

The Biblical Ministry of Pastor: Eph 4:11 “*And he gave some ...pastors and teachers.*” This verse simply shuts up every mouth saying that the ministry of pastor is not biblical, and is not commanded and imposed by God in the NT church for the benefit of the church. Twist the Scriptures however you want to, but we return to the simple biblical fact that God commanded pastors to take care of churches.

A detailed study will reveal that there are three important words referring to the concept of pastor in the NT: “**pastor**” which is better understood as a verb¹ describing what he does as leader of the church (spiritual watchcare of the flock). Then there is the word “**elder**” which best refers to an older man with experience that *is able* to govern (even though it does not refer to the fact of him governing but to the spiritual quality of being able to govern). An elder is always an elder no matter what, but a pastor is only a pastor when he has a charge. The word “**bishop**” should be understood as the official office of the leader of a local church². **Acts 20:17-28** relates that Paul called the elders of the church (**20:17**), and that God had called them to be “*bishops*” (**20:28**) in the capacity of “*feeding the flock*” (pastoring the church). So their quality of experience and wisdom is described with the term “elder”, and their position within the government of the church is described with the term “bishop”, and what they actually do on a day to day basis is described as “pastoring”. It is correct to use the term “pastor” for this person, because God uses it in **Eph 4:11**. In Titus 1 we find that the terms are interchanged for the same person. “*Ordain elders*” (**1:5**), “*For a bishop...*” (**1:7**). **1 Peter 5:1-2** “*the elders... feed the flock of God*”. It is ridiculous and contrary to the Bible to deny the existence of the ministry of

¹ “Pastor” or “to feed” is the most exact biblical word to describe what the person in charge of a church does.

² This is the word that Paul preferred to use in speaking of the requirements for the position in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. The Catholics in years after the NT twisted the concept of bishop to be a man over various churches, but in the NT it is always a man charged with the care of a single church.

pastor, the office of bishop, or the qualities of an elder.

Jer 3:15 “*And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.*” The promise of God is that God would give his people men of God that would carry the name “pastor” and that would feed them spiritually. The concept of ra’ah (to pastor) in the O.T. always has the idea of governing, of making executive decisions for the group. It is not necessary to establish the concept anew in the NT. **Jer 23:4** “*And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD.*” Jeremiah identified himself as a shepherd of Israel in **Jer 17:16**.

Government by Anarchy: The Bible shows a simple preference for a plurality of men of God in a single church, but always **the pastor is one who is designated and responsible for the things that happen in the church.** If this pastor is a true man of God, wise and not a novice, then he will not be a dictator, neither will he abuse the rest, but he will always seek to convince the rest through the exposition of the Bible (spiritual feeding) and not through his own opinions, preferences, nor desires, nor will his leadership style be one of authoritarianism. **The abuse by others of something commanded by God does not give us the right or permission to abandon what God has established as His will.** To the contrary, we should follow God’s instructions in the matter with even more energy to do it right. Notice that in **Jer. 23:1-2; 25:34-36; 50:6; Eze. 34:1-23; and Isa. 56:11** all give a very strong warning to abusive pastors of their day, those who were not responsible, and who were wicked. Laziness in demanding the requirements of these ministers before entering their office is what allows wicked men to enter into the ministry in the first place, and the responsibility here is placed at the feet of the members who are on pulpit committees, not the pastorates. **The existence of a plurality of elders in a church neither affirms**

nor denies the fact that one among them is “charged” with and responsible as “pastor.”

Most churches today have a senior pastor and an assistant pastor. The idea that some present us is that nobody can be “the leader” over a local church, but, they say, all the mature brethren decide the matters through the Holy Spirit. Even though this sounds very spiritual, in reality it is very unbiblical. First we see that God never had any reservations in endowing one single man³ with complete responsibility and authority. Moses, David, Saul, and other kings of Israel and many other men of God were assigned to such a position, and some abused their authority, but that did not cause a unilateral rejection of one man leadership. In **John 10:12**, Jesus condemned the hireling that fled when there were dangers or difficulties. In other words, Jesus condemned those that want the fame, but would not take responsibility when things got tough. This is the spirit of a coward, and the Bible declares in **Rev 21:8** that all cowards have their place in the lake of fire. In **2 Tim 1:6-7** Paul says that God has not given us the spirit of fear (cowardliness), but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. God condemns the sin of leaders that do not take responsibility, and who refuse to pay any price in order to defend the flock of God, and yet are in some way “watching over” the flock. In practice, the system of “no set pastor” always results in failure because in general, when nobody is given the leadership but rather a committee of equals rules, then they will throw the responsibility from one to another, and nobody will act in fear of appearing to dominate the group, and crises and needs are poorly treated. In war, a fight among equal generals over how the war will be fought (a

³ We see something curious in the Trinity. The three persons are totally equal, but in 1 Cor 15:24-28 the comment is made that in the Trinity, God has placed Christ in a position of ruling until sin is completely vanquished (we suppose this is in the narrative of Revelation). But the point is very sharp here. God within himself is a perfect harmony, not a working committee. He uses a single “chief” like an army, which is the responsible decision-maker and leader among other equals.

committee approach) is always going to result in failure.

Heb 13:17 "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." Here we see that THERE IS A PLURALITY OF ELDERS in the church, (but again, this does not shed light on if one is in charge or not). But this reveals that they will be responsible before God for the flock. The question is, how can they be responsible if they have no authority or power to govern and change what is wrong?

Eze 34:6-10 My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered... and none did search or seek after them. Therefore, ye shepherds... because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock... Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand...

Why do people want to destroy the office and ministry of pastor? If all the brethren in a church could make decisions as they wanted, and all could preach without respect that one has to organize these things, and all are equal, then we would have anarchy, and not order (**1Cor 14:33-40**). God has given us two passages, **1Tim 3:1-7**, and **Titus 1:5-9**, that give the requirements of bishop. If there is no real office of "pastor" or one in charge, then why are there requirements for that office (that doesn't exist)? When is an elder evaluated against the requirements? It is not logical to eliminate the official position of pastor and repudiate the requirements and even the office. Doing so will remove the very men who will confront error and correct it, and it will gut them of any official authority and power to do their work.

Non-Paid Ministers: Certain people want to make the pastors to be unpaid volunteers. Every pastor is a volunteer, but none should be unpaid. **Luke 10:7** for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. **Mat 10:10** for the workman is worthy of his meat. **1Ti 5:17** Let the elders that rule

well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. **18...** Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward. This commentary stuck in a passage about elders that teach and govern obviously implies that these elders are paid. **1Co 9:14** Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. Any church that refuses to pay a worthy salary to their pastor is in rebellion against God.

Gal 6:6 Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Every believer has a commandment from God, a spiritual duty before God to "communicate"⁴ economically with his pastor. Those who refuse are under a curse from God. Those who teach that we should not have paid pastors ignore the warnings of God in the OT about using workers but not paying them their due wages⁵. James repeats this principle of God in **James 5:4** "Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth." The error is in this teaching that the preachers of the gospel should not receive anything nor receive a worthy salary to live of the ministry as if God cannot afford to have paid ministers. This is covetousness and avarice of the members, because they don't want to sacrifice for the Lord's work. Paying him a livable salary frees him to dedicate himself to the study of God's word and prayer. He has time for evangelism, counseling, and other church duties. Churches without paid pastors have many problems, and false doctrine and wolves find them easy prey.

⁴ "Communicate" has the idea of economic exchange. In other words, the member receives teaching and preaching, and in turn he should give money and things of value back to this same preacher.

⁵ **Lev 19:13** "the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning." **Mal 3:5** "I will come near to you to judgment... against those that oppress the hireling in his wages"

Pastorless Flocks

Is it biblical for a church to be without a pastor?

By David Cox

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The argument goes something like this. "Pastors are bad because they are dictators, and this is not biblical, then we should not have pastors. According to us, the Bible teaches that each church should have a plurality of elders where none is over any of the others, and no one is 'in charge', but everybody is equal. Each mature brother in the church should work as his heart leads him. The church won't have economic problems like this..." This is like never going to another doctor because you went to one that made matters worse and overcharged you. Find a good doctor but don't cross off all doctors! For those who assert that the ministry of pastor is not biblical, there is a simple answer, why does the word then occur in the Bible? Is it not a biblical concept? The word and concept are completely biblical, so why do people reject it?