

Welcome to Calvary Church, Brighton



Today 24th June 2018 speaker Philip Wells, Full-time Elder.
This morning - "Eldership - a practical study (3)"

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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.

N.B. Isaiah's teaching - TRUST THE LORD

This teaching - the Lord is my shepherd ... I'll not lack

Eldership

Looking at questions and answers

•Why Elders?

- Why the church!!
- Answer - Jesus Christ's single project is to build his church, bringing in the lost, beautifying the ugly to become his Bride.
- N.B. this is the most important thing for any human
- Elders are an indispensable layer in that process

•What are Elders?

- Overseers / older ones / shepherds / manage-the-affairs of the church / role models / example setters

•What are they like?

- Like Christ they are servants.
- They serve by leading

Eldership

How do you get them?

- God gives them
- Mostly from within
- Sometimes from outside (e.g. Paul & Antioch)

• What do they do?

- Manage the affairs of the church, shepherd, care, mostly by word and prayer

• How do they do it?

- As a team (apparently)
- mostly by ministry of the word and prayer

Some conclusions so far

0. Jesus is the ultimate Elder / Overseer / Shepherd
 - Gathering and shepherding his flock = the church
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 - elder ~ wisdom
4. quality of life matters
5. quality of doctrine matters (i.e. not just "a good heart")
6. ability to deploy the health-giving message matters ("to encourage ... to prove-wrong")
7. via apostolic word, via congregation, the Holy Spirit appoints elders
8. this is a serious spiritual matter

Eldership #3

Is there anything else?

1. the model is really quite flexible

- Elders in Manhattan
- Elders in Cambodian village
- Elders with PhD's in historical theology
- Elders who prayerfully and give wise scriptural advice
- Elders with management skills needed for a church of 1000
- Elders with patience and love to care for a church of 15

Eldership #3

2. Although there is an expectation of Elders arising within a church, there is a precedent for calling in "specialists" from outside

Ephesians 4:11-14

Gifts from the conquering Saviour

v.11 apostles, prophets (NT?), evangelists (NT?), pastor/teachers

- To prepare God's people
- For work of diakonias
- Unto building up the body of Christ
- Aiming for unity of faith and knowledge
- ~ maturity ~ grow up in Christ ~ body growth
- ==> pastor/teachers train others to serve
- ==> service // maturity
- ==> maturity ~ working, functioning, growing the body
- ==> Q1 is this happening
- ==> Q2. Are we/you part of that?

Eldership #3

2. Although there is an expectation of Elders arising within a church, ...

2 Timothy 2:1,2

" and the things you heard from me through many witnesses entrust [to reliable [=faithful] men who will also be qualified to teach others"

- Part of Timothy's task was to perpetuate the gospel via "faithful" "able" "to teach"
- Timothy learned a body of teaching from the apostle
- He had many witnesses = various people re-echoed to Timothy what they had heard Paul say (?)
- This needs to be passed on to others
- ==> rationale for ministry training (e.g. MTC)
- ==> within the local church
- ==> perhaps with the assistance of the academy (i.e. college)
- ==> we should do training
- ==> and we should pray for training!

Eldership #3

FIEC summary of the message of God from Jesus Christ and his apostles

1. God

There is one God, who exists eternally in three distinct but equal persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God is unchangeable in his holiness, justice, wisdom and love. He is the almighty Creator; Saviour and Judge who sustains and governs all things according to his sovereign will for his own glory.

2. The Bible

God has revealed himself in the Bible, which consists of the Old and New Testaments alone. Every word was inspired by God through human authors, so that the Bible as originally given is in its entirety the Word of God, without error and fully reliable in fact and doctrine. The Bible alone speaks with final authority and is always sufficient for all matters of belief and practice.

3. The Human Race

All men and women, being created in the image of God, have inherent and equal dignity and worth. Their greatest purpose is to obey, worship and love God. As a result of the fall of our first parents, every aspect of human nature has been corrupted and all men and women are without spiritual life, guilty sinners and hostile to God. Every person is therefore under the just condemnation of God and needs to be born again, forgiven and reconciled to God in order to know and please him.

4. The Lord Jesus Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, and lived a sinless life in obedience to the Father. He taught with authority and all his words are true. On the cross he died in the place of sinners, bearing God's punishment for their sin, redeeming them by his blood. He rose from the dead and in his resurrection body ascended into heaven where he is exalted as Lord of all. He intercedes for his people in the presence of the Father.

Eldership #3

5. Salvation

Salvation is entirely a work of God's grace and cannot be earned or deserved. It has been accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ and is offered to all in the gospel. God in his love forgives sinners whom he calls, granting them repentance and faith. All who believe in Christ are justified by faith alone, adopted into the family of God and receive eternal life.

6. The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit has been sent from heaven to glorify Christ and to apply his work of salvation. He convicts sinners, imparts spiritual life and gives a true understanding of the Scriptures. He indwells all believers, brings assurance of salvation and produces increasing likeness to Christ. He builds up the Church and empowers its members for worship, service and mission.

7. The Church

The universal Church is the body of which Christ is the head and to which all who are saved belong. It is made visible in local churches, which are congregations of believers who are committed to each other for the worship of God, the preaching of the Word, the administering of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; for pastoral care and discipline, and for evangelism. The unity of the body of Christ is expressed within and between churches by mutual love, care and encouragement. True fellowship between churches exists only where they are faithful to the gospel.

8. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Baptism and the Lord's Supper have been given to the churches by Christ as visible signs of the gospel. Baptism is a symbol of union with Christ and entry into his Church but does not impart spiritual life. The Lord's Supper is a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice offered once for all and involves no change in the bread and wine. All its blessings are received by faith.

9. The Future

The Lord Jesus Christ will return in glory. He will raise the dead and judge the world in righteousness. The wicked will be sent to eternal punishment and the righteous will be welcomed into a life of eternal joy in fellowship with God. God will make all things new and will be glorified forever.

Eldership #3

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BUT - the specialist from outside

Acts 11:25

- There was gospel telling already v.20
- There was a good thing happening v.23
- There were a lot of converts v.24
- Ethnic and cultural new territory (Jews only ... Greeks v.20b)
- Barnabas and Saul taught great numbers of people (v.26)
- ==> work was not in sin
- ==> work was not wrong or in need of correction
- ==> there was a special need [for teaching non-OT converts] and very few people could fit the bill
- ==> Barnabas "headhunted" Saul (who was presumably already busy)
- ==> specialist skills: running a larger church, church planting, running multiple sites, apologetics,

Eldership #3

3. there is more to leadership than maintenance

N.B. it is difficult to get this thought simply by looking at the [dis] qualifications for elders

Possibly get it from "shepherd" i.e. where do the sheep get led TO?

Better to get it from the place within the plan of God (like Paul did!)

e.g Isaiah 2:1 ff

- The mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as chief among the mountains ... all nations shall stream to it
- VISION of many people, from all nations, coming to the Lord
- VISION for here:
 - Many people from all nations coming to the Lord
- STRATEGY
 - How is that going to happen?
 - What steps can and should we take for that to happen?

3. there is more to leadership than maintenance

e.g. Nehemiah

- Saw the city of God destroyed and its gates burned with fire
- Knew what the vision of the city was
- Cared about the city of God
- Prayed about the city of God
- “saw what ought to be, and where they actually were and the ability of Almighty God to bridge that gap” - Alistair Begg (?)
- Was able to form plans to get from A to H via BCDEF ...
- Was able to motivate people to work together

3. there is more to leadership than maintenance

e.g. Paul

- Romans 15:23
- *Now there is no more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many years to see you, I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to visit you while passing through there and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while ...*
- He saw the vision of the city with all nations streaming to it
- He formed plans and strategies to be part of God's plan in real life
- He was able to motivate people to be part of it too.

Eldership #3

Other things

1. the model is flexible

- Works in New York and Newport

2. Although there is an expectation of Elders arising within a church, there is a precedent for calling in “specialists” from outside

- In-house training and development
- Training in apostolic message (“word”) to pass on
- Head-hunting specialist skills and experience

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- Nehemiah saw it
- Paul saw it
- We need leaders who will see it too.

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