



Week Three: Holy and Hopeful Herding

Leadership is not something we all trust in. We do not have the best examples around us, be that in the world or in the church at large. Leadership is easily used and abused. We as a church seek to guard against that temptation by holding to what we view as the scriptural imperative for church governance. So today, we look at how Paul instructed Titus to lead the church in Crete, in order to learn how we are to govern our church today.

Text: Titus 1:5-9

1. Mature Churches Require a Plurality of Elders

- Read Titus 1:5

Though Titus had proven to be spiritually mature himself, Paul did not leave him in Crete to lead the church on his own. He was not given any other option but to appoint a plurality of elders because this was Paul's pattern for church leadership all over world.

- ❖ *Q: Why do you think it is crucial for the health of a church to have a plurality of leadership rather than one leader?*

2. Mature Churches Require a Plurality of Elders to Serve and Lead Them

- Read Titus 1:

The office of "elder" in the church incorporates the idea of an overseer and a steward, someone set apart to handle the load of church governance with responsibility and accountability. The scripture further explains the role by comparing it to the responsibility of a shepherd, who serves the people in the following 4 areas:

- Know the sheep – as best he can, to know the movements, strengths and weaknesses of the members of the church, in order to engage intelligently with them and pray for them.
- Feed the sheep – to teach them sound doctrine and defend the church from heresy.
- Lead the sheep – to model and teach what is good and right; to lead those who are disobedient, who want to venture out into places that are not good for them.
- Protect the sheep – against "fierce wolves" that come in to destroy the sheep in a variety of ways.

As you can see, the role of elder was, and still is, *not* a glamorous role, given to those with "rock-star" status in life, but rather a responsibility-laden job, given to the spiritually mature.

- ❖ *Q: Prior to this message, what sort of picture did you have in your mind about the role of the elders in the church? (Was it even vaguely biblical or was it very romanticized – did you see it as a role of privilege and honour, rather than of servanthood, responsibility and accountability?)*
- ❖ *Q: Which of the aforementioned responsibilities that the elders carry on your behalf, are you most grateful for and why?*

Considering the elders' role of responsibility and accountability for you before God, think about what kind of sheep you have been over the last year. Take a moment to think through the answers to each of these questions before you report back as a group:

- ❖ *Q: Do you make it easy for the elders to know you? Are you transparent, involved, communicative?*



- ❖ *Q: Are you present in our services, involved in the membership process, active in Gospel Community? Are you learning and growing - do you absorb, process and apply the messages on a Sunday? Are you "eating the food" they are providing for you?*
- ❖ *Q: Are you easy to lead because you trust in the authority God has given to them? Are you a co-labourer with them and a blessing to them? Or do you resist and fight them, and refuse to be led without some push-back?*

3. Mature Churches Require a Plurality of Qualified Elders to Serve and Lead Them

- Read Titus 1:6-9

The criteria for eldership here are drawn from the above passage and others, in order to be concise. You will notice that very few of the expectations are based on gifting, but are heavily weighted on the man's character. Elders are to reflect these characteristics - whilst they may not do so perfectly, they are to strive towards them throughout their lives.

An elder is to be:

- i. Male - this is unpopular today, mostly because it is misunderstood as a leaning towards male chauvinism. But this is not the lens we take at all. The view we hold is the one seen in scripture, that holds that both male and female possess:
 - Full equality of persons
 - Mutual dependence
 - Functional distinctions - equal but different: the difference in roles is that of headship and submission. Headship generally means the shouldering of responsibility and servanthood in the home and the church, and being accountable to God for that role. We must remember these scriptural limits, and not try and bring these distinctions into other realms of life, such as the workplace or politics, where God has not instructed us to apply them.
- ii. Above reproach - free from accusation
- iii. A 'one-woman' man - committed to his wife alone; not a flirt or a user of pornography
- iv. A leader at home - teaching his children love and respect in God's ways
- v. Mature and humble - not a recent convert; not conceited or proud
- vi. Self-controlled, disciplined and respectable - his private life must be in order, being such that others would wish to emulate it; he must be able to govern his passions (anger, lust, gluttony, laziness etc.)
- vii. Hospitable - approachable; keeping an open home, where others are welcome
- viii. Able to teach - able to communicate the truths of scripture and defend sound doctrine
- ix. Sober, gentle and peacemaking
- x. Not a lover of money - being rich or poor is not the issue, but being driven by money is
- xi. Respected by outsiders - he must be known by others outside of his church community, and respected in those circles too

4. Mature Churches Imitate, Celebrate, and Enjoy Godly Leadership

- Read Hebrews 13:7 & 17

We should imitate the lives of our elders. As they are marked by Christian maturity, we should all be striving to live our lives in the same way because we are all called to mature in our walk with Christ. Submitting well to leadership is not an excuse to remain as infants in the faith, but should act as an encouragement to mature.

- ❖ *Q: What do you think it means to imitate our elders and why do you think it is important for us to do so?*
- ❖ *Q: How do you think God is calling you to respond in terms of this study on church leadership? (E.g. repentance, submission, growing in maturity, celebration for our leadership?)*



MATURE CHURCH

Where BBC is currently at in terms of Eldership:

- We have 6 elders who have been serving for a number of years together.
 - At present, only 1 of the elders is a paid church staff member – the others are in the marketplace.
 - As lead pastor, Ross does not chair the elder's meetings or have a swing vote.
 - Decisions are made by consensus.
 - In a continually growing church, we are actively raising up new elders to help shepherd the flock.
 - We are in the process of growing up additional elders to help shepherd, who have proven their health and maturity before and during the process.
 - The 3 proposed new elders are Badi Badibanga (Gospel Community Pastor BBC), Tumi Moraba (Church Planter BBC Midrand) and Bob Judelsohn (Market-place).
-