The Overseers and the Overseen
Acts 20:28

Introduction:
A. Each New Testament congregation was overseen by more than one overseer.
   1. They were called Bishops/overseers, Pastors/shepherds, Elders/presbyters.
   2. They were required to meet certain qualifications for the office (1 Tim. 3; Tit. 1)
   3. They were given and accepted a heavy responsibility (cf. Heb. 13:17)
B. Both the overseers and the overseen have serious responsibilities.

Discussion:
I. Responsibilities of the Overseers.
A. They must work – not a honorary title (1 Tim. 3:1)
B. They must not just rule, but rule well (1 Tim. 3:3,4)
   1. They rule with diligence (Rom. 12:8)
   2. They must also rule with wisely – consider views and feelings of family.
C. They must take oversight, but not as lords (1 Pet. 5:2-3)
   1. Oversee with humility (1 Pet. 5:5).
   2. Like Jesus become a servant (Matt. 20:28)
D. They must “take care of the house of God” (1 Tim. 3:5)
   1. Feed or tend the overseen (1 Pet. 5:2; Acts 20:28)
   2. Protect them from spiritual wolves (Acts 20:29-31; Tit. 1:9-11)
   3. They must admonish (warn) the overseen (1 Thess. 5:12)
E. They must limit oversight to those over which Holy Spirit made the overseers (cf. Acts 20:28)
   1. They are made overseers only of the “flock among (them)” (1 Pet. 5:2)
   2. Their work is spiritual oversight, not physical (Watch for souls)
   3. They oversee the church, not homes, businesses, politics, etc. of the overseen.
F. They must show respect the “Chief Shepherd.” (1 Pet. 5:4)
   1. Not lawmakers (Jas. 4:12) nor law changers (Gal. 1:8,9)
   2. Administer His law effectively – decide judgment matters.

II. Responsibilities of the Overseen.
A. Obey or submit to their oversight (Heb. 13:17)
   1. Makes their work a joy and not a burden.
   2. Make their work profitable for us.
B. Know and esteem them highly (1 Thess. 5:12-13)
   1. To know here means “to have regard for one, cherish, pay attention to” (Thayer)
   2. The esteem them highly “for works sake.”
C. Honor them (1 Tim. 5:17)
   1. First, honor and esteem them for there work.
   2. A second honor to those whose “work is teaching and preaching.” (v. 18, 19 NIV)
      a. This honor is financial support to and elder who gives his time this work.
      b. The same scripture is quoted in regard to preachers living of gospel (1 Cor. 9:6-14)
D. Rebuke when appropriate (1 Tim. 5:19-20).
   1. Only after proving accusations.
   2. Do it with extreme caution.

Conclusion:
A. Every member of this congregation is either an overseer or is overseen.
B. If each fulfils his responsibility the church will continue to prosper.

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