

News & Notes

One Restored: *Jessica Boser*, student at IU who lives in Noblesville, IN, came forward on Sunday evening, January 10th to confess that she had not been faithful in serving the Lord and asked for prayer on her behalf. Please take time to encourage our young people.

Edwards In Meetings: Johnie will work with two churches in gospel meetings in March. March 20-25 with Bill Craddock and the St. Leon, IN church of Christ. March 28-April 1 with the Gadsden, IN church of Christ.

Eldership Study: To help us appreciate what the Bible teaches about the eldership, a series of articles are being written to that end. There will also be sermons on this subject this month. Plan to read and hear the truth on this vital issue.

Acts Study: All of our Bible classes are studying the book of Acts at this present time. It is a great study. You are the loser, if you are not attending every study! See you in Bible study.

Our Giving: A recent financial report shows the need for increasing our weekly contribution. Let's all work on this. Each 5th Sunday's contribution is going into a maintenance fund.

- SCHEDULE -

Sunday

Bible Study 9:45 A.M.
Worship 10:30 A.M.
Worship 6:00 P.M.

Wednesday

Bible Study 7:00 P.M.
Every Member At Every Service!

- RADIO PROGRAM -

Sunday 9:00 a.m.
92.7 FM WSKT

- WEBSITE-

www.ellettsvillechurchofchrist.com

- TELEPHONE -

Preacher (812) 336-4630
Church Office (812) 876-2285

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CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Evangelist & Editor
Johnie Edwards.

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The Need For Elders

Johnie Edwards

The Bible teaches that elders are required in every church of Christ to make it Scripturally organized. To this end, this issue is directed.

1) **Elders In Every Church:** By apostolic example we learn that every church is to have its own elders. "And when they had ordained them *elders in every church*, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed" (Acts 14:23). Local churches of Christ had elders in New Testament times. A good example is seen when Paul, "from Miletus...sent to Ephesus, and called the *elders* of the church" (Ac. 20:17). There is to be more than one elder in every church!

2) **Elders Demanded In Order-Setting:** Paul wrote preacher Titus, "For

this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest *set in order* the things that are wanting, and *ordain elders* in every city, as I had appointed thee" (Ti. 1:5). Elders were appointed in every city where the church was established, and so must we! Where there are no elders, something is wanting in the church.

3) **Elders In The Local Church:** Writing the local church of Christ at Philippi, Paul penned, "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi with the *bishops* (elders) and deacons" (Phil. 1:1). Elders are to "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind...being ensamples to the flock" (1 Pet. 5:1-3).

Eldership Terms

Johnie Edwards

To have a better understanding of the eldership, we need to have a good handle on some Biblical terms which describe the eldership.

1) **Elder:** The Old Testament use of the word “elder” means an older man as seen in, “the elders of Israel” (Ex. 3:16). An elder is one who is advanced in years. He is not to be “a novice” (1 Tim. 3:6); that is, he is not to be a new Christian. Due to lack of experience, in being a child of God, he can be “lifted up with pride,” and “fall into the condemnation of the devil” (1 Tim. 3:6).

2) **Bishop:** An elder is a bishop in that the word is applied to elders. Acts 20:17 says that Paul “called the elders of the church.” Referring to the same men, Paul called them “bishops” (Acts 20:32, ASV). Paul called an elder “a bishop” when he wrote Titus about their qualifications (Ti. 1:5, 7). The word “bishop” suggests the idea of oversight, as elders superintend the work of the local church. Even though religious bodies have made a distinction between an elder and a bishop, the Bible makes no such distinction! Not knowing that a bishop and an elder are the same man, bishops have been placed over a number of churches and finally resulted in one man being made the head of the Roman Catholic Church!

3) **Pastor:** Ephesians 4:11 calls elders “pastors.” The word “pastor” carries the concept of one who shepherds or tends a flock of sheep. In this case, the Lord’s sheep is the church (Acts 20:28). Most churches refer to their preacher as “pastor,” when he is not an elder. A preacher, who is also an elder, could be called a pastor. Otherwise, it is a misuse of the term.

4) **Elders:** One man cannot be an elder, for the Bible requires a plurality of men to make up an eldership. When Paul wrote the church at Philippi, he addressed the letter to “saints, bishops/elders and deacons” (Phil. 1:1). When men were appointed to the eldership, they “ordained them elders in every church” (Acts 14:23). “Relief” was sent “to the elders” when there was a needy church (Acts 11:29-30). The church in Ephesus had “elders” (Acts 20:17). As Titus “set in order the things that are wanting,” he “ordained elders in every church” (Ti. 1:5). Paul makes mention of “The elders which are among you...” (1 Pet. 5:1).

5) **A Man:** Paul stated, “If a *man* desire the office of a bishop/elder, he desireth a good work” (1 Tim. 3:1). So, this eliminates women from being elders. Only men can be elders in the Lord’s church!

The Work Of Elders #1

Johnie Edwards

The work of elders is outlined in the word of God. Thus, we are not left to guess as to what their work is. Paul called this office a “work” (1 Tim. 3:1). The work of elders involves:

1) **Flock-Feeding:** As Paul called the Ephesian elders down to the little city of Miletus to bid them good-bye, he said, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to **feed** the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). The flock has reference to members of the church. Peter put it this way to elders: “Feed the flock of God which is among you...” (1 Pet. 5:2). To feed is to nourish as a shepherd provides food and water for his sheep. The Lord’s flock “live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Mt. 4:4). Elders must see that the church is taught the word of God, as they are nourished with spiritual food. This is the reason elders are called pastors.

2) **Oversight:** Paul charged elders in Acts 20:28 as “*overseers*.” Likewise, Peter admonished elders to take “the oversight” (1 Pet. 5:2). Elders must look carefully, as a guardian or superintendent of the souls they look over. Ezekiel made it clear that the duty of a watchman was to

“hear the word” of God and give “warning” to God’s people (Ezek. 3:17). This watch involves vigilance to prevent or regain straying sheep. Elders would do well to read and re-read the story of the lost sheep in Luke 15:3-7. This parable shows the value of just one lost soul. Elders must see that everything possible is done to find and lead the lost one back to the flock. Qualified elders see to it that the church is provided teaching to help prevent going astray. Elders must be aware that “grievous wolves,” in the disguise of false teachers, stand ready to enter the flock. Elders are to guard and protect the church against teachers of error. This work of oversight is limited to “the flock of God which is among you” (1 Pet. 5:2). Elders can oversee only the local church where they have been appointed to oversee! No one else.

3) **Example-Setting:** “...being *ensamples* to the flock” (1 Pet. 5:3). The word “example” is like that of being a pattern to go by. Elders, being shepherds, go before the sheep. Elders must be men whose lives can be imitated by members of the church in every aspect of life. This includes practicing liberality in giving, keeping himself pure and above suspicion, given to hospitality, controlling his temper, behaving himself, being honest, being a Bible teacher and a blameless reputation.