

Biblical Study of New Testament Church Leaders

Overview

This study includes the following topics:

Topics	See Pages
New Testament Church Government	1
Bishops, Overseers, Elders, Presbyters, Shepherds, Pastors	1-2
Roles and Responsibilities of Bishops, Overseers, Elders, Presbyters, Shepherds, Pastors (Overseeing and Shepherding the Church)	3-6
Qualifications of Bishops, Overseers, Elders, Presbyters, Shepherds, Pastors	7-9
Roles, Responsibilities, and Qualifications of Deacons (Serving the Church)	10-11
Church Leaders' Wives' Qualifications	11
Following Our Leaders (Congregation's Role and Relationship with Leaders)	12

This study uses New Testament references, Greek lexicons, and dictionaries. This study includes every command and example in the New Testament on this subject. The approach is to use the Bible to interpret the Bible. - 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

New Testament Church Government

Jesus Christ is the only head of the one church. - Matthew 16:16, 18; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4. Jesus is our unseen leader. Some church leaders act like the church belongs to them. The church is bigger than any one man.

Local congregations compose the one church that Jesus built and are subject only to Him. They are independent and self-governing. Congregational autonomy is respected. No earthly headquarters or church hierarchy is taught in the New Testament.

Several formal congregational leadership roles are listed in Ephesians 4:11. There may be many other informal leadership and service roles in a congregation. This study will focus on two formal congregational leaders – bishops and deacons as seen in Philippians 1:1 and other references.

Six words describe the role of the congregational bishops. Even though some of these words are used only a few times, they are very important. Many important words like “Christian” are only mentioned a few times in Scripture as well.

Bishops, Overseers, Elders, Presbyters, Shepherds, Pastors

Bishops, overseers, elders, presbyters, shepherds, and pastors are six words that synonymously and equally describe the same official capacity of a group of congregational leaders. They always occur as a plurality rather than a single congregational leader. The New Testament reveals that they are used more often to describe the role or function than as a title. These words serve more as a job description to explain their responsibility or ministry.

These scriptures equate the six words. They are from three different Greek words to provide three different description of the same group of men.

Acts 20:17, 28 – elders, overseers, shepherds

Titus 1:5, 7 – elders, bishops

1 Peter 5:1-2 – elders, shepherds, overseers

Continued on next page

Bishops, Overseers, Elders, Presbyters, Shepherds, Pastors, Continued

Overseers and bishops come from the same Greek word.

Overseers – inspector, curator, guardian, superintendent, a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly. Greek noun “episkopos”.

Acts 20:28

Oversight, to have or to take the oversight – to look upon or over, to inspect, to look after, to care for, to control. Greek verb “episkopeo”.

1 Peter 5:2

Bishops – overseer. Greek noun “episkopos”.

Philippians 1:1

1 Timothy 3:2

Titus 1:7

1 Peter 2:25 – Refers to Jesus.

Work of a bishop – oversight, overseership, charge. Greek noun “episkope”.

1 Timothy 3:1

Bishopric – overseer, oversight. Greek noun “episkope”.

Acts 1:20 - Refers to taking over the work of the apostle Judas.

Elders or presbyters come from the same Greek word.

This is the word most often used to refer to this group of church leaders.

Elders – older persons, church leaders. Greek noun “presbuteros”.

Acts 11:30

Acts 14:23

Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23

Acts 16:4

Acts 20:17

Acts 21:18

1 Timothy 5:17, 19

Titus 1:5

James 5:14

1 Peter 5:1

Presbytery – an assembly of elders or eldership. Greek noun “presbuterion”.

1 Timothy 4:14

Shepherds or pastors come from the same Greek word.

Shepherds – shepherds, feeders. Greek noun “anthropos poimen”.

Acts 20:28 – Greek verb meaning to feed, refers to the work of church elders.

Hebrews 13:20 – Greek noun referring to Jesus as the great Shepherd of the sheep.

1 Peter 2:25; 5:4 – Greek noun referring to Jesus as the Chief Shepherd of your souls.

1 Peter 5:2 – Greek verb meaning to feed, refers to the work of church elders.

Pastors – Latin for shepherd, feeder. Greek noun “poimen”.

Ephesians 4:11

Roles and Responsibilities of Bishops, Overseers, Elders, Presbyters, Shepherds, Pastors (Overseeing and Shepherding the Church)

Serving as bishops, overseers, elders, presbyters, shepherds, and pastors in the church of our Lord is one of the greatest responsibilities in the world. It also can be a great joy and satisfaction. Overseeing the church is a good work and a noble task. - 1 Timothy 3:1.

The following scriptures reveal their roles and responsibilities. They apply to all Christians and apply with even greater force to those who must lead the church into what is right and away from all that is wrong. The shepherd is a perfect example of how elders should care for the church.

Luke 15:4-7

Shepherding is a major responsibility of church leaders. Shepherds:

- Place first priority on hunting strayed sheep.
- Do not give up until they find the lost sheep.
- Know how many sheep they have.
- Know all of their sheep individually with their strengths, talents, and interests.
- Know all of their sheep real well including their needs, weaknesses, and problems.
- Rejoice over reclaimed sheep.
- Share their joy about restored sheep.

John 10:1-2

- God's shepherds do things God's way.
- A good shepherd is honest, sincere, genuine; not deceitful, sneaky, or dishonest.

John 10:3

Shepherds are leaders. They:

- Do not yell, scream, or demand. They speak and the sheep listen.
- Know their sheep by name.
- Lead their sheep with love. They don't drive them by fear.

John 10:4

- Shepherds have integrity and credibility.
- Sheep follow their shepherd because he is trustworthy and they have confidence in him.

John 10:11

- Shepherds are concerned about their sheep's welfare.
- They are willing to die for their sheep.

John 10:12-13

Shepherds:

- Will not leave their sheep and flee from danger. They know the enemies of the sheep.
- Protect their sheep from false teachers.
- Care about their sheep with love and kindness.

John 10:14

- The shepherd knows his sheep. This takes time and relationship building.
- The sheep know their shepherd.

John 10:27

Shepherds make their sheep feel safe when the sheep hear the reassuring voice of their shepherd.

Psalms 23 also describes how the Lord takes care of us and how elders should shepherd the church.

Continued on next page

Roles and Responsibilities of Bishops, Overseers, Elders, Presbyters, Shepherds, Pastors (Overseeing and Shepherding the Church), Continued

Acts 11:30

Elders:

- Are first mentioned here in the New Testament.
- In the Jerusalem church received aid from the Antioch church delivered by Barnabas and Saul for relief of brethren in Judea.
- Can send and receive aid to and from other churches.
- Oversee all the work of the church including physical, financial, and spiritual. They do not personally perform all the details of the work. They can delegate to deacons and other Christians.

Acts 14:23

- Elders were appointed in every church with prayer and fasting about a year after the churches were established.
- Does an eldership require perfect brothers with perfect families? Perfect? No! Qualified? Yes!

Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23

Elders:

- Listen to and help resolve disputes, conflicts, and doctrinal issues.
- Send representative messengers on a mission.
- Write letters of greetings, commendation, and clarification.

Acts 16:4-5

- Actions of elders should result in stronger growing churches.

Acts 20:17

Elders:

- Listen to missionary reports.
- Receive instruction from experienced preachers.

Acts 20:28

Elders:

- Pay careful attention to themselves.
- Care for the church members among them.
- Oversee the church.
- Feed, tend, guide, and shepherd the church.

Acts 20:29

- Elders remain alert for false teachers and deceitful members who can infiltrate the church.

Acts 20:30

- Elders must guard against false teachers and corrupt leaders developing within their own group.

Acts 20:31

- Elders must watch and remember warnings they learned from God's word.
- They do not let their guard down and become vulnerable.

Acts 20:35

- Elders support the weak.

Acts 21:18-19

- Elders are interested in receiving missionary reports.

Continued on next page

Roles and Responsibilities of Bishops, Overseers, Elders, Presbyters, Shepherds, Pastors (Overseeing and Shepherding the Church), Continued

Ephesians 4:11-13

Pastors (shepherds):

- Prepare members to serve.
- Strengthen the church.
- Develop the maturity of members.

Philippians 1:1

- Bishops were over the church in Philippi.

1 Thessalonians 5:12

Elders:

- Work diligently among the church.
- Are over the church.
- Admonish and instruct the church.

1 Thessalonians 5:13

- Elders' work must be worthy of high esteem.

1 Thessalonians 5:14

Elders must be versatile and flexible in order to:

- Warn or admonish unruly or disorderly members.
- Encourage the fainthearted.
- Support and help the weak.
- Show patience to all people.

1 Timothy 3:2

Bishops (overseers):

- Show hospitality.
- Teach the church.

1 Timothy 3:5

- Bishops (overseers) take care of the church.

1 Timothy 5:17-18

- Elders who rule well are counted worthy of double honor, especially those who spend more time teaching and preaching. The church may financially support them.

1 Timothy 5:19-20

- Elders receive proper rebuke with humility and respect.

Titus 1:5

- Elders are to be appointed to complete the organization of the church.

Titus 1:7

- Elders are good stewards or caretakers. A steward is one who is appointed to care for that which belongs to another.

Continued on next page

Roles and Responsibilities of Bishops, Overseers, Elders, Presbyters, Shepherds, Pastors (Overseeing and Shepherding the Church), Continued

Titus 1:9-11

Elders:

- Hold fast to the Word.
- Teach the Word.
- Refute false teachers.

Hebrews 13:7

Bishops (overseers):

- Have responsibility to rule over the church.
- Speak the Word of God.
- Set an example of faith worth imitating.

Hebrews 13:17

Bishops (overseers):

- Watch for the souls of the church.
- Give an account for their work and the souls of the church.
- Work with joy.

James 5:14-15

- Elders are men of faith who pray for the sick.

1 Peter 5:1-2

Elders:

- Shepherd the flock of God which is among you.
- Serve as overseers.
- Serve willingly not by constraint.
- Serve eagerly not with impure motives or for dishonest gain.

1 Peter 5:3

Elders:

- Do not act like a dictator lording it over those entrusted to them.
Dictators love position power and authority.
Diotrephes loved the pre-eminence and misused and abused his authority. - 3 John 9-10.
- Lead by example.

1 Peter 5:4

- Elders are rewarded.

1 Peter 5:5-6

Elders:

- Submit to one another.
- Serve with humility before God and His people.

Questions Concerning Roles and Responsibilities

1. What are the primary responsibilities of bishops, overseers, elders, presbyters, shepherds, pastors?
2. If they spend most of their time in administrative meetings, how effective will they be as shepherds?
3. How effective will they be at overseeing if they never meet together to discuss the work of the church?
4. How can they achieve a balance among their various roles and responsibilities?

Qualifications of Bishops, Overseers, Elders, Presbyters, Shepherds, Pastors

Pray for God's guidance and wisdom as you consider these scriptural qualifications and men being considered for this work. Also, pray for personal growth in areas that relate to your life.

All men should aspire to develop the qualities required of elders and deacons and be taught to develop these from a young age. Most of these church leader qualities or attributes are expected of every Christian, but a man **must** possess **each** qualification before he can serve in this leadership role. Remember, no one is perfect in this life, not even the greatest leaders in the Bible.

1 Timothy 3:1-7 (see verse number)

* Also listed in **Titus 1:5-11**

** Only listed in **Titus 1:5-11**

1. **Desire the office or position** (1) – Proper desire and right motives are pre-requisite. One should never insist upon being appointed. Neither should one be forced into this work. - 1 Peter 5:2.
2. ***Blameless** (2) – Without or above reproach, unblamed. This does not refer to any impossible, sinless perfection, but to a life that does not bring reproach, shame, or embarrassment on the church. He must have nothing against his character. - Titus 1:6, 7; Philippians 2:15.
3. ***Husband of one wife** (2) – A one-woman man. Not a bachelor and not a polygamist. Must be married and only to one wife. - Titus 1:6; 1 Corinthians 7:2.
4. **Temperate** (2) – Self-controlled, even-tempered with a calm and moderate spirit. Vigilant, watchful and on guard to care for his own soul and the souls of his flock; awake, alert, aware of needs, danger signs, and all situations. - 1 Peter 5:8.
5. ***Sober-minded** (2) – Sober, serious-minded, sensible, a sound thinker, clear thinker, not flighty or flippant, self-controlled, prudent. - Titus 1:8.
6. **Of good behavior** (2) – Orderly, dignified, respectable, honorable, well behaved, well mannered, modest, decent, discreet, well arranged, and systematic in his life and activities so as to inspire the respect and admiration of all. - 1 Corinthians 14:40.
7. ***Hospitable** (2) – Lover of strangers (literally in Greek). Given to hospitality at home and elsewhere. Uses his home and means to help others. Willing to share and serve. Provides service with a smile. This is difficult without family support. - Titus 1:8; Hebrews 13:2; 1 Peter 4:9.
8. ***Apt to Teach** (2) – Apt means having ability. Capable, ready, and willing to teach in some way. - Titus 1:9-11; 2 Timothy 2:24.
9. ***Not given to wine** (3) – No brawler, not quarrelsome over wine, no drunkard, not given to drunkenness, not addicted to wine. The meaning of the original Greek words here mean "not near," "not in the vicinity of," or "not near to the proximity of." He is to stay away from alcoholic beverages. Some modern translators have left the wrong impression to allow people to justify their use of alcoholic beverages. The Bible is also clear about avoiding this dangerous habit for his own sake and for an influence and example to others. - Romans 14:13. He does not drink or approve of drinking alcoholic beverages. - Titus 1:7.
10. ***Not violent** (3) – No striker but gentle, peaceable, and patient. Not pugnacious, eager to fight, quick tempered, fighter, strike back with fists when annoyed, snap back with the tongue, bruiser, ready for a blow, rebel, quarrelsome, disagreeable, disputer, railer, reviler, lashing out with harsh words toward others, hot headed. - Titus 1:7.
11. ***Not greedy for money** (3) – No lover of money. Not greedy of filthy lucre. Filthy lucre is base, sordid, or dishonest gain. Must be honest. Not materialistic. Not impressed or influenced by wealth or fame or wealthy members. - Titus 1:7; 1 Timothy 6:10.
12. **Gentle** (3) – Patient; must exercise patience and kindness and have a gentle and meek spirit. Patience is required for personal endurance and for dealing with other people. - 2 Timothy 2:24.
13. **Not quarrelsome** (3) – Not a brawler; not contentious or offensively aggressive insisting on his own rights, likes, and dislikes; does not retaliate; peaceable. - Titus 3:2.
14. **Not covetous** (3) – No lover of money or desirous of any base gain. Not eager to obtain something belonging to another such as money, substance, or position. Covetousness will also disqualify one as a Christian. - 1 Corinthians 5:11.

Continued on next page

Qualifications of Bishops, Overseers, Elders, Presbyters, Shepherds, Pastors, Continued

15. **One who rules his own house well** (4) – Manages his own family well. Demonstrates spiritual leadership and restraint at home. Can handle responsibility and balance multiple roles of husband, father, church leader, and earning a living for his family. Does not neglect his own family to serve the family of God.
16. ***Having his children in submission or subjection with all reverence or gravity** (4) – Keeping his children under control with all dignity. Keeping his children submissive and respectful. His children obey him with proper respect. They are disciplined and responsive to his direction. Verse 5 tells why this is important. For if a man does not know how to manage his own family, how shall he take care of the church of God? - Titus 1:6.
17. ****Having faithful children** (Titus 1:6) – Children who believe. Children who are believers. Demonstrates evidence that that they were or are being brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The most important souls you help go to heaven are your wife and children.
18. ****Not accused of dissipation or insubordination** (Titus 1:6) – Children not accused of riot, unruly, or rebellion. Not open to the charge of being of being wild or disobedient. Children should be obedient, respectful, and courteous. Elders must shoulder responsibility, be fair, reasonable, wise, and loving fathers. His family respects his authority. This good home life is expected of all Christians. - Ephesians 5:22-33; 6:1-4.
19. **Not a novice** (6) – Not a recent convert nor a young man, lest being lifted up with pride or conceit he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Must be old enough to have children obey the gospel. Old enough in the church to wisely handle and teach doctrinal and practical Bible truth. This qualification deals more with maturity in Bible knowledge, spirituality, and experience as a Christian than with age. Ability to handle responsibility is essential. The word "elder" implies age, experience, and wisdom. Acts 14:20-23 relates that only after about a year's experience in the church some were appointed to the eldership. Every Christian man should develop by growing and working so that someday he might be eligible to serve as an elder. - Hebrews 5:12-14.
20. **Have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil** (7) – Must be well thought of and have the respect and good report of outsiders or non-members. A good reputation in the community is essential. However, every false tale and rumor cannot be accepted as truth. - 1 Timothy 5:19.
21. ****Steward of God** (Titus 1:7) – God's house managers, administrators, or supervisors over God's children in their local congregation. Entrusted with God's work. - Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 4:10.
22. ****Not self-willed** (Titus 1:7) – Not willful, stubborn, dogged, headstrong, militant, presumptuous, overbearing, or arrogant. Not self-pleasing or determined to have his own way regardless of others' wills. Must be cooperative. - Philippians 2:2-5.
23. ****Not quick-tempered** (Titus 1:7) – Not soon angry or easily provoked to anger. Not one to say angry words hastily. Not irritable. A quick-tempered or hotheaded man cannot serve well. - Ephesians 4:26, 31.
24. ****A lover of what is good** (Titus 1:8) – Lover of goodness. Must have love for all good people and things. Loves what is good. - Romans 12:9-10.
25. ****Just** (Titus 1:8) – Uprightness. Must use justice and fairness and be morally upright in all dealings and decisions relative to persons or things. Must be objective as well as subjective in their thinking. Prejudice, partiality, and selfishness are not to be in the eldership.
26. ****Holy** (Titus 1:8) – Pure in life. Close to God. He understands that he belongs to God. Separate from worldliness. A godly man will inspire spirituality in others. Holiness is one of those qualities without which no man shall see the Lord. - Hebrews 12:14.
27. ****Self-controlled** (Titus 1:8) – Self-disciplined, temperate, able to curb the desires of the flesh. Self-denying, moderate in all things relating to not only abstaining from strong drink, but also control of temper, tongue, sex, eye, ear, mind, and every faculty.
28. ****Holding fast or firm the faithful word as he has been taught** (Titus 1:9) – Holding to sound doctrine; steadfast in truth; does not compromise with error. - 2 Thessalonians 2:15.

Continued on next page

Qualifications of Bishops, Overseers, Elders, Presbyters, Shepherds, Pastors, Continued

29. ****That he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort** (Titus 1:9) – Encourage and instruct the believers. Knows the truth and can teach it.
30. ****And convict those who contradict** (Titus 1:9) – Refute those who contradict the Word. Convince the gainsayers or opposition. Set right the opposers of truth or at least expose their error.

Other Scriptural Requirements

1. An example or pattern of faith and godliness. - 1 Peter 5:3.
2. Able to feed, tend, and protect the church. - Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2.
3. Able to watch out for the souls of all members of the church. - Hebrews 13:17.
4. Able to exercise oversight of the church. - Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2.
5. Able to take care of the church. - 1 Timothy 3:5.
6. Able to be entrusted as a steward over God's work and His people. - Titus 1:7.

Roles, Responsibilities, and Qualifications of Deacons (Serving the Church)

Deacons – servant, minister, ministrant, deacon. Greek noun “deaconos”.
Verb form of the word means to serve, to minister, to serve in the ministry of a deacon.

References:

Philippians 1:1

1 Timothy 3:8-10; 12-13 – noun in verses 8 and 12; verb in verses 10 and 13.

Also see:

Acts 6:1-7

Romans 12:7

Roles and Responsibilities of Deacons

Relationship with the Bishops, Overseers, Elders, Presbyters, Shepherds, Pastors:

- Deacons are not co-elders, junior elders, nor assistant elders.
- They are co-workers on the church leadership team.
- Deacons are under the oversight of the elders.
- A spiritual-physical division of the work is not scriptural.
- Elders have oversight of all the affairs of the church. - Acts 20:28.
- Elders can delegate and assign to deacons or others the responsibility, accountability, and authority to carry out any area of work.
- If a deacon is not capable of doing the job, he should not be appointed to do it. - 1 Timothy 3:10.

Deacons are servants, not just office holders.

- They are to be given specific assignments by the elders to assist in the work of the church.
- They can relieve the elders. - Acts 6:1-7.
- Their work may be a certain one-person responsibility.
- Their assignment may be to administer a work involving supervision of other members in a given ministry or project.

Deacons always occur as a plurality in the New Testament. The number should be determined by two factors:

- The number of available qualified men.
- The number needed by the church.

Qualifications of Deacons

1 Timothy 3:8-10; 12-13

1. **Reverent** (8) – Grave, serious-minded, honorable, dignified, worthy of respect.
2. **Not double-tongued** (8) – Deceitful, insincere, two-faced, thinks one thing and says another.
3. **Not given to much wine** (8) – Does not have the habit of drinking wine. Sets an example and considers influence on others. - Romans 14:13.
What about the word "much?" Ecclesiastes 7:17 says "Be not over **much** wicked." Does that mean that you can be a little bit or moderately wicked?
Also 1 Peter 4:4 speaks against "**excess** of riot." Does that approve some riotous living?
Letting the Bible interpret the Bible and other Bible passages should lead one to the conclusion that deacons or any other child of God should not use intoxicating beverages.
4. **Not greedy for money** (8) – Not greedy for filthy lucre. Not desirous, eager, or in pursuit of dishonest gain.

Continued on next page

Qualifications of Deacons, Continued

5. **Holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience** (9) – Hold the deep revealed truth with personal holiness or a clear conscience. Believes and lives the truth. Not a hypocrite.
6. **First be tested; then let them serve as deacons** (10) – Not be appointed until character is demonstrated and experience indicates ability and dependability. Already should be serving.
7. **Being found blameless** (10) – Beyond reproach. Unimpeachable. Nothing against his character. Free from legitimate accusation. Has a good reputation.
8. **Husband of one wife** (12) – A one-woman man. Not a bachelor and not a polygamist. Must be married and only to one wife.
9. **Ruling their children and their own houses well** (12) – Keeping his children under control with all dignity. Keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way. Manages his own household well. Demonstrates leadership and restraint at home. Can handle responsibility.

In addition:

Church leaders should possess all other qualities of the Christian life to a mature measure especially love. If a man truly loves, all other qualities will develop easier. - 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

Deacons who serve well deserve respect, appreciation, and recognition. - 1 Timothy 3:13.

Questions Concerning the Qualities of Church Leaders

1. Why are the qualities listed for elders and deacons so important?
2. Why is character so important to being an elder or deacon?
3. Why is it such an important issue for both elders and deacons to be men of strong convictions regarding their faith in Christ and the truthfulness of His Word?
4. What are the reasons for the requirements concerning the families of elders and deacons?
5. Are appointments lifetime or temporary?
6. What about resigning, retiring, or removing one from these leadership roles?

Church Leaders' Wives' Qualifications

Church leaders' wives are looked to as examples and have a powerful influence on other women. All women should aspire to these qualities and be taught to develop these from a young age.

1 Timothy 3:11

1. **Reverent** – Grave, dignified, serious-minded, and modest in manner of life, behavior, speech, and action. Not showy or flippant. Worthy of respect. Inspires respect by her conduct.
2. **Not slanderers** – She devils (literally in Greek). Not malicious gossips, loose talkers, busy bodies, talebearers, false accusers. Does not relate overheard church business. Must have strict control of the tongue.
3. **Temperate** – Sober, moderate, self-controlled, calm, prudent, wise conduct, free from unholy excitement, even-tempered, and moderate spirit.
4. **Faithful in all things** – Obedient, dependable, trustworthy, reliable, faithful in every relationship with all people and things. She is faithful to her Lord, husband, children, all people, and responsibilities.

Following Our Leaders (Congregation's Role and Relationship with Leaders)

Christians have a responsibility toward their leaders.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

- Recognize those who labor among you.
- Recognize them as having authority over you and accept their oversight.
- Receive their admonishment and teaching.
- Esteem them very highly in love for their work sake because of their position and responsibility.
- Be at peace among yourselves.

1 Timothy 5:1

- Do not rebuke an older man.
- Exhort him as a father.

1 Timothy 5:17-19

- Count those who rule well worthy of double honor (reward, wages, salary, stipend).
- Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses.

Hebrews 13:7

- Remember those who rule over you and who have spoken the Word of God to you.
- Follow their faith considering the outcome of their conduct.

Hebrews 13:17

- Obey those who rule over you. They have authority over you. Listen to them. Yield to them. Comply and cooperate with them.
- Submit yourselves and yield to authority in the spirit of obedience. Follow your spiritual guides.
- Let them watch for your souls since they are accountable. Let them help you get to heaven.
- Bring joy to them by the way you live for your own benefit.

Understand and Love Our Leaders

- They have a double duty, often with another full-time job and only 24 hours a day.
- Appreciate their wives who often spend many hours waiting on a pew, in a classroom, in a car or home alone while their husbands are counseling, teaching, exhorting, or serving.
- Encourage their children because family plans are often changed or put on hold while dad is called to help a member of the church.
- Realize that they are human. No one is perfect.
- Speak directly to them. Do not be critical about them or gossip behind their backs or publicly.

Offer Friendship, Respect, and Support

- Take initiative to know them and understand their work.
- Discuss your problems with them freely.
- Give your time to answer their call for special service or needs.
- Offer your suggestions and solutions rather than criticisms and problems.
- Listen to them, not opposing voices.
- Defend them when they are unjustly criticized.
- Contribute generously and cheerfully to finance the work of the church.
- Express words and notes of appreciation, thanks, and encouragement to them.

Pray for Our Leaders!