

Introduction

It is always wonderful to have real life examples to follow, not non-living illustrations, but real people who have lived the life or done the work. When considering men who were great leaders of God's people, two of the greatest of the Old Testament are Moses and Nehemiah.

Moses

Of Moses it is recorded, "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. 12:3). Meekness is strength under control. It is a characteristic of the Lord (Matt. 11:29; 21:5). In Numbers 11:29 he is not envious of others or jealous of a position that he held, a spirit which ought to dignify every saint of God (1 Pet. 3:4), for while this is written concerning women, yet the truth of it ought to apply to all. Some of the other characteristics of Moses as a leader were:

- a) He was faithful in God's house (Num. 12:7)
- b) He prayed for those who would seek his hurt (Num. 12:13)
- c) He gave men a responsibility (Num. 13:1-16)
- d) He wrestles with God for an erring people, with himself put out of sight (Num. 14:13)
- e) He sided with God on the matter of discipline (Num. 16:28)
- f) What he didn't know he asked of God (Num. 27:5)

Nehemiah

In reading the book of Nehemiah one cannot help but be impressed by the references to prayer in the crisis of his life (ch. 1:4, 6, 11; 2:4; 4:9; 11:17). He was a man of prayer. He was also a man of:

- a) Foresight (Neh. 2:8)
- b) Concern (Neh. 2:10)
- c) Responsibility and organization (Neh. 2:11-14)
- d) Caution (Neh. 2:11)
- e) Empathy (Neh. 4:10-12; 5:1-5)
- f) Realization (Neh. 4:9)
- g) Impartiality (Neh. 5:7)
- a) Courage (Neh. 6:11)

What Ought To Be The Congregation's Attitude To The Elders?

When a man is an elder in the true sense, such will be his life and deportment that it will be easy for the saints to:

- a) Trust them (1 Tim. 5:19)
- b) Obey them (Heb. 13:17; 1 Cor. 16:15-16; 1 Pet. 5:5)
- c) Acknowledge them (1 Cor. 16:18; 1 Thess. 5:12)
- d) Respect them in love (1 Thess. 5:13)
- e) Remember them (Heb. 13:7)
- f) Recognize them (1 Thess. 5:12)

Their Attitude In Their Functioning

Those who are elders must ever remember that they are to be living examples of the the "Chief Shepherd" (1 Pet. 5:4), therefore, they ought to be like Christ:

- a) Meek and lowly in heart (Matt. 11:29)
- b) Speak with grace (Lk. 4:22)
- c) Steadfast in purpose (Lk. 9:51)
- d) Whose love will be unlimited (Jn. 13:1)
- e) Who seeks to fulfill the word of God irrespective of what they are going through personally (Jn. 19:28)

- f) Must be a servant (Matt. 20:25-28; Mk. 10:42-45; 2 Thess. 3:8-9; 1 Pet. 5:3-5)

Recompense and Reward

There is a very unspoken but accepted fact that when Paul uses the scripture, “Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn” (1 Cor. 9:9), it is perfectly acceptable to financially enable evangelists and Bible teachers the freedom to depend on the Lord by assisting them. The elder who labours in word and doctrine is worthy of double honour, and from the context it means respect due to his ability and work, and some financial help if needed (1 Tim. 5:18). There are many wonderful elders who have a very limited pension and yet they never go to visit a saint without a little “gift”. It could be a box of biscuits, a cooked chicken, a gallon of milk, or a few groceries, but they themselves oftentimes have very little. It would be not only acceptable but Biblical for such a one to be given a few dollars from time to time. If they are well off then such a man would not want to take from those who can use the help more than he.

Discipline

Sadly there are times when elders fall into sin of various sorts. When this happens there should never be an “old boy’s club” where the matter is overlooked or excuses made. I have seen this happen. Because he is in a very public place, discipline must be carried out, but how?

As with any other individual:

- a) There must be pre-discipline activity which involves a minute and sanctioned inquiry without any of the non-elders knowing anything at this point. The man must be given the benefit of doubt until proven guilty. The scriptures in the Old Testament taught that before there was any discipline, they were to “And it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and enquired diligently, and, behold, it be true, and the thing certain” (Deut. 17:4); they were not to judge by appearance or rumor, “Do not judge by the ears and eyes alone (paraphrased, Isa. 11:3). In the New Testament judgment must be done righteously (Jn. 7:24) and be according to knowledge, that is facts (Rom. 2:12).
- b) While no man is perfect, no accusation should be held against an elder unless there are two or three witnesses (1 Tim. 5:19). It must never be an examination by one man for one individual can be tainted.
- c) When an elder is found to be guilty of a sin, then discipline must be administered, and they are to be rebuked before all the congregation. Nothing must be obscure, but righteousness must be seen to be done, “that others also may fear” (1 Tim. 5:20).
- d) If the individual is guilty then discipline must be executed, but there is a need to be careful HOW it is executed:
 - a) How it is to be done?
 - i) It must be done:
 1. With the tenderness of a child dealing with a father (1 Tim. 5:19-25)
 2. “According to truth” (Rom. 2:2)
 3. “Without preference” (1 Tim. 5:19-20)
 4. With “the wisdom which comes from above” (Jam. 3:17)
 5. Without bias (Rom. 2:5, 11) for since the discipling persons are functioning on God’s behalf for His glory and must be carried out, regardless of gift, earthly position, church position, financial assistance, or personal association.
 - b) How it must never be done:
 - i) Be ignored, because this individual is a buddy, or has issues at home, etc.
 - ii) In smug satisfaction
 - iii) In arrogant pseudo holiness
 - iv) In a hands washing, glad-to-get-rid-of-them attitude.

The Church

Elders - Old Testament Examples of Elders - Attitudes - Rewards - Part 9

Reward

For the believers there are a series of rewards held out for them and the three principles ones are crowns (1 Cor. 9:25-27; 1 Thess. 2:19; 2 Tim. 4:8; Jam. 1:12; Rev. 2:10; 1 Pet. 5:2-4); clothing (Rev. 19:8); and commendation (1 Cor. 4:5). When the individual, who is an elder, will stand at the judgment Seat, he will be judged on what he professed to be, whither he was an elder by the Holy Spirit or a man. If he has not been a Holy Spirit equipped elder, he will have failed to do the work God had planned for him and loses that reward, and whither he will get a reward for doing what he was not to do is not my ability to answer.

If he is a Holy Spirit made overseer who did care and feed the flock of God, then he shall receive from the chief Shepherd a crown, as Peter informs us: "When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Pet. 5:4). For the God made elder the crown is assured, for it says: "Ye shall receive", and what will be the joy of such a man when the Lord of glory, before untold millions, openly acknowledges the greatness of the work he has done and crowns him, clothes him, and commends him. Then they will gladly acknowledge His commendation will be worth all the sorrows, the sleeplessness, and the dark valleys they had to endure in their labour for Him.

A flow Sheet

With the business of caring for the saints it is very easy for time to go swiftly by and for some not to be visited. To help prevent such, the following is a sample of a flow sheet by which an elder can keep track of who he visits, where, and the particulars about it. Such a paper must not contain sensitive information, that must be carefully guarded. There would be one for each assembly member.

Name: Mr & Mrs D. So in So				
Address:				
Phone:				
Email address:				
Date	Gift	Read	Prayed for	Prayer requested
21 07 15	Box of biscuits. They like Cadbury's whole wheat biscuits	Jn. 19:1-10	Family and their work in the church	Personal

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

Rowan Jennings, Abbotsford, British Columbia