



September 6, 2026

Elders from Genesis to Revelation

The Role of Elders In God's Church

1 Peter 5:1-4, Acts 20:25-35, Titus 1:7 & 9, 1 Timothy 3:1 & 5

1. Sermon Outline:

- a. Elders Shepherd God's People, Especially By Prayer and Teaching God's Word
 - i. As pastors, elders care for God's people under the leadership of Jesus, the Good Shepherd
 - ii. This is a very personal responsibility at LRBC
- b. Elders Provide Spiritual Leadership, Especially by the Example of Their Life in Christ
 - i. As overseers, elders are to provide spiritual leadership in the manner of Jesus
 - ii. Again, this is a very personal responsibility at LRBC
- c. Elders Help God's People Apply God's Resources to Their Lives and Church
 - i. Elders are to help God's people apply His Word and grace to their own lives
 - ii. This is a critical responsibility as members of LRBC grow to maturity in Christ

2. *Sunday* – As soon as possible after the sermon, consider:

- a. What stood out to you the most in this sermon?
- b. What new truth did you learn, or what truth were you reminded of?
- c. Is there a particular Scripture passage you feel God is leading you to meditate on or commit to memory?
- d. What is one thing God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
- e. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?

3. *Monday*:

- a. Begin the week by reading 1 Peter 5:1-4, 1 Timothy 3:1 & 5, and Titus 1:7 & 9.
 - i. This week's sermon focuses on the role elders perform in the church (next week will consider their qualifications using other verses from 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1). Based on a first reading of these three passages, how would you describe the role of an elder?
 - ii. Note: Depending on the translation you use, you may encounter the term overseer, elder, bishop, or shepherd. These terms should be considered interchangeable, although bishop, used in the King James and other related translations, is not found in most modern translations (ESV, NIV, and CSB)

to avoid confusion with the leadership position using that title that has been adopted by some denominations, but is not described in the Bible.

- b. Read and meditate on 1 Peter 5:1-4.
 - i. Who was Peter, and what was he best known for?
 - ii. How does he identify himself with those he is writing to? What title does he give himself in this passage? What more authoritative title might he have used (see 1 Peter 1:1)?
- c. What was Peter likely thinking of when he:
 - i. Says he was a “witness of the sufferings of Christ” (consider Luke 22:54-62)?
 - ii. Mentions “glory” in verse 1 (see Matthew 17:1-5)?
 - iii. Wrote about the shepherd and the flock in verse 2 (consider John 10 and 21:15-17)?
 - iv. Wrote about “not domineering” (“not lording” in the NIV and CSB) (consider Luke 22:24-30, John 13:12-17, 15:20)?
- d. After thinking about Peter and reading these passages, what one other event would seem to make Peter especially qualified to write these instructions to elders (John 21:15-17)? How does the mission Jesus gave Peter compare to the role for an elder mentioned in the passages read to start the day?

4. *Tuesday:*

- a. Read and meditate on 1 Peter 5:1-4 again today.
- b. The King James Bible begins verse 2 with the word “feed” instead of “shepherd”. How would you describe the difference between the two?
 - i. Although “shepherd” is the more appropriate translation, why might Peter have thought a lot about feeding when he wrote? What were two of the three commands Jesus gave Peter in John 21:15-17?
 - ii. Read (or repeat from memory) the first verse of Psalm 23. How is this function of the shepherd described? What other function does the shepherd perform?
- c. Shepherds, sheep, and flocks are important images used throughout the Bible. Pause from considering elders briefly and read these passages: Psalm 78:51-53, 100:3, Isaiah 40:10-11, Micah 5:4, Zechariah 9:16, John 10:1-16, Hebrews 13:20, Revelation 7:17 (there are many more if you want to use a concordance to extend the study).
 - i. What general conclusions can you form about shepherds, sheep, and flocks from these passages?
 - ii. Not all shepherds are good. Read Jeremiah 23:1-2, Ezekiel 34:1-10, and Zechariah 11:17.
 - 1. How does Paul bring this forward to the New Testament era as he writes to Titus in 1:10-2:1?

2. How do you think 1 John 4:1 relates?
3. What caution should we gather from these verses?
- d. In what ways would you see the role of a shepherd and that of an elder being similar (or identical)?

5. **Wednesday:**

- a. Read 1 Peter 5:1-4 again today, meditating especially on verses 2b-3.
- b. Peter describes three possible problems that might confront an elder and how they should respond using contrasting exhortations:
 - i. Not under _____, but _____.
 1. Although it is mainly about money, how does 2 Corinthians 9:7 apply? What is an elder giving?
 2. What two words might be used to describe this problem* (Hint: Philippians 1:18, 1 Thessalonians 2:3, & James 4:3)?
 - ii. Not for _____, but _____.
 1. Other than money, what shameful gain might an elder seek?
 2. What two words might be used to describe this problem* (consider James 4:13-16, Philippians 2:3-4, & Matthew 23:5-7)?
 - iii. Not _____ over _____, but being _____ to the _____.
 1. How did Ezekiel describe this problem in 34:4-5? Can you think of a similar case in our time?
 2. What two words might be used to describe this problem* (John 18:11, Mark 10:42-45 & 2 Corinthians 1:23-24)?
 - iv. Taking just the positive statements (those after the “but”) together, what brief description do you get for an elder?
- c. What reward does Peter tell us is involved? When is it given? Who else is going to receive the crown (see 1 Corinthians 9:25, 2 Timothy 4:8 (especially the last phrase), James 1:12, and Revelation 2:10)?

6. **Thursday:**

- a. Read and meditate on Acts 20:17-35.
- b. While only Peter identifies himself as both an Apostle and an Elder, Paul never does so (unless you consider Philemon 8, but there he is saying he is an old man), yet he appoints elders or has others do so in churches he plants.
 - i. Where do you see him demonstrating the functions of an elder in this passage from Acts?
 - ii. As he talks to the elders from Ephesus, how does Paul’s describe the primary motive for how he has lived and for how he sees his future?
 - iii. What is his primary goal?

- iv. What method does Paul say he used?
- v. In what ways does Paul demonstrate that he is a true shepherd of this flock?

7. **Friday:**

- a. Today, go back to 1 Peter 5 and read verses 5-10.
- b. In these verses, Peter moves on from instruction to the elders and addresses the broader community of believers. While the focus this week is the role of elders, why would these instructions have been necessary for elders to perform those functions (imagine trying to shepherd cats instead of sheep)?
- c. What is the primary instruction he gives that applies to all of us?
 - i. How important is this to us as Christians (see Matthew 23:12, Ephesians 4:2, James 4:10)?
 - ii. Who is the perfect example of this quality (see Philippians 2:8)?
- d. Why/how does humility help overcome anxiety?
- e. What other applications do you see for your life in verses 5-10?

8. **Saturday:**

- a. Reread the four focal passages: 1 Peter 5:1-4, Acts 20:25-35, Titus 1:7 & 9, 1 Timothy 3:1 & 5.
- b. Based on what you have learned about the role of elders, how important do you think they are? How do you see LRBC better serving the Lord by engaging additional elders?

9. **Application:** While the instructions in 1 Peter 5:1-4 are to elders, the principles, especially those from the three contrasting statements, should apply to all Christians. No task we perform for the Lord should be done for the **wrong motives**. We should not engage in any activity for the Lord because of guilt or pressure, but instead because the Holy Spirit has led us to do so. Likewise, we must avoid **wrong goals** and always work to bring honor and glory to the Father. Self should never factor into our goals. And finally, we must be cautious that we don't employ the **wrong methods** as we serve Him. We must be careful in our zeal to share the Gospel that we don't become dependent on the world instead of the Word.

10. **Pray:** This week, as we continue to learn more about the horrific flash flood in Nepal and Tibet, in addition to praying for the two countries and those directly affected, please pray for these two unreached people groups:

- a. **Hill Brahmin.** A Hindu priestly caste found only in Nepal, they comprise almost 10% of the country's population, yet less than 0.1% know Christ as their Savior.
- b. **Gtsang.** Living exclusively in Tibet (now part of China), they follow several different Buddhist sects, and only about 0.02% of the 752,000 Gtsang identify as Christians.

* Suggested two-word descriptions for the three problems are included in the Application paragraph.