

How to Treat Church Elders

1 Timothy 5:19-22

Introduction:

- Why there is confusion over how to treat church elders
 1. A church who has had several pastors often views the pastor as someone they h_____ to do their bidding.
 2. The IRS views pastors from a tax standpoint
 - a. As an e_____ from an income tax standpoint
 - b. As s_____employed from a social security tax standpoint
- God's w_____ must be our guide in how to treat church elders.

Don't idolize them, but pray for them (context)

- The qualifications of an elder given in 1 Tim 3 places the church people's e_____ of their spiritual leaders very high.
 1. Some may expect elders to be so super-spiritual that they place them somewhere between h_____ and God.
 2. When an elder fails to live up to an expectation, it may d_____ the church.
- Elders are human beings and so should never be put on a p_____ (idolized).
 1. The qualifications of an elder were not requiring elders to reflect perfection but p_____. So an elder may not have been so gentle in handling a situation, although normally he is gentle (see 3:3).
 - a. Pastors have f_____ just like everyone else.
 - b. Pastors have t_____ just like everyone else.
 - c. Pastors will fall to s_____ just like everyone else.
 2. Instead of idolizing pastors (elders), you should p_____ for them.
 - a. Elders who are dedicated to serving God and the church will be a target of S_____.
 - b. By praying for your pastor to resist temptation, to handle situations wisely, etc, you are entering into spiritual b_____ with him against Satan.

Don't criticize them, but confront them (19-22)

- Every leader whether religious or secular is in a position that brings c_____.
 1. What President of the U.S. was never criticized?
 2. What Pastor has never been criticized?
 3. It is human nature to criticize.
- Most criticism against a spiritual leader is over differences in

o _____ or philosophy.

1. When this kind of criticism is done behind the spiritual leader's back, what effect does that have on a church body? – d _____
2. If someone shares such criticism of a pastor with you:
 - a. Do not r _____ it (v. 19)
 - b. Tell them that spreading such criticism can cause division and the Bible states not to a _____ with a divisive person after two warnings (Titus 3:10).
 - c. Encourage the person to go to the pastor personally and voice their disagreement.

● What if the criticism has to do with sin (the elder is under suspicion of committing a sin)?

1. Verse 19 states not to receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. Paul is following Jesus's instruction given in Matt 18:15-16.
 - a. Step 1: There must be a p _____ confrontation.
 - 1) If the sin is confirmed and the pastor r _____, then the process is complete.
 - 2) If the sin is confirmed and the pastor refuses to repent, then proceed to step 2.
 - b. Step 2: Take one or two with you to confront the elder so that every fact can be c _____.
 - 1) If the pastor r _____, then the process is complete.
 - 2) If the pastor refuses to repent, then proceed to step 3.
2. Step three is given by Paul in verse 20 – *those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest [other elders] will be fearful of sinning.*
 - a. Step three is given by Jesus in Matt 18:18 – *tell it to the c _____ and if he refuses to listen even to the church let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.*
 - b. If the elder repents before the church, then the process is complete, otherwise he is to be r _____ from his elder position and is no longer to be part of the church.
3. What if the sin is a gross sin, like adultery or embezzlement?
 - a. Why would an elder fall to such sins?
 - 1) Some churches who are looking for a pastor, choose one out of d _____ rather than qualifying him.
 - 2) Paul counsels Timothy not to lay hands upon anyone too h _____.
 - a) The laying on of hands was a means of a _____ and was done in appointing elders (see Acts 14:23).

- b) Doing this hastily would be to fail to thoroughly investigate their character and qualify them using 1 Timothy 3:1-7.
- b. What happens to an elder who repents of a gross sin?
- 1) He still must step d_____ from his role as an elder.
 - 2) He must go through a restoration process of intense c_____ which takes at least one year, if not several.
 - 3) Once the restoration process is c_____, the person may return to an elder role.

Conclusion

- What kind of bone are you?
 1. W___bone – never willing to work or pray for what they wish for
 2. J___bone – gossip and keep the church in turmoil
 3. F___bone – touchy and threaten to leave the church
 4. D___bone – follow all the rules but dead as a fossil
 5. B___bone – spiritually support the church and its leaders.
- If you have a bone to pick with a spiritual leader, pick _____