

ELDER'S DUTY IN KEEPING THE CHURCH PURE

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INTRODUCTION:

1. God has never done anything without a purpose.
 - A. When He gave the qualifications for elders, it was for a purpose.
2. The word "must," in 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:7, is there for a reason.
 - A. Just as the elder "must" be qualified, he "must" discharge his responsibilities to himself, and to the congregation over which he presides.
3. No greater responsibility ever rested upon any man that which rests upon the elders of the Lord's church.
 - A. These men who are commissioned by God are to be "elders" (1 Pet. 5:1), "bishops" (1 Tim. 3:1), "overseers" (Acts 20:28), "pastors" (Eph. 4:11) and their functions can easily be seen from the terms "he ruleth" (Rom. 12:8; 1 Thess. 5:12), "the ones that have rule" (Heb. 13:7), and "shepherds and teachers" (Eph. 4:11; 1 Cor. 12:28).
4. Of equal importance to these words are the words, which are often overlooked, "steward" (Tit. 1:7), and "watchmen" (Acts 20:21; Heb. 13:17).
 - A. Here is where I want us to concentrate in this lesson.
 1. The elders' responsibility of watching over the church in order to keep it pure.

BODY:

1. From the passages that we have already noted, the church is to submit itself unto the authority of the eldership which is over it.
 - A. Three words need to be considered by the church in relation to this point:
 1. "Obey."
 2. "Rule."
 3. "Submit."
2. Today sins of the world have crept into the church to the point that it is often difficult to distinguish it from the world.
 - A. We see unpaid debts, covetousness, animosity, pride, immorality, unjustness, false doctrine, adultery, and almost every other kind of sin imaginable in the church today.
 1. It is as if cancer has taken over the body of Christ, with the intent to destroy it as quickly as possible.
 - B. This spiritual malignancy must be stopped!
 1. A church will only grow with clean lives, holy hands and discipline.
 - C. Here is where the elders' responsibility to purity comes in.
 1. The church's spiritual appetite is formed by the diet it is fed on.
 - A. The church's overseers are going to give account to God for conditions in the church.
 1. If sin prevails, the elders will answer for such!
 2. God needs men of the Book (i.e. the Bible).
 - A. Men of the Book, when negligent in their duties, must know that they are

jeopardizing the souls of men and playing with hell fire - Prov. 18:9; Jere. 48:10; Hos. 4:6.

3. Members absent themselves from such congregations week after week and nothing is done to find the cause nor to bring them back to the Lord.
 4. The unruly member of the church continues to embarrass the faithful body by his actions and nothing is done to disassociate the church from such an individual.
 - A. Due to this the church becomes a thing of ridicule in the community.
4. There are many methods of true discipline.
- A. Self-discipline.
 1. Each member of the church should be encouraged by the elders to properly discipline themselves.
 2. There are many Scriptures which indicate the need for such - 1 Cor. 9:27; Gal. 5:24; Rom. 12:9, 21; 1 Pet. 2:23; Phil. 4:5.
 3. In almost every aspect of life there is the need for self-discipline.
 - B. Teaching and admonishing.
 1. No one can develop in the Christian life without a continuous growth in knowledge.
 - A. Christians live "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" - Mt. 4:4.
 2. With this in mind we see the necessity of the Bible being taught to each congregation.
 - A. This points to the responsibility of the elders to tend the flock that it may grow - Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 2:2.
 - C. Training in service.
 1. Knowledge alone is not sufficient.
 - A. Development comes through the practice of knowledge.
 2. Elders need to be vitally involved in the training of their congregation.
 - D. Encouragement.
 1. Elders can do a great service to the church by encouragement.
 - E. Reproving and rebuking.
 1. There are times when a public reproof is timely.
 - A. This is especially true when some public sin is persistently indulged in.
 2. Elders may not always be popular in doing this but it is necessary and a part of their responsibility.

CONCLUSION:

1. As we can see, true discipline involves many things.
 - A. As elders who desire the best for their congregations they will seek to carry out these responsibilities.