

ARE YOU THE PASTOR?

By
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I. INTRODUCTORY MATTERS:

- A. "Are you the pastor?" is a question that I am frequently asked when non-Christians visit our assembly of the saints.
- B. Sadly the above question has also been asked of me by those who claim to be members of the church.
- C. A similar question when people learn that I preach: "What church do you pastor?"
- D. These questions are well intentioned, but misinformed.
 1. Most people are not aware of the Biblical use of the word "pastor."
 2. Indeed, most "pastors" today are not even qualified to be a pastor in the Biblical sense.
 3. If we desire to use Bible words in Bible ways, then we would do well to consider the proper meaning and use of the word "pastor."

II. "PASTOR" DEFINED:

- A. The English word "pastor" is found only one time in the New Testament (**Ephesians 4:11**).
 1. Many are surprised to learn this since the word is "thrown round" so often today.
 2. Yes, it seems nearly everyone in church leadership is a "pastor" these days – so goes the wisdom of the world (cf. **1 Corinthians 1:19-20**).
- B. The Greek word that "pastor" is translated from is ποιμήν (poimēn).
 1. This word literally means "a shepherd; a feeder of sheep, whether literal or figurative."
 2. The English word "shepherd" is found seventeen (17) times in the New Testament.
 3. In **Ephesians 4:11**, pastors are those who tend to sheep in a metaphorical sense; i.e. the pastors (shepherds) in this passage shepherd Christians.

III. THE POSITION DESCRIBED:

- A. The pastors or shepherds in the NT church were also called "elders" of individual local congregations.
 1. Compare **Acts 20:28** with **Acts 20:17**.
 2. This indicates that the role of shepherding was the service committed to elders.
 - (a) "Elder" is translated from the Greek word, πρεσβύτερος (presbúteros).
 - (b) This term denotes an older man who is spiritually mature.
 - (c) To be an elder he must, of course, meet the qualifications laid out in the New Testament.
 3. So then, we have seen that the terms "Elder," "Pastor," "Shepherd" are all terms for the same office.
- B. Pastors are seen to have the duty of overseeing the work of the church; i.e. they make sure the church stays in line with scripture (**Acts 20:28**). Look up the term: ἐπίσκοπος (epískopos). This term is also translated as "bishop" in **1 Timothy 3:2** and again in **Titus 1:7**.

IV. WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED SO FAR:

- A. We cannot let men define who is a “pastor.”
- B. If we are to know who a “pastor” is we must go to God for answers:
- C. Having done so we have seen...
 - 1. One who is a pastor is also an elder.
 - 2. One who is an elder is also an overseer.
 - 3. One who is a pastor/elder/overseer is also a bishop.

V. “THE PASTOR” – DON’T THINK SO!

- A. The term “The Pastor” is unscriptural in that it cannot be found in all of God’s Word.
- B. The New Testament also reveals that there was always a plurality of elders/overseers/ shepherds/pastors in a congregation (**Acts 14:23; Act 15:4; Acts 20:17**).
 - 1. There was never just one pastor in a congregation.
 - 2. There was always at least two.
 - 3. No doubt this serves to prevent “one-man rule” over a congregation.

VI. WHO MAY SEVRE AS A PASTOR/ ELDER/ OVERSEER/ BISHOP?

- A. The qualifications for elder-bishop-pastor are found in two places in the New Testament.
 - 1. **1 Timothy 3:1-7**
 - 2. **Titus 1:5-9**
- B. Note some of the things that these passages teach that an elder-bishop-pastor MUST BE:
 - 1. A man.
 - 2. The husband of one wife (i.e., a married man).
 - 3. A father of faithful children.
- C. Such qualifications rule out:
 - 1. Single “pastors.”
 - 2. Childless “pastors.”
 - 3. Pastors without faithful children.
 - 4. Female “pastors.”

VII. CONCLUDING REMARKS:

- A. In light of who pastors are, it becomes very apparent that many who claim to be pastors really aren’t pastors in the Biblical sense of the word.
- B. I am a preacher of the gospel.
- C. I am not one of, what at least must be, two pastors overseeing and shepherding a local church.