

Welcome to Calvary Church, Brighton



Today 17th June 2018 speaker Philip Wells, Full-time Elder.
This morning - "Eldership - a practical study"

www.calvary-brighton.org.uk

Sermons and talks - calvary-brighton.sermon.net

Eldership - a practical study #1

Aim - to help us find the will of God regarding future ministry at Calvary Church by going back to *first principles*.

Q: does the bible tell us the name and address of the next (future) paid Elder?

A: unfortunately not

BUT - God does promise to guide and provide for his people in accordance with his word, and by his Spirit.

So ... presumably God has a BETTER way than just giving us the email address ...

- this probably involves us in praying,
 - examining ourselves
 - and our situation,
 - learning to trust God,
 - learning more about his ways by experience.

Eldership

Will aim to touch on the following thoughts:

- Why Elders?
- What are Elders?
- What do they do?
- What are they like?
- How do you get them?
 - but painting with a broad brush

My arrangement of thoughts ...

1. it's not just N.T. that has elders
2. the N.T church did have elders
3. the elders had various descriptive titles
4. Jesus is the ultimate [elder]

Note - two things

1. In this and all other matters we are to have faith in God, even though we cannot see how he will work it out

- Definite part of faith is “waiting”
- “those who wait upon the LORD will renew their strength” Isaiah 40:31

2. Jesus, the Lord, is our good Shepherd, he leads and protects us

- “your rod and your staff, they comfort me” Psalm 23:4

1. it's not just new testament churches that have elders

1. there are societies today that are led by elders

May 7th 2018 Kabul: *Security officials in Afghanistan are working with local tribal elders to trace the seven Indian engineers kidnapped reportedly by Taliban gunmen in the restive northern Baghlan province, media reports said today.*

2. Ancient Egypt had elders:

- Genesis 50:7 "so Joseph went up to bury his father. All Pharaoh's officials accompanied him - the dignitaries [elders] of his court and all the dignitaries [elders] of Egypt ..."
- N.B. Elders = LXX presbyteroi

3. Ancient Israel had elders

- Exodus 24:1 "The [God] said to Moses, "Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and 70 of the Elders of Israel" (zaqen = LXX presbyteroi)

4. In the time of Jesus Israel had elders:

- Matthew 27:20 "But the chief priests and the **elders** persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed"

5. There are elders in heaven:

- Rev 5:14 then the 4 living creatures said "Amen" and the **elders** fell down and worshipped

1. it's not just new testament churches that have elders

=> all these societies needed and accepted this leadership

- This is part of human wisdom, human condition
- i.e. societies do not function properly without some sort of leadership
- God uses / endorses / expects this

=> elders are called elders because they are elder/older

- The assumption is that long life / experience / wisdom are needed = respect
- Also: this assumption is not always correct (e.g. those who voted against Jesus)
- But being old certainly doesn't automatically disqualify an elder

2. the new testament churches had elders

1. Acts 11:20 the church in Antioch Jews and Greeks

- v.22 assisted by the church in Jerusalem ...they sent Barnabas ... a great number of people
- v.25 Barnabas went to get Saul/Paul as vital part of the team
- v.30 [sending help = diakonia = service = money] sending their gift to the **elders** by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

2. Acts 14:22,23

- "[encouraged and warning the disciples]
- ... Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church, and with prayer and fasting (Acts 13:3 only) committed them to the Lord in whom they had put their trust."
- Appointed = cheirotoneo = "hand + stretch"
- ?? vote ?? (x2 in NT)
- Prayer (=prayer) and fasting (=culturally sadness, seriousness)
- Presumably there is a way to appoint elders that does not depend on first or second generation apostolicity

2. the new testament churches had elders

3. Titus 1:5 "[to Titus] straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint [= set in place] elders in every town [where there is a church]"

N.B. see qualifications

- v.6 blameless
- v.6 Maritally exemplary (not necessarily married)
- v.6 "traditional" view of family life - obedient children
- v.7 "household-manager" of God
- v.7 Not self-pleasure, angry, alcoholish, dishonourable-gain,
- v.8 Rather: lover-of-strangers, lover-of-good, sound-minded, just, fitting, self-controlled
- v.9 Holding firmly the faithful word/message as taught
- v.9 So he can **exhort/encourage** others by sound doctrine / healthy teaching AND refute/convict/beat the anti-teachers
- v.10-14 able to **contradict** the false and ruinous teachers

3. The elders have various descriptive titles

N.B. elders are always addressed as plural

Acts 20:17 Paul speaks to the elders (presbyteroi) of the church in Ephesus

v.28a "Take heed to yourselves

v.28b and all the flock

v.28c over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers (episkopos = epi+skopos) .

v.28d Shepherd (poimeno - poimen=shepherd) the church of God, which he bought with his own blood"

=> in the New testament the leaders are the elders (whatever else we might call them ... Reverend/ vicar / rector / pastor / minister)

=> elders are overseers (episkopos = bishop)

=> the plural indicates a team working together

=> their role is to shepherd (~ pastor = shepherd)

=> they are appointed by the Holy Spirit - not just the church, and not just the apostles

=> this is a demanding task (watch out!)

4. Jesus is the real Shepherd and Bishop

Jesus is the great model elder/overseer/ shepherd

- He is the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:15)
- 1 Peter 2:24,25 ... we are returned to the Shepherd (poimen) and Overseer (episkopos) of your souls
- 1 Peter 5:4 to elders (presbyteroi)
- ... shepherd (poimaino) the flock of God ... overseeing (episkopeo) willingly
- ... not-as-a-lord but as examples ...
- v.4 When the Chief Shepherd (archipoimen) shall appear ... crown of glory

Some conclusions so far

1. it is right and necessary to be concerned for the future church to have elders
2. that is not just one man, but a team
3. being old is not disqualification, but neither is being younger
4. quality of life matters
5. quality of doctrine matters (i.e. not just "a good heart")
6. ability to deploy the message matters
7. via apostolic word, via congregation, the Holy Spirit appoints elders
8. this is a serious spiritual matter
9. Jesus is the ultimate Elder / Overseer / Shepherd