

Be a Blessing to the Body of Christ By Loving Devotion to Your Pastors and Elders

Our Lord Jesus promised, as we read in **Matthew 16:13–18**, that He would build His Church, and He victoriously declared that there was no power in hell that could stand against that work.

One of the key components of God's plan for the building, growth, strengthening, and flourishing of His Church is Christ's gifting of spiritual leaders to the local congregations. We see this wise plan expressed in **Ephesians 4**. Yesterday we touched on this passage, but we need to consider it again for today's study. There are several observations I want to make as we begin:

1. God has gifted _____ of a local church to minister to the saints (**v.7–8**).
2. Among those gifted people are _____, who play a key role in the building of Christ's church (**vs.11–12**).
3. The goal of the growth of the church is _____, which is marked by at least five characteristics (**vs.13–15**).
 - What are the five characteristics of a mature church?

So in light of the Lord Jesus's plan for the building up of His church, what do we need to understand and what do we need to do to cooperate with His working in His church?

Let's look at four actions we must take, to that end:

I. _____ **and** _____ **them** – 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

A. The first attitude is _____ over the congregation.

- What are the necessary actions that accompany such acknowledgement?

B. The second attitude is _____ toward these elders/pastors.

- Why ought the congregation hold the pastor(s) in such high, loving regard?
- Put yourself in the shoes of your pastor for a few moments. What do you think the difference would be between having a congregation that is challenging, rebelling, criticizing, etc. and one that is submissive, obedient, encouraging, and caring?

II. _____ **because of the weight of their responsibility** – 2 Corinthians 11:28; James 3:1; Hebrews 13:17

2 Corinthians 11:28 – For the faithful pastor, there is an endless burden of responsibility for the sheep he leads for the Lord, the Great Shepherd of the sheep.

- Do you remember Jesus's words to Peter in John 21?

James 3:1 and **Hebrews 13:17** – The pastor's accountability is not primarily to the congregation.

III. _____ **reasonably and generously** – Galatians 6:6–10; 1 Corinthians 9:3–14; 1 Timothy 5:17–18

A. The Simple Principle – Galatians 6:6–10

B. The Biblical and Logical Explanation – 1 Corinthians 9:3–14

1. The Logical Argument (vs.3–7)

2. The Biblical Support (vs.8–10)

3. A Personal Appeal (vs.11–12)

4. The Simple Summary (vs.13–14)

C. A Helpful Clarification – 1 Timothy 5:17–18

- So the clear teaching of Scripture is that the local congregation must financially support their full-time pastors, so that they can fulfill the important responsibilities Christ has given them.

IV. _____ **and** _____ **them** – Hebrews 13:17

These actions are closely connected, of course. The first focuses on action while the second on position and relation toward the leaders.

A. **Obey Your Pastors**

B. **Submit to Your Pastors**