

God's Watchmen 2021-09-05

Hebrews 13:17-21

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

18 Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. 19 I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner.

20 Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, 21 equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Adult obeying another adult strange in our culture.

- Authority/power often abused so legitimate misgivings about obey/submission.
 - To extent government leaders corrupt/negligent, citizens suffer.

God gives churches leaders under His authority to protect/benefit His people.

- New Testament different names/titles for church leaders: Elders, bishop, overseers, pastors (means shepherds). Hebrews 13:17a, Titus 1:5b, 7a, 1 Peter 5:1-3

New Testament clearly teaches plurality of leadership with God as the leaders overseer.

- Plurality safeguard against abuse of authority plus load too great for 1 man
 - "lord it over": use power without servant heart for own gain/ego not Jesus Christ's glory/His people's good.
- LEFC elder plurality and elder-led. MEN under authority, not just with authority.
 - Under-shepherd's accountable to Jesus Christ, Chief Shepherd. LEFC is *His* church!
- congregation approves lay and vocational elders...all have equal authority (1 vote).

High standards cause failures in leaders seen/affect more. 1 Timothy 3:2-7, Titus 1:9

- all basically character qualities with 1 competency qualification: able to teach.

Elders stewards/managers of Christ's church responsible for spiritual leadership.

- lead primarily through example and teaching. Acts 6:4, 20:28, 1 Peter 5:3
 - God-centered models to imitate and God-centered teachings to follow.
 - Leaders must persistently say with mouth/lives: Fix eyes on Jesus!

Responsible lead church through prayer and ministry of word and also care for Jesus' flock.

- Old Testament & New Testament picture: shepherds look out for wellbeing of flock.

- lead good pasture/water, healthy, protect from enemy/harm. Hebrews 13:17b
- Old Testament picture of “watchmen” on walls so not attacked by enemy while slept.
 - Watching over flock shared effort among leaders/people. Galatians. 6:1-2
 - elders can’t know all needs to give personal care/exhort. Small Groups

Your response to godly leadership: obey/submit for your benefit. Hebrews 13:17-18, 3 John 4, Galatians 4:19

- obey implies going along with direction....OK to question but in end trust Elders.
- submit involves attitude...cooperation from trust.
 - supportive in attitude/action.....unless clearly against Script.
- Spiritual children, like natural, source of immense joy/grief.

Love you, privilege to serve you but very weighty...pray for us! Spurgeon Hebrews 13:18-21

- "pray" present imperative, meaning continual action of uplifting in prayer.
 - God-centered models, maintain good conscience, Holy Spirit-led shepherd with God’s wisdom not man’s (not have all answers), against discouragement (targets of enemy), lead by faith not sight, alert watchmen.

God gives LEFC Elders under His authority to protect/benefit His people.

- Elders give account for how faithfully watched over your souls. Pray for us.
 - Responsibility seem impossible but with God’s strength, all possible!

“Secret of your great influence.” Spurgeon replied, “My people pray for me.”