

Well Done Good and Faithful Church – Evaluating the Leadership

March 20, 2022

1 Tim. 5: 17-25

5 Questions for evaluating the leadership of our church and ourselves from Paul to Timothy:

- 1) **Are They Hard Working?** V17; “elders who rule,” not domineering, but those that can call for and insist on obedience to God’s word, Tit. 2:15, they rule the church. Also, they are worthy of double honor, “two-fold honor.” The word means: respect, honor and also financial remuneration. Those who labor in preaching and teaching are especially worthy of this double honor. Paul’s life was poured out for this work, 2 Tim. 4:6-7. See also 1 Thess. 5:12: hard work, toil, labor.
- 2) **Am I Buying Truth?** V18; Pro. 23:23, “buy the truth and do not sell it.” From Deut. 25:4, Paul references this passage. This reference speaking to how I treat the property of my neighbor from whom I’ve borrowed their animal for work on my field. I allow the animal to feed because the animal is more valuable than the grain and respect for my neighbor more than the grain it eats. What’s the point? It is an argument of a lesser to the greater. How are the shepherds to be treated? The points are justice and value.
 - a) **Justice:** we receive the life-giving Word of God and we give because we benefit from that work.
 - b) **Value:** How much do you pay them? See their labor to proclaim the Word of God. Philippians is a letter to a church that supported Paul, and Paul’s prayer for them in Phil. 4:19.
- 3) **Do I Cultivate Love and Respect for the Leaders?** V19; is about receiving accusations against a shepherd. Deut. 19:15, one witness not enough to charge another, there isn’t a requirement of perfection of our leaders but a life where growth is evident and progress made growing in Christlikeness, 1 Tim. 4:15. Watch for those who would single out a shepherd to attack them. From 1 Thess. 5:12-13, 1) Respect those who labor: know them, 2) Esteem them: consider them worthy of respect. 3) Be Peaceful Sheep: for your own sake, Heb. 13:17.
- 4) **Do They Set an Example as Growing Believers?** V20-21; the sin of false teaching is the context of exposing them in the presence of all, 1 Tim. 1:3-4. Without partiality: God, the Lord Jesus, and angels witness how sinning shepherds should be corrected in the church. A godly man should receive correction and show progress in their growth. They must keep working on sanctification and Christlikeness and setting a worthy example.
- 5) **Do They Purify or Putrefy the Church?** V22-25. V22, simple meaning, don’t be hasty in committing to make one an elder or leader. Reason 1) V24, you need to know them and their works because their sins might come to light slowly. Reason 2) V25, you also learn about the good works they do that no one knows about, confirming a good example.
**Men that don’t grow, can’t be taught, and are not growing in Christlikeness – they putrefy the body.

What about using wine in v23? Paul talked about asceticism in Ch.4:3, so this is not the Christian liberties of Rom. 14:15 and conscience issues. Dealing with sinning leaders and church conflict causes suffering and pain which Timothy had to endure (2 Tim. 5:2).

Further Discussion and Application

We are challenged as believers to examine our heart and determine where our affections are. What is our attitude to the preached word of God? What is our affection for our shepherds and the labor they exert each week in the ministry?

1 Cor. 9:1-18 gives additional detail and support of the blessing of supporting the men that labor in preaching and teaching of the Word of God. What spiritual things do we reap as a result of these men's labor? Why should our shepherds receive material things from us for the spiritual work they do on our behalf?

Shepherds need to grow and mature in Christ as well as believers. How can the body of Christ encourage and love the shepherds in their walk? How can we as sheep live our Christian life in a way that builds the body of Christ? How do we respect our shepherds for their labor to lead us by being peaceful sheep?

As slaves of Christ, we are called to obey our master and live our lives in obedience to His commands. How does the preached Word of God prepare us for that work? How does fellowship with other believers and accountability with others help us purify and unify the body of Christ? How do we encourage those in our number that are distracted for a time in this work?

How do you cultivate love and respect for the leaders in our church and those who lead you in the ministries that you serve in? How can you help them be more effective in their ministry and service to the church?