

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 to 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.