest may be warned and stand in wholesome awe and fear.”  The main point here is that if an elder is active in sin after the accusations have been confirmed, it shows an unwillingness in his life to repent.  The method then of dealing with him is to rebuked and admonish before all the church.  The exposure of his sin will either break down his pride and bring repentance, or it will drive him out of the church because of his refusal to change his behavior.  This type of correction benefits the flock in three ways:

1.      It brings solemn warning to others in a place of oversight that continued sin will not be tolerated.

2.      It serves as a deterrent to the congregation, not to the detriment of the congregation as it is a warning that the same discipline would happen to them.

3.      It honors the prophetic warning of 1 Timothy 4:1-6 by being pro-active and watchful for the wrongdoing that scripture declares will happen among some of the leadership.

The term “rebuke” in the Greek is elencho; it means to convict, refute, reprove.  This word varies from the common word used in the Greek vocabulary for a rebuke (epitamao), which may be an undeserved rebuke (Matthew 16:22) or an ineffectual rebuke (Luke 23:40), because elencho implies a rebuke that carries a conviction.  In other words, when an elder is found guilty the rebuke given to him before all is one by which he has been tried and convicted.

1 Timothy 5:21 summarizes the attitude that is to be maintained by other elders when dealing with an accusation of sin in the eldership.  The Amplified reads:  “...guard and keep these rules without personal prejudice or favor, doing nothing from partiality.”  The New International Version states: “...keep these instructions without partiality, and do nothing out of favoritism.”  And the Emphasized translation reads: “...that these things thou observe apart from prejudgment, doing nothing from partiality.”  There are to be no favorites among the elders; none preferred, especially because such partiality would cloud the other elder’s discernment and judgment when calling each other to account.

***James 5:14****“Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders (plural) of the church, and let them pray over him.”*

This verse is consistent with all previously mentioned texts showing a group of elders being called upon to minister to the church in healing.  It nowhere mentions having one pastor being called upon for such a ministry.

***1 Timothy 3:1-7****“It is a trustworthy statement; if any man aspires to the office of an overseer it is a fine work he desires to do.  An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money.  He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a many does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?); and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into condemnation incurred by the devil.  He must have a good reputation to those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”*

These verses summarize nicely the qualifications of a shepherd of the flock, although the text in itself is not comprehensive.  It is clear that leadership in our churches needs to be re-aligned to conform to the Biblical pattern.  This change will not come easily because it will call for a break with the tradition we have lived with for hundreds of years.  Yes, God will continue to operate within the churches the way they are currently structured, but ultimately this will change as the church continues the Reformation begun by Martin Luther and others and returns to the authority of Scripture over tradition.

***Ephesians 4:11-13****And He gave some, on the one hand, as apostles, and on the other hand, as prophets, and still again some as bringers of good news, (evangelists), and finally, some as pastors (shepherds) who are also teachers, for the equipping of the saints for ministering work with a view to the building up of the Body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the experiential, full, and precise knowledge of the son of God, to a spiritually mature****man****, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ.”  (from Wuest’s Expanded Translation of the New Testament)*

The offices of the church must be restored in their scriptural settings in order for this passage to be fulfilled.  In closing, let us carefully take to heart the words of Ezekiel the prophet, who warns the shepherds of Yahweh’s judgment if ever they use force and severity to dominate the flock:

***Ezekiel 34:1-4, 7-20, 23-24, 29-31****Then the word of the LORD came to me saying, “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to those shepherds, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Woe, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock?  You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat sheep without feeding the flock.  Those who are sickly you have not strengthened, the diseased you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up, the scattered you have not brought back, nor have you sought for the lost; but with force and with severity you have dominated them…”*

*Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: "As I live," declares the Lord GOD, "surely because My flock has become a prey, My flock has even become food for all the beasts of the field for lack of a shepherd, and My shepherds did not search for My flock, but rather the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock; therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will demand My sheep from them and make them cease from feeding sheep. So the shepherds will not feed themselves anymore, but I will deliver My flock from their mouth, so that they will not be food for them."'"*

*For thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out.   As a shepherd cares for his herd in the day when he is among his scattered sheep, so I will care for My sheep and will deliver them from all the places to which they were scattered on a cloudy and gloomy day.  I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and bring them to their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the streams, and in all the inhabited places of the land.  I will feed them in a good pasture, and their grazing ground will be on the mountain heights of Israel. There they will lie down on good grazing ground and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I will feed My flock and I will lead them to rest," declares the Lord GOD.*

*"I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bind up the broken and strengthen the sick; but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with judgment.  As for you, My flock, thus says the Lord GOD, 'Behold, I will judge between one sheep and another, between the rams and the male goats.*

*Is it too slight a thing for you that you should feed in the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pastures?  Or that you should drink of the clear waters, that you must foul the rest with your feet?  As for My flock, they must eat what you tread down with your feet and drink what you foul with your feet!'"*

*Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them, "Behold, I, even I, will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep… Then I will set over them one shepherd, My servant David, and he will feed them; he will feed them himself and be their shepherd.  And I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David will be prince among them; I the LORD have spoken.  I will establish for them a renowned planting place, and  they will not again be victims of famine in the land, and they will not endure the insults of the nations anymore.  Then they will know that I, the LORD their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are My people," declares the Lord GOD.  As for you, My sheep, the sheep of My pasture, you are men, and I am your God," declares the Lord GOD.       NASU*

**SELAH… PAUSE, REFLECT & ALLOW GOD TO CHANGE YOUR HEART**

* John MacArthur or Grace to You.  Used by permission.

What is the pastor’s responsibility, besides preaching and studying?

[**1 Peter 5:1-4**](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Peter%205.1-4)**;**[**John 10:11**](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/John%2010.11)**;**[**Jeremiah 23:1-4**](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Jeremiah%2023.1-4)**;**[**Ezekiel 34:2-10**](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Ezekiel%2034.2-10)

The answer to your question lies in the title you used--pastor. That title is rich with meaning and sets out the chief responsibilities of your minister.

One of Jesus' favorite metaphors for spiritual leadership, one He often used to describe Himself, was that of a shepherd--a person who tends God's flock. A shepherd leads, feeds, nurtures, comforts, corrects, and protects--responsibilities that belong to every church leader. In fact, the word pastor means shepherd.

Peter wrote these words to elders who would have been familiar with sheep and shepherding:

I exhort the elders among you ... shepherd the flock of God ... exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory ([1 Peter 5:1-4](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Peter%205.1-4)).

To give you a more complete picture of your pastor's role, here's a look at the nature of sheep, the task of shepherds, and how they compare to the pastor's role among the church. Note the principles of church leadership it contains--they determine what should fill your pastor's schedule.

**Shepherds Are Rescuers**

A sheep can be totally lost within a few miles of its home. With no sense of direction and no instinct for finding the fold, a lost sheep usually will walk around in a state of confusion, unrest, and even panic. It needs a shepherd to bring it home.

And so when Jesus saw the crowds, lost, spiritually disoriented, and confused, He likened them to sheep without a shepherd ([Matthew 9:36](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Matthew%209.36)). The prophet Isaiah described lost people as those who, like sheep, have gone astray--each one turning to his own way ([Isaiah 53:6](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Isaiah%2053.6)).

Like lost sheep, lost people need a rescuer--a shepherd--to lead them to the safety of the fold. A pastor does that by pointing the lost toward Jesus, the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep ([John 10:11](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/John%2010.11)).

**Shepherds Are Feeders**

Sheep spend most of their lives eating and drinking, but they are indiscriminate about their diet. They don't know the difference between poisonous and non-poisonous plants. Therefore the shepherd must carefully guard their diet and provide them with pasture rich with nutrients.

In His encounter with him described in John 21, Jesus drove home to Peter the importance of feeding the sheep. Twice in His command to Peter, Jesus used the Greek term *bosko*, which means "I feed" (vv. 15, 17).

The pastor's goal is not to please the sheep, but to feed them--not to tickle their ears, but to nourish their souls. He is not to offer merely light snacks of spiritual milk, but the substantial meat of biblical truth. Those who fail to feed the flock are unfit to be shepherds (cf. [Jeremiah 23:1-4](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Jeremiah%2023.1-4);[Ezekiel 34:2-10](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Ezekiel%2034.2-10" \t "_blank)).

**Shepherds Are Leaders**

Peter challenged his fellow elders to "shepherd the flock of God among you" by "exercising oversight" ([1 Peter 5:2](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Peter%205.2)). God entrusted them with the authority and responsibility of leading the flock. Pastors are accountable for how they lead, and the flock for how they follow ([Hebrews 13:17](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Hebrews%2013.17)).

Besides teaching, the pastor exercises oversight of the flock by the example of his life. Being a pastor requires getting in among the sheep. It is not leadership from above so much as leadership from within. An effective pastor does not herd his sheep from the rear but leads them from the front. They see him and imitate his actions.

The most important asset of spiritual leadership is the power of an exemplary life. [First Timothy 4:16](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/First%20Timothy%204.16) instructs a church leader to, "Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you."

**Shepherds Are Protectors**

Sheep are almost entirely defenseless--they can't kick, scratch, bite, jump, or run. When attacked by a predator, they huddle together rather than running away. That makes them easy prey. Sheep need a protective shepherd in order to survive.

Christians need similar protection from error and those who spread it. Pastors guard their spiritual sheep from going astray and defend them against the savage wolves that would ravage them. Paul admonished the pastors at Ephesus to stay alert and to protect the churches under their care:

Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them ([Acts 20:28-30](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Acts%2020.28-30)).

**Shepherds Are Comforters**

Sheep lack a self-preservation instinct. They are so humble and meek that if you mistreat them, they are easily crushed in spirit and can simply give up and die. The shepherd must know his sheep's individual temperaments and take care not to inflict excessive stress. Accordingly, a faithful pastor adjusts his counsel to fit the need of the person to whom he ministers. He must "admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, and be patient with all" ([1 Thessalonians 5:14](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Thessalonians%205.14)).

**The Good Shepherd and His Undershepherds**

Jesus is the perfect example of a loving shepherd. He epitomizes everything that a spiritual leader should be. Peter called Him the "Chief Shepherd" ([1 Peter 5:4](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Peter%205.4)). He is our great Rescuer, Leader, Guardian, Protector, and Comforter.

Church leaders are undershepherds who guard the flock under the Chief Shepherd's watchful eye ([Acts 20:28](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Acts%2020.28)). Theirs is a full-time responsibility because they minister to people who, like sheep, often are vulnerable, defenseless, undiscerning, and prone to stray.

Shepherding the flock of God is an enormous task, but to faithful pastors it brings the rich reward of the unfading crown of glory, which will be awarded by the Chief Shepherd Himself at His appearing ([1 Peter 5:4](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Peter%205.4)).

If your pastor is faithfully carrying out the duties required in his job title, remember to follow this admonition of Scripture:

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you ([Hebrews 13:17](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Hebrews%2013.17)).

According to Carson ([*For the Love of God*, vol. 1](http://slavepj.com/2006/11/02/duties-tasks-and-responsibilities-of-a-pastorshepherdelderoverseer/www.wtsbooks.com/product-exec/product_id/4649/nm/For+the+Love+of+God%2C+Vol+1%3A+Daily+Companion+for+Discovering+the+Riches+of+God's+Word+(Paperback)/?utibayan&utm_medium=ptibayanm_source=pt), [Crossway: 1998] Nov. 2):

* Feed (as a shepherd)
* Defend (as a shepherd)
* Guide (as a shepherd)
* Discipline (as a shepherd)
* Be mature (as an elder)
* Be respected (as an elder)
* Oversee (as an overseer)
* Godly manage (as an overseer)
* Hold in spiritual accountability (as an overseer)
* *Responsibilities and Duties of Elders and Licensed Pastors*-  
  1.The responsibilities of elders are derived from the authority given in ordination. Elders have a fourfold ministry of Word, Sacrament, Order, and Service and thus serve in the local church and in extension ministries in witness and service of Christ's love and justice. Elders are authorized to preach and teach the Word, to provide pastoral care and counsel, to administer the sacraments, and to order the life of the church for service in mission and ministry as pastors, superintendents, and bishops.   
  2. Licensed pastors share with the elders the responsibilities and duties of a pastor for this fourfold ministry, within the context of their appointment.
* *a) Word and ecclesial acts:*
* (1) To preach the Word of God, lead in worship, read and teach the Scriptures, and engage the people in study and witness.24  
  (a) To ensure faithful transmission of the Christian faith.  
  (b) To lead people in discipleship and evangelistic outreach that others might come to know Christ and to follow him.  
  (2)To counsel persons with personal, ethical, or spiritual struggles.  
  (3)To perform the ecclesial acts of marriage and burial.  
  (a) To perform the marriage ceremony after due counsel with the parties involved and in accordance with the laws of the state and the rules of The United Methodist Church. The decision to perform the ceremony shall be the right and responsibility of the pastor.  
  (b) To conduct funeral and memorial services and provide care and grief counseling.  
  (4)To visit in the homes of the church and the community, especially among the sick, aged, imprisoned, and others in need.  
  (5) To maintain all confidences inviolate, including confessional confidences except in the cases of suspected child abuse or neglect, or in cases where mandatory reporting is required by civil law.
* *b) Sacrament:*
* (1) To administer the sacraments of baptism and the Supper of the Lord according to Christ's ordinance.  
  (a) To prepare the parents and sponsors before baptizing infants or children, and instruct them concerning the significance of baptism and their responsibilities for the Christian training of the baptized child.  
  (b) To encourage reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant and renewal of baptismal vows at different stages of life.  
  (c) To encourage people baptized in infancy or early childhood to make their profession of faith, after instruction, so that they might become professing members of the church.  
  (d) To explain the meaning of the Lord's Supper and to encourage regular participation as a means of grace to grow in faith and holiness.  
  (e) To select and train deacons and lay members to serve the consecrated communion elements.  
  (2) To encourage the private and congregational use of the other means of grace.
* *c) Order:*
* (1) To be the administrative officer of the local church and to assure that the organizational concerns of the congregation are adequately provided for.   
  (a) To give pastoral support, guidance, and training to the lay leadership, equipping them to fulfill the ministry to which they are called.  
  (b) To give oversight to the educational program of the church and encourage the use of United Methodist literature and media.  
  (c) To be responsible for organizational faithfulness, goal setting, planning and evaluation.  
  (d) To search out and counsel men and women for the ministry of deacons, elders, local pastors and other church related ministries.  
  (2)To administer the temporal affairs of the church in their appointment, the annual conference, and the general church.  
  (a) To administer the provisions of the *Discipline*.  
  (b) To give an account of their pastoral ministries to the charge and annual conference according to the prescribed forms.  
  (c) To provide leadership for the funding ministry of the congregation.   
  (d) To model and promote faithful financial stewardship and to encourage giving as a spiritual discipline by teaching the biblical principles of giving.  
  (e) To lead the congregation in the fulfillment of its mission through full and faithful payment of all apportioned ministerial support, administrative, and benevolent funds.  
  (f) To care for all church records and local church financial obligations, and certify the accuracy of all financial, membership, and any other reports submitted by the local church to the annual conference for use in apportioning costs back to the church.  
  (3)To participate in denominational and conference programs and training opportunities.  
  (a) To seek out opportunities for cooperative ministries with other United Methodist pastors and churches.  
  (b) To be willing to assume supervisory responsibilities within the connection.  
  (4) To lead the congregation in racial and ethnic inclusiveness.
* *d)Service:*
* (1) To embody the teachings of Jesus in servant ministries and servant leadership.   
  (2) To give diligent pastoral leadership in ordering the life of the congregation for discipleship in the world.  
  (3) To build the body of Christ as a caring and giving community, extending the ministry of Christ to the world.  
  (4) To participate in community, ecumenical and inter-religious concerns and to encourage the people to become so involved and to pray and labor for the unity of the Christian community.
* From *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* - 2012. Copyright 2012 by The United Methodist Publishing House. Used by permission.

**List of Responsibilities.** A pastor's responsibilities or duties are given in several key passages in the New Testament. What are the responsibilities of elders and/or pastors? The chart below provides a summary.

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| Duties of Pastors and Elders |
|  |

**Most Important Responsibility.** Some years ago we visited a church to help them in the selection of a new pastor. At one point during the weekend, we asked them what they thought was the most important duty of a pastor. We gave them a list of possible duties: administration, Christian Education, [church discipline](http://www.neverthirsty.org/pp/corner/read2/r00836.html), community service, counseling, evangelism, prayer, sermon preparation, social action, teaching/preaching, visitation in the home, weddings/premarital counseling, funerals, visiting the sick, and visitation in the home, as well as others. Then we asked them how many hours the pastor should spend on each one. The results were amazing. Most everyone said the pastor should spend most of his time in sermon preparation and teaching/preaching, but they thought he should spend only about 10 hours per week doing this. That told us that the leaders of this church did not really believe the duties of the pastor was to teach and preach. If they did, the number of hours should have been at least double. For an additional article dealing with the duties of a pastor, the selection of a pastor, and for a copy of the above mentioned questionnaire please read ["Thoughts On Selecting A Pastor."](http://www.neverthirsty.org/pp/church-leadership/searchcommittee/search01.html) Another important article is "[A Call: Teach The Bible](http://www.neverthirsty.org/pp/church-leadership/pastor-teacher/call-teach_the_bible1.html)."

 Many Christians believe the pastor should be an administrator for the church. They fail to realize that God did not give every pastor the spiritual gift of administration. It is common for churches to seek a pastor who is a great people person, an excellent administrator for the church, and an effective counselor, as well as a great preacher. But ten hours a week for sermon preparation and teaching/preaching is not enough. In fact, this church had missed the emphasis of the following two passages.

And the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. But select from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. But we will devote ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.” (NASB) [Acts 6:2-4](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Acts%206.2-4)

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. (NASB) [1 Timothy 5:17](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Timothy%205.17)

In the first passage the apostles were being asked to do some church administration - to care for some widows. Now that is an important and loving ministry. But they responded by saying that this was not the most important priority for them. I am sure some in that church thought they were unloving and uncaring to these widows. But their greatest priority - greatest expression of love - was to be in prayer for them and to teach and preach the Word to them.

This is the same message in [1 Timothy 5:17](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Timothy%205.17). In the early church there were two types of elders. There were elders who were gifted in administration - "rule well" - and those who worked hard at teaching/preaching. In many churches the elders who rule well are called lay elders and the other elders are called pastors. However, [Acts 20:17](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Acts%2020.17), [28](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Acts%2020.28) and [1 Peter 5:1-3](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Peter%205.1-3) indicate that all elders are pastors even if their vocation and spiritual gifts are different. Some elders will naturally excel in administration and others in teaching and preaching.

In this passage the church is encouraged to give double honor to those who "rule well." Some understand "double honor" as being money. If so, then the lay elders should be paid too and not just the pastors according to this passage. In truth, the Greek word for "honor" is also used in reference to God within 1 Timothy ([1 Tim. 1:17](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Tim.%201.17); [6:1](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Tim%206.1)). The word typically means "honor." Notice that the phrase "especially" has the sense of "most importantly" and not just the one who excels in preaching and teaching. Who receives the highest honor? It is the one who works hard at teaching and preaching. An elder who has the responsibility of teaching and preaching but forsakes that responsibility in order to excel in administration is not "especially" worthy of double honor. An elder who teaches and preaches is not necessarily worthy of double honor either, but the one who excels and works hard at teaching and preaching is worthy of double honor. The Greek word for "work hard" has the idea of being physically, mentally, and emotionally weary from study. Now that is working hard! To work only ten hours a week at digging in the sacred book is not working very hard.

**Conclusion:** The most important duty of a pastor is to work hard at preaching and teaching. By his sermons and his teaching, he shows his love to God and to the congregation. It will be obvious in the messages a pastor preaches when he is not growing in his walk with God and is not spending many hours in scripture. The apostles did not have time for administration and neither do pastors today. In fact, some of the centralization of power with pastors would disappear if administrative duties were turned over to other elders and deacons. The priority of the apostles was the teaching of the scriptures - the Bible. When the Bible is seriously taught book-by-book and verse-by-verse, Christians will be warned about sin, be encouraged in the faith, learn how to live the Christian life, and best of all discover the character of God.