

Elder Interaction With The Church

6. **Keeping A Finger On The Congregational Pulse** Elders are not “bosses” who arrogantly rule with an iron fist. At the conclusion of the Jerusalem Conference on Gentile relations: (Acts 15:22) “*Then pleased it the _____ and _____, with the _____ church, to send chosen men of their _____ to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas.*” (a) Note that the _____ church was included in making the decision in this instance. (a) Elders must have a finger on the pulse of the local membership in order to determine needs and how best to address them. (b) They must establish comfortable, trusting personal relationships. (c) As they mix and mingle, make inquiries, address concerns, and *watch* for potential problems, they must always be ready to listen. (d) It may be expedient to meet with the entire membership to ask and answer questions from time to time. At other times it may be appropriate to meet separately with the men, women, younger folks, older folks, single members, married members, etc. (e) Satisfaction is attained only when all legitimate member concerns, suggestions, and problems are given due consideration. Elders, know your flock!
7. **Leading In The Right Direction** We remind of Isaiah’s warning: (8:20) “*To the _____ and to the _____: if they speak not according to _____, it is because there is no _____ in them.*” Elders must seek the (Jer 6:16) “_____ paths” and “*the _____ way, and _____ therein.*” (a) Some matters are not specified in black-and-white law. (b) Policies that conform to scriptural principles are adopted out of expediency (1 Cor 6:12; 10:23) to fit local culture and current needs. (c) Elders must understand that “*all things are lawful --- but all things edify not.*” Scripture? _____ (d) This is where wisdom prevails. Elders set the stage in shaping local policies. They should always be capably alert to potential dangers. Elders must be sound in the Scriptures.
8. **Elders Feed The Flock** Jesus told Peter, “*Feed my lambs.*” Scripture? _____ Elders are to (Acts 20:28) “*feed the _____ of God*” and (1 Pet 5:2) “*_____ the _____ of God which is _____, taking the _____ thereof.*” (a) Elders must be “*apt to teach.*” Let no one fool you: An elder that is incapable to teach is not *apt to teach*; neither can he oversee those who are able to teach. (Titus 1:9) “*Able by _____ doctrine both to _____ and to _____ the gainsayers.*” (b) This does not necessarily mean he must preach, or teach public Bible classes every week. (c) He may no longer publicly teach because his years have depreciated his physical health and stamina, but he must be instructive, imparting knowledge. (d) This “feeding” varies from teaching Bible doctrine to teaching personal values, counseling, giving timely advice and, very importantly, teaching by example. Elders are watchmen. They know and resist false ways.
9. **Elders And Church Discipline** The local body, as well as individual members, must experience proper discipline. (a) The elder must be _____ (Titus 1:7). (b) “*(For if a man _____ how to _____ his _____ house, how shall he _____ of the church of God?)*” Scripture? _____ (c) A definition of discipline: A system of rules governing conduct and behavior. The Scriptures (2 Tim 3:16) are “*profitable for _____, for _____, for _____, for _____ in righteousness.*” (d) Discipline does not necessarily involve punishment. The intent is to correct wrongs. (e) In irresolvable cases, withdrawal of fellowship is commanded (2 Thess 3:6). Elders must initiate and oversee such matters, making certain they can say of themselves (V7), “*for we _____ not ourselves disorderly _____.*”
10. **Summation** Godly elders are our *older brothers* and *fathers* in the church. God holds them more accountable because of their great responsibility. It is a work of love. **Remember:** (Heb 13:17) “*They _____ for your _____.*” (1 Thess 5:13) “*Esteem them _____ in _____ for their work's sake.*” No NT church can be complete without them. Appreciate them!