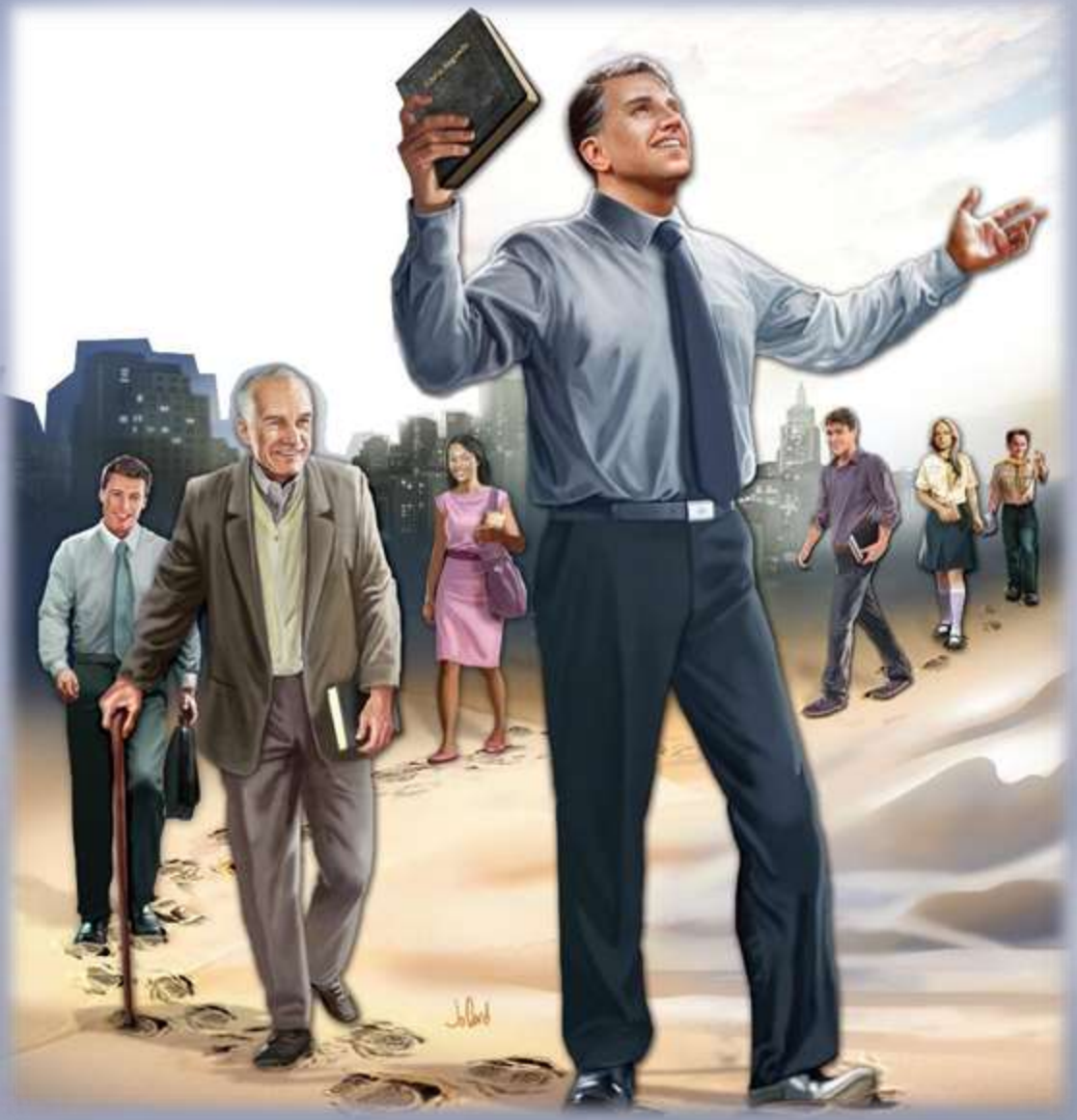
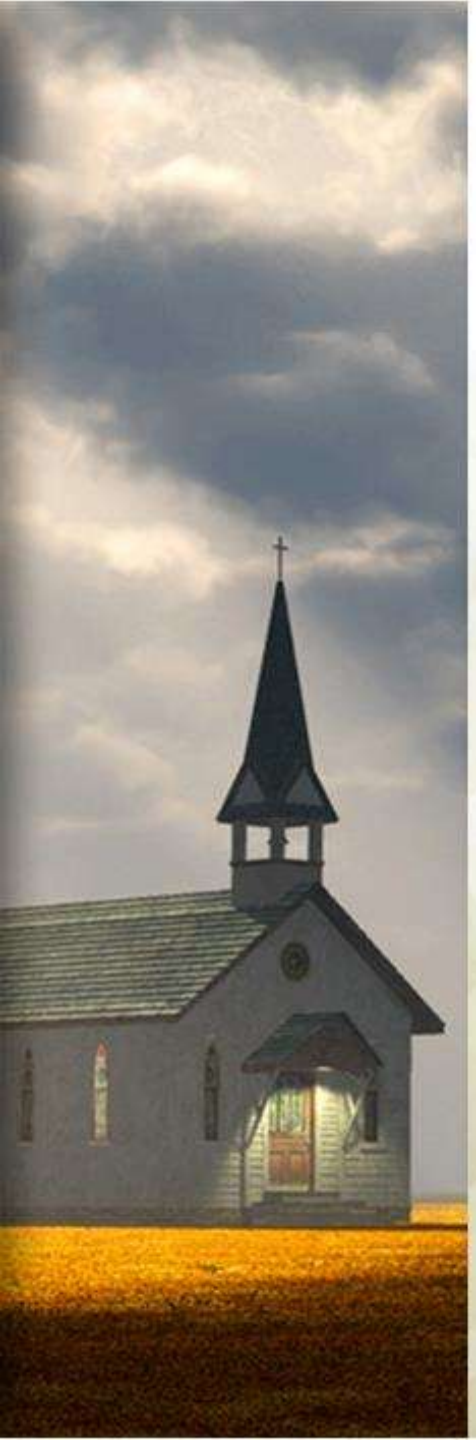
SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Lesson 7 for May 13, 2017

In 1 Peter 5:1-10, Peter explained the role of the elders at Church.



- The origin of eldership.
- Requirements for eldership.
- The duties of elders.
- Called to serve.
- Humbleness.
- Confronting dangers.



THE ORIGIN OF ELDERSHIP

"Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine." (1 Timothy 5:17)

The Church was led by 12 apostles at the beginning.

As Church grew, more help was needed. Deacons were chosen to do so (Acts 6:1-6).

When churches were planted beyond Jerusalem, there was a need for people to lead them: the elders.

We see in the book of Acts and Paul's writings that elders were appointed in each local Church (Titus 1:5).

Some of their duties was to preach, to exhort and to maintain the community's well-being.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ELDERSHIP

"This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work." (1 Timothy 3:1)

The requirements of those who are appointed as elders are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

- Blameless.
- Husband of one wife.
- Temperate.
- Sober-minded.
- Of good behavior.
- Hospitable.
- Able to teach.
- Not given to wine.
- Not violent.
- Not greedy.
- Gentle.
- Not quarrelsome.
- Not covetous.
- One who rules his own house well.
- Not a novice.
- Having a good testimony among those who are outside.
- Having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination.
- Not self-willed.
- Sober-minded.
- A lover of what is good.
- Just.
- Holy.
- Self-controlled.
- Holding fast the faithful word.

THE DUTIES OF ELDERS

"Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God." (1 Peter 5:2 NLT)

The elder is a "witness of the sufferings of Christ" above all, and "partaker of the glory that will be revealed." (1P. 5:1).

An elder is compared to a shepherd that cares after his sheep. He must lead them to the great Shepherd and shared his knowledge about the Savior with them.

He must be an example to the flock; he must teach them and help them to work in harmony (1P. 5:3).

He should do everything voluntarily, in good spirits, being motivated by his love for Christ and His Church.

CALLED TO SERVE

"Not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock." (1 Peter 5:3 NIV)

There's an important difference between the nations of this world and the Kingdom of Heaven: the way the leaders behave.

Church leaders must serve the others and be their example.

Jesus said that "whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your servant", since He "did not come to be served, but to serve." (Matthew 20:27-28).

Every leader must imitate Christ. They must look after their brothers and sisters and not just themselves.

HUMBLENESS

"Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'" (1 Peter 5:5)

In Peter's time, humbleness was the attitude servants and slaves should show towards their masters.

Being humble to someone "underneath" oneself—or at the same level—was considered a weakness.

But it shouldn't be like that at Church. Humbleness is an indispensable requirement to living together, especially for those in leadership.

We should treat our brothers and sisters with the same humbleness we show before God (1P. 5:6-7).

CONFRONTING DANGERS

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world." (1 Peter 5:8-9)

Christians are always in the middle of the Great Controversy between good and evil.

As the Church goes on, the enemy fights harder for our souls.

We are called to resist the devil and stand strong in faith. Jesus promised that He will "restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast." (1P. 5:10 NIV).

"Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. […] Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." (Revelation 2:10)

“Those who become colaborers with God will increase in moral and spiritual power, while those who devote their time and energies to serving themselves will dwarf, and wither, and die. Christian women, the youth, the middle-aged, and those of advanced years, may have a part in the work of God for this time; and in engaging in this work as they have opportunity, they will obtain an experience of the highest value to themselves. In forgetfulness of self, they will grow in grace. By training the mind in this direction, they will learn how to bear burdens for Jesus, and will realize the blessedness of the service. And soon the time will come when ‘they that sow in tears shall reap in joy.’”

E.G.W. (Daughters of God, cp.1, p. 19)