

# PLAIN SPEECH

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**“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech” (2 Cor. 3:12)**

By Scott Parker

## I KNOW WHO WASN'T THERE

The backdrop for this article is a meeting between the apostle Paul and a group of Christians during a journey of his back to Jerusalem. Just who were these persons? In **Acts 20:17** we find the answer in the following words: **“And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.”** What I want to underscore is who was not there with Paul on that occasion. Let's explore this idea.

I know there were not any individuals there who were compelled into service. Paul met with elders and God says elders must **desire** to serve (**1 Timothy 3:1**).

I know there was not a woman present. Paul met with elders and God says elders must be **men** (**1 Timothy 3:1-2**).

I know there was not a man there who brethren could prove to be living in sin. Paul met with elders and God says elders must be **above reproach** (**ibid**).

I know no divorcées were there. Paul met with elders and God says an elder must be the husband of **one wife** (**ibid**).

I know there was not a man there who over-indulged in worldly appetites. Paul met with elders and God says elders must be **vigilant**; i.e. one who is temperate; one who practices moderation (**ibid**).

I know there was not a senile, demented, perverted, rash, or hostile minded man amongst them. Paul met with elders and God says elders must be **sober** (**ibid**).

I know there was not a man there who smoked cigarettes, walked around in jogging shorts, gave his approval to the Prom, or gambled. Paul met with elders and God says elders must be of **good behavior** (**ibid**).

I know there was not a man there who cared only about his own personal interests. Paul met with elders and God says elders must be **hospitable** (**ibid**).

I know there was not a man there who refused to teach, or was unable to teach, the will of God to others. Paul met with elders and God says elders must be **apt to teach** (**ibid**).

I know there was not a man there who uncorked a bottle of wine with dinner and drank socially. Paul met with elders and God says elders are those who are **not given to wine** (**1 Timothy 3:3**).

I know there was not a bully present. Paul met with elders and God says elders must **not be strikers** (**ibid**).

I know there was not a man there who was fooled by the allure of worldly riches. Paul met with elders and God says elders must **not be greedy for filthy lucre** and must **not covet** (**ibid**).

I know there was not a man who was known for being mean spirited or quarrelsome. Paul met with elders and God says elders must be **patient** (gentle) men who are not **brawlers** (**ibid**).

I know there was not a man there who failed to raise his children properly in **every** way. Paul met with elders and God says elders must **rule their houses well** (**1 Timothy 3:4-5**).

I know no babes in Christ were there. Paul met with elders and God says elders must not be **novices** (**1 Timothy 3:6**).

I know there was not a man among them whom any honest person in Ephesus could say a poor word about. Paul met with elders and God says elders must have **a good report of them which are without** (**1 Timothy 3:7**).

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Only **true** elders met that day with Paul. Yet, today truly scriptural elders are hard to find. Sadly, as one looks at any number of congregations, time and again one finds “elders” who do not meet the requirements set forth by God. Listen, any congregation of the “Lord’s church” that allows even one man to hold the office of an elder when he does not meet all of God’s requirements is a shameful bunch. “Go Along to Get Along” members of such congregations must repent or else suffer eternally (**2 John 9-11; Isaiah 9:16**).