

**Now that we went through four of the five fold ministry gifts, we will focus on the gift of pastor and the rest of general church authority.**

**It doesn't matter what man has said in times past. What does matter is what the Bible alone says. The first thing that we need to do is find what references are used in the Bible.**

**How many positions of church authority can you list from scripture? (not including the other fivefold ministry gifts)**

**Examples:** Bishop, Deacon, Elder, Episcopal, Overseer, Pastor, Presbyterian, Shepherd, Clergy, etc.

**What are some different leadership understandings of what is a pastor, bishop, and elder?**

- Some will say that a pastor is the same as a bishop while others say that they are different.
- Some will say that pastors are elders and elders are pastors in the church while others say that pastors are the head of the church.
- Some call the head of a church the pastor and some call them the bishop.

***Special note:***

*As we grow in Christ, we find many things that differ from church to church. It's important that we continue to move forward and be careful to not cause divisions in the body of Christ, always working towards unity through grace when it is at all possible. This topic should not be a cause for division. Whether one who is the head of a church prefers to call himself a pastor or a bishop, may we all hold on to the unity of the faith.*

**Some of these are actually the same title and position.**

**For example,**

- Bishop means episkopos in Greek from which they get episcopal. It also means overseer in definition and refers to the pastor or shepherd in practice since bishop refers to one who rules or oversees.
- Elder means presbyter in Greek. As with Clergy, they are the leaders of the church with authority and include the work of a shepherd/pastor in the church.

**So we see that there are already overlapping titles and definitions that are used today.**

**There are many supporting verse but one passage that uses all of the key titles.**

**1 Peter 5:1-4 (NKJV)**

*1 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.*

**What insight can we gain from this passage?**

In the above passage, we have the words “elder”, “shepherd”, “overseers” used to describe the role of those Peter is writing to who are the leaders of authority in their churches.

- Peter, who was an apostle, was also an elder.
- The elders did the work of overseers, which is simply the description of a bishop.  
Even though this doesn't say that elders are pastors, it does mean that they at least should be able to do the work of a pastor. And we can determine that there are at least some elders that are serving as bishops (pastors).
- Peter compares Jesus, the “Chief Shepherd” to the church leaders which is pastor.

**PASTORS, BISHOPS, and ELDERS**

**At this point we see 3 titles that are used for church authority: Pastors, Bishops, and Elders.**

**Ephesians 4:11 (NKJV)**

*And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors, and teachers*

**The word used in Ephesians 4:11 for pastor is ποιμένας in the original Greek.**

**Original Greek word for pastor: Poimenas**

**Definition: a shepherd; the feeder, protector, and ruler of a flock of men.**

**The meaning of the word most used is shepherd.**

### **1 Timothy 3:2 (NKJV)**

*A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach.*

**The word used in 1 Timothy 3:2 for bishop is ἐπίσκοπον in the original Greek.**

**Original Greek word for bishop:** [Episkopos](#)

**Definition:** Overseer, ruler, supervisor, especially used with reference to the supervising function exercised by a lead elder of a church.

**The meaning of the word most used is [overseer](#).**

### **What can we see from the descriptions alone about these two titles?**

We can see that both descriptions are to be done by both titles. They are two titles with the same function and the same position. A pastor must know how to oversee the church and a bishop must know how to shepherd the flock.

### **What can we conclude from this about pastors and bishops?**

We can see from the passage in 1 Peter 5:1-4 that, at the very least, some elders are mentioned as pastors and at the same time be called bishops. This, in effect, makes bishops and pastors to actually have the same function.

Simply, a pastor is a bishop and a bishop is a pastor.

### **Note:**

*For the sake of clarity, we will use pastor when referring to bishop.*

### **What can we conclude from this about pastors and other elders?**

Every group or organization needs leadership that the group cannot provide for itself as a group. In other words, committees and boards do not lead, leaders lead. And vision and leadership is what the lead pastor has been called to provide. To establish any other elder with this role is to needlessly confuse and set the two in competition with each other. It would also ask the elder to duplicate the knowledge, experience, investment, and most importantly the calling the Lead Pastor already has.

We can also see that a pastor is an elder but an elder is not always necessarily a pastor. An elder could be a teacher or another position of authority within the church.

\*We will talk more on eldership later on in this lesson.

**Who has been given authority in the church?**

Church authority has been given to the elders of the church with the pastor as the leader.

**Now we will take a look at the three positions in the church mentioned in the bible for church order: PASTOR, ELDER, and DEACON.**

### **1. PASTOR:**

**What is a pastor? According to the definition of it's title alone, what can we say that a pastor does?**

A pastor is to lead, feed, and protect the sheep in the body of Christ that are under his care just like a shepherd cares for all his flock.

**How does a shepherd feed his flock?**

**What are some ways a shepherd cares for his flock?**

**How does this gifting as pastor fit within the church model?**

Since a pastor is part of the 5 fold ministry, he has a special fivefold pastors anointing, the gifting of pastor and authority for the local body of Christ. His main function is to shepherd and guard the flock of the local church that is in his sphere of influence.

**Acts 20:28 (NKJV)**

*Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*

**What are the leaders of the church told they should guard when they shepherd the church?**

1) [Themselves](#)

2) [The flock](#)

**Why do you think they are told to be on guard? What are they on guard from?**

### **What is the difference between a pastor and an evangelist?**

A pastor's main gift is not to evangelize but he may have a supporting gift of doing the work of an evangelist. Many times we see evangelists filling the role of a pastor and calling themselves pastor when their calling is as an evangelist. In these situations it is the church members that suffer.

### **What is the difference between a pastor and a teacher?**

A pastor's main gift is not to teach but he must be able to teach (1 Timothy 3:2).

### **Can a church have more than one pastor?**

No. By definition alone, there can only one overseer, ruler, supervisor.

### **Key verses:**

#### **Philippians 1:1 (NKJV)**

*1 Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.*

### **What were the two kinds of leaders that Paul was writing to?**

We see here that Paul and Timothy both addressed the leaders of the churches in Philippi as bishops (pastors) and deacons. It is interesting to see that Paul didn't use the general term of elders (church leaders) but rather by their actual positions of pastors and deacons.

#### **1 Timothy 3:1 (NKJV)**

*This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; 3 not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; 4 one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence 5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); 6 not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. 7 Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.*

#### **Titus 1:7 (NKJV)**

*It is necessary for the bishop to be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, 8 but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, 9 holding fast the*

*faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.*

**What are the 20 qualifications of a pastor seen in the above passage?**

1. [Blameless](#)
2. [Husband of one wife](#)
3. [A man](#)
4. [Temperate](#)
5. [Sober-minded](#)
6. [Good behavior](#)
7. [Hospitable](#)
8. [Able to teach](#)
9. [Not given to wine](#)
10. [Not violent](#)
11. [Not greedy for money](#)
12. [Gentle](#)
13. [Not quarrelsome](#)
14. [Not covetous](#)
15. [One who rules his own house well](#)
16. [Not a novice](#)
17. [A good testimony among those who are outside](#)
18. [Just](#)
19. [Holy](#)
20. [Self-controlled](#)

**1 Timothy 3:4-5 (NKJV)**

*4 one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence  
5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?).*

**Are there any differences and issues between these verses that qualify a bishop and what we see today in the churches? Go through the list. What are some of the biggest unscriptural issues you see today?**

- Women pastors
- Bishops not blameless and with a past
- Bishops divorced
- Single pastors
- No self-control
- Greed
- Any more?

## 2. ELDER:

**Original Greek word:** Presbuteros

**Definition:** A (not “the”) leader in a Christian assembly, a church.

**Key verses:**

- **Titus 1:5-6 (NKJV)**

*For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you. If a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination.*

**What are the 5 qualifications of an elder seen in the above passage?**

1. [Blameless](#)
2. [Husband of one wife](#)
3. [A man](#)
4. [A family](#)
5. [Faithful children](#)

**What is the difference between an elder and a pastor or deacon?**

An elder simply means a leader of authority in the church, an elder (church leader) can carry any position that requires church authority.

**1 Peter 5:1-3 (NKJV)**

*The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.*

**1 Timothy 5:17 (NKJV)**

*Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.*

**What two different kind of elders can you see from this passage?**

It is interesting to see that there are elders who labor in the word and doctrine and the also elders who do not. Since all pastors must be in the word, this tells us that there are elders who are not pastors.

**What does double honor mean?**

Double honor is simple double the pay that would be considered honorable. Whatever a person is able to live on, an elder that does well should be paid double that amount, if it's possible.

**What are some qualities of an elder according the passage above?**

Elders who rule well are worthy of double honor. Elders who do not rule well should not be paid double salary. So double pay should not be a standard for all elders, only for those who do a good job.

**Should elders be paid more than double?**

No. We can see that Paul is laying the understanding that those who are doing well are to be rewarded, even up to double pay. But to pay more than that would be an abuse of church funds and spiritual authority in the church. There is absolutely no reason for an elder to be paid over and beyond double pay. That becomes greed and a real heart issue.

**What kind of elders (church leaders) are there in the church that labor in the word to do their job that should be paid double honor?**

Pastor  
Teacher  
Evangelist  
Apostle  
Etc.

**What kind of elders (church leaders) are there in the church that DON'T labor in the word to do their job that should not be paid double honor?**

Worship leader  
Children's leader  
Treasurer  
Media Director  
Etc.

**What insights do you gain from the following passages with regard to how these titles relate to one another?**

### 3. DEACON:

**Note:** The actual office of a deacon is mentioned in 2 different places in scripture, the word itself has been mentioned 27 other times as simply a servant that does not pertain to an office. This is an important point to make when seeing one simply as a servant or as a deacon in a church.

**Original Greek word:** Diakonos

**Definition:** a waiter, servant; then of any one who performs any service, an administrator.

**Key verses:**

- **Philippians 1:1**

*to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.*

- **1 Timothy 3:8-13**

*8 Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, 9 holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. 10 But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. 11 Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. 12 Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. 13 For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

**What are the 10 qualifications of a deacon seen in the above passage?**

1. [Reverent](#)
2. [Not double-tongued](#)
3. [Not given to much wine](#)
4. [Not greedy for money](#)
5. [Holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience](#)
6. [First be tested](#)
7. [Blameless](#)
8. [Husbands of one wife](#)
9. [A man](#)
10. [Ruling their children and their own houses well](#)

**What do you think are the differences between the function of an elder and a deacon?**

**Colossians 1:18 (NKJV)**

*And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.*

**Why are the roles of church leadership so important to the church?**

Every church is led by Christ if it is a New Testament church. When the church no longer obeys the Word of God, the presence of Christ leaves a church and Christ is no longer the ruler of the church. We may call the organization a “church,” but it is not, according to the biblical use of the term. No other church or man can come between Christ and His church.

**Each church is called to be self governing and self sustaining; growing and expanding through independent church plants.**

**1 Timothy 3:15 (NKJV)**

*I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*

**These roles can be weighty roles, carrying much responsibility. Is there some practical way you can encourage the pastor, elders, and deacons in your church this week?**