

Date: June 23, 2019

Text: Acts 20:28-32

Title: On Eldering

Big Idea: Elders carry a great responsibility, with great dangers, bolstered by a great hope, and promised a great reward.

What Are Elders? A Quick Overview

If you have time, read and discuss the following passages in regards to elders: Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-11.

Read Acts 20:28-32

The Elders' Great Responsibility

Two imperatives: “Pay careful attention” (v. 28) and “Be alert” (v. 31), echoed in 1 Peter 5:8: “Be sober minded; be watchful.”

*The elders have responsibility **for God's flock**—the church.*

How does Paul describe the church in verse 28.

Read Psalm 23 & John 10:1-18. How does God relate to the church as a shepherd?

How is this reflected in the elders' job description of “shepherd” (see also 1 Peter 5:2).

*The elders have the responsibility to **oversee** the church.*

Discuss this term and it's relation to “pay careful attention...to all the flock” (v. 28).

*The elders also have responsibility to **care for** the church.*

Paul explicitly describes their task as “to care for the church of God” (v. 28).

Look back at Psalm 23 & John 10—how does God care for his church? How should elders care for the church?

*The elders have the responsibility to **protect** the church.*

Verse 29: what are the threats to the church? (see Matthew 7:15; 1 Timothy 4:1; 1 John 4:1; 1 Peter 5:8-9a; Matthew 24:11,24; 2 Peter 2:1; 2 Corinthians 11:12-15; and 1 Timothy 6:3-10).

Who is behind these “wolves”? (see 1 Peter 5:8).

How does Jesus protect his flock (John 10:11)? How should elders do so?

The Elders' Great Dangers

Discuss the implications of these 3 dangers:

Danger 1: Elders forget whose flock they are serving.

Danger 2: Elders become tired, discouraged, or simply lazy.

Danger 3: Elders are at risk of becoming wolves (see verse 30; compare 1 Timothy 3:6).

How can you, as a member of the flock, help to protect your elders from these dangers?

The Elders' Great Hope

Read verse 32: what is the threefold hope that Paul outlines in this verse? (God, his word, and his grace).

Just as for all of us, the elders' great hope is the grace of God. We cannot do our work without it. We are utterly dependent upon him.

The Elders' Great Reward

What is the reward for elders who serve well? See verse 32 and 1 Peter 5:4.

The Call for the Flock

1. *Don't make their job more difficult than it should be (Hebrews 13:17).* Brainstorm some ways that you could make the elders' jobs a joy *and follow through on them.*
2. *God might be calling some of you men to serve his church as elders (1 Timothy 3:1).* Do you aspire? What will you do about that?
3. *Pray for your elders?* They could not ask for a greater expression of love from you.