

THE APPOINTMENT OF ELDERS & DEACONS

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INTRODUCTION: (ILLUSTRATION: OPENING OF PRESENTS... THIS IS A GREAT ONE!)

A. I take a personal responsibility in the selection and appointment of elders & deacons at this church:

1. Some believe the church selects & approves of the men & the preacher's role is only teaching the qualifications & publicly acknowledging the men the church selects:
 - a. **Acts 6:1-4** is seen as a precedent → These aren't elders & probably not deacons
 - b. I can't find any passage that teaches a congregation's role in selecting and appointing elders & deacons, but I can find a preacher's role defined.
2. Consider what Paul has to tell Timothy & Titus:
 - a. **Titus 1:5** → Left in Crete to set in order things that are lacking and appoint elders
 - b. **I Tim 5:19** → Do not receive an accusation against them except from the mouth of two or three witnesses
 - c. **I Tim. 5:20** → Those who are sinning, rebuke in the presence of all
 - d. **I Tim. 5:22** → Don't lay hold on anyone hastily or share in other's sins
 - e. **I Tim. 5:23** → Take a little wine for your stomach's sake
 - f. **I Tim. 3:10** → Deacons, having been tested & prove, let them serve
3. This is why I feel a personally responsible in their selection & appointment:
 - a. I do believe seeing this takes place is part of fulfilling my ministry as a preacher
 - b. I also believe that I will answer to God for whether or not it happens and for the type of men who are chosen to serve in these two capacities!
 - c. This is why I have "taken the bull by the horns" and really handled the bulk of it

B. With these thoughts I mind, I would like us to appoint elders & deacons this morning!

1. These roles have not been filled in an official sense in over fifty years! It's been too long!
 - a. There are several reasons why – Some are justified and some are probably not
 - b. Because most of you have not worked under elders in a long time, if ever, it will certainly be a transition time for all us! Patience & cooperation is a must!
2. As we proceed this morning, I want to acknowledge that not everyone put this exact list of men together in these particular roles on their sheets:
 - a. Some men submitted were unqualified to serve, some did not desire the work, and some withdrew their own names for other & more personal reasons
 - b. Just because you did not write one (or more) of these names down doesn't mean they are unqualified – Combinations of all of these & more were submitted!
 - c. What we need now is for the congregation to come together in unity supporting all of these men as a unit and individually as they faithfully fulfill their roles

I. THE APPOINTMENT OF DEACONS:

A. Words of exhortation to the deacons

1. You are about to be appointed to the role of a deacon in the Lord's church!
 - a. This is a very important work that I am sure each of you take very seriously!
 - b. You haven't come by the qualifications overnight... it's taken years of spiritual work
 - c. The congregation's request for you to serve should stand as a testament to your character, trustworthiness, and the confidence they have in you individually
2. As a deacon you will be a servant for the Lord in this church (**Phil. 1:1**)
 - a. Your responsibility will be to take care of the physical needs of the congregation
 - b. Certainly some of your responsibilities may be spiritual in nature too (arranging of Bible class teachers, material, etc – Whatever the elders delegate to you)
 - c. Your focus will be to assist the elders as a servant so they can spend as much of their focus as possible on the church's spiritual welfare
3. I also want to encourage you not to try to do everything all by yourself!
 - a. The work of a deacon has always been done to some degree in this church by those who are willing to work – This includes you and includes many others!
 - b. Utilize talents and desire to serve in others as you carry out your work as a deacon

B. The appointment of the men:

1. Call David, Terrell, Ralph, and Robert up to the front for their appointment:
 - a. Do you accept the position of a deacon in the Lord's church?
 - b. Will you do your best to faithfully fulfill your duties as a servant?
2. Pray for the men collectively, mentioning their names, and then shake hands with each one of them – Thank them for their work and their willingness to serve
3. Introduce to the congregation their new deacons

C. Words of exhortation to the congregation:

1. These men will need help and cooperation as they serve as deacons: **(Romans 16:1-2)**
 - a. Remember, like with the elders, these men will likely have regular 40 hours a week (or more) jobs and families they have responsibilities toward
 - b. Just because an elder assigns one of these men a job doesn't mean they have to always do it by themselves... It's perfectly fine to delegate work to others!
 - c. You will likely be asked to help with some things or maybe you aren't asked even and you see help is needed – Don't hinder their work by refusing to help!
2. Not only do they need help and cooperation, but also support: **(Col. 3:16-17)**
 - a. When you see them doing their work as a deacon well then tell them how much you appreciate them and the work they are doing – Be a Barnabas!
 - b. Sometimes their work will be clearly visible to all; however, sometimes their work will be behind the scenes and go greatly unnoticed!
 - c. Sometimes its only when work is not being done that attention is given – Not good!

II. THE APPOINTMENT OF ELDERS:

A. Words of exhortation to the men

1. You're about to begin a serious & important work in the life of this church:
 - a. It's so important that God wants every church to have its own elders
 - b. Its work that should be desired – But not because you want to have power, control, a name among brethren, or public recognition! It's the work you're after!
 - c. It's a work to be desired because you see you meet the qualifications, you desire to do the work of the Lord, you see the need for it being done! **(I Tim. 3:1)**
2. The work that is before you to do is the work of a shepherd! **(I Pet 5:1-4)**
 - a. To know how a shepherd leads look to God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ
→ The perfect example of a shepherd's heart! **(Psalms 23, John 10:11ff)**
 - b. A shepherd does not drive like a cowboy, is indifferent like a hired hand, bosses like a sheriff, or is aloof like a CEO! These are detrimental misconceptions!
 - c. You will need to smell like sheep! Developing personal relationships with all of the members will be vital – Lead, guide, feed, protect, and correct us!
3. You also have the responsibility of being an overseer in this church: **(I Tim. 5:17)**
 - a. We place confidence in you because of spiritual maturity and experience – Being "elder" you possess wisdom and foresight – An ability to see ahead!
 - b. You have the duty of seeing that the things we do, teach, and practice are the right things – The things that will lead us closer to God, not further away
 - c. You are charged with making decisions and directing the spiritual welfare of this church → Your decisions must have our best spiritual interests at heart!
4. As a shepherd & overseer, we will be looking to you to guard & protect us! **(Ax 20:28-29)**
 - a. You must be listening to what is taught, making sure it is truth from God's word
 - b. We need you to be on the guard against those who would come in and teach things that are contrary to God's word and stand firm against them!

B. The appointment of the men

1. Call Bryan, Bob, and Steve up to the front for their appointment:
 - a. Do you humbly accept the office, the work of a shepherd in the Lord's church?
 - b. Will you do you best to faithfully fulfill your duties as a shepherd & bishop – Feeding, nurturing, protecting, and guiding this flock of the Lord?

2. Pray for the men collective, mentioning their names, and then shake hands with each one of them, thank them for their work and their willingness to serve
3. Introduce to the congregation their new elders

C. Words of exhortation to the congregation

1. While they have a duty to truly know the flock, we must know them! **(I Thess. 5:12-13)**
 - a. Allow them into your life... be open to them! Don't make yourself aloof to them!
 - b. As they try to become involved and know you better, don't assume they are out to get you! These men will be looking out for your soul!
 - c. Hold these men in high regard in your hearts & minds!
2. Obey & submit to them – They're charged w/overseeing this church **(Hb 13:17; I Pt 5:1-5)**
 - a. Don't be constantly at war with them and the decisions they are making!
 - b. They should not have to badger us to follow them in the things they ask us to do, like a parent might have to badger a child to clean his room!
 - c. It involves not only doing what they ask of us, but also the proper attitude
3. We must strive to be at peace amongst ourselves – The task laid before them is not an easy one... Let's not add to their load by tearing one another apart!
4. Understand though, that these are just men, their authority is a limited authority!
 - a. If they should ever ask you to do anything that violates the scriptures or violates your conscience you must obey God rather than man! **(Acts 5:29)**
 - b. The decisions they make must fall in line with the teachings of God's word... if not, we must not follow them! They are susceptible to being wrong & falling away!
 - c. **Illustration:** "They're my elders... I've got to do what they say!" or "They're the elders, surely they're right!" – Many are in error due to this thinking!

SONG: RISE UP O MEN OF GOD!

CONCLUSION:

- A. It's been a long time coming, but we can now say with confidence that we have the type of leadership in place here that God desires for us to have!
- B. We have just appointed "Shepherds" in this church – There's a greater Shepherd that is calling for you today – Jesus the Loving Shepherd!