

General Topics :: Elders--Married Only?**Elders--Married Only? - posted by havok20x, on: 2014/4/30 17:55**

I have a question about the qualification of Elders (and deacons).

In 1 timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6 it seems to say that an elder should be married and have children.

1 Tim 3:4-5 also says, "...one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?)..."

So I have heard the idea that this can't possible mean that the elder must be married because Paul and Jesus would not have qualified as elders. However, I don't see anywhere where Paul or Jesus actually fulfilled the role of elder (and Jesus is head of the Church, so I don't think it matters, since He is God.) Paul planted churches and appointed (or had someone else appoint) elders in the churches. I can understand that church-planting would be a separate function from eldership. I can also see that a man who plants a church could become an elder in that church if he qualifies. I can also see that a single man who plants a church would relinquish "control" (and that is the wrong word, but the best one I can think of, since we all know that the Lord controls the churches) to an eldership.

Am I wrong in my thinking? What has the Lord shown you?

Re: Elders--Married Only?, on: 2014/4/30 18:48

married.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2014/4/30 19:01

Paul functioned as an Apostle and did not necessarily act as an Elder in local assemblies I believe. He appointed Elders though.

Our Lord did speak of eunuchs for the kingdom of God. As well brother Paul was single and did wish all men where single or at least acted in part like it.

I do see exceptions where brethren could function as an Elder being single or widowed. But as a rule having a physical family helps one to be able to handle the spiritual family of God.

Re: , on: 2014/4/30 19:06

I think in 1 Timothy it speaks of an elder who must manage his household well. The idea being an elder who can take care of this house can shepherd the spiritual house of God. This would seem to convey the idea the elder should be married.

Wisdom would suggest that a married elder would be better in counseling on family matters. Particularly in marital issues.

Of course these are only my thoughts.

Blaine

Re: Elders--Married Only? - posted by proudpapa, on: 2014/4/30 19:52

That is the wisdom of the Scriptures.

I have thought alot about a recent controversy in which a certain leader claimed that he was so busy pouring his life out into the ministry that he never had the time to marry.

Rather or not the accusations against him be true or not, The position that he held needed to only be held by a married man whom could have a wife by his side while counseling those of the opposite sex, both for there protection as well as his.

Re: Elders--Married Only? - posted by savannah, on: 2014/4/30 20:44

"In 1 timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6 it seems to say that an elder should be married and have children."

What it seems to say, and what it says, is no real difficulty at all.

If you'll read through all the qualifications in both Timothy and Titus you will note that each one is descriptive not of the man's status but of his character, with the exception of 'not a new convert'.

Re: Elders, on: 2014/4/30 23:35

Can a married woman become an elder ? Whats your thoughts

Re: Elders--Married Only? - posted by Sree (), on: 2014/5/1 1:08

We have an elder in our Church who does not have Children but mighty in deeds and word. He says God has given him so many Children through the Church!

I sincerely believe that if there were 2 brothers who are worthy to be appointed as elder then prefer the one who is married. It is wisdom not law as stated by others. Most problems in a Christians life surfaces after marriage. Married life shows us how selfish we are. Hence someone who has gone through the same as us can have a father's heart to counsel us.

Regarding women being an elder the answer is NO. Women are not given authority in Church. They can prophesy but not have authority over other brothers in Church. It is just a role given to men alone just like women are given the role to be mother who can bear a Child. Roles does not determine equality. In new covenant there is no difference between man and women in terms of importance or equality.

Nothing against women but I find them generally women when they are given authority even in workplace they cannot handle it. They get tensed. Men have this nature of sucking up pressure and remaining cool but most women cannot do it. They cannot handle pressure in management more than certain extent. I am yet to see a woman who can be considered a cool manager who does not crumble under pressure and remains calm.

Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2014/5/1 10:53

I had a good discussion about this with a man at my church. We thought it would be way too easy for the Holy Spirit through Paul to say, "IF the man has a wife" or "IF the man has children then this is how his character needs to be in regards to that"...etc.

We also discussed how God puts each member of the body in place as He sees fit, and if God was preparing a man to be an elder, then He could easily provide him with a wife and children and bring the man to the point in which he could fulfill that role.

Also, we agreed with Brother Greg that a man who is a godly husband and godly father would have learned skills from the Lord that would be absolutely useful in dealing with the children of God and dissenters--in love.

I haven't nailed it to the ground yet, but that seems to me what a plain reading of the passage is saying.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2014/5/1 11:56

Quote:
-----Paul functioned as an Apostle and did not necessarily act as an Elder in local assemblies I believe. He appointed Elders though.

I just read 1 Peter 5:1 in which Peter calls himself a "fellow Elder" so I wanted to take back the statement quoted above, Paul the Apostle was probably an "Elder" too?

Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2014/5/1 13:21

Peter was an elder in Jerusalem for sure. He also was married for sure. Paul never settled in a place like Peter did. He was a missionary to the day of his death.

Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2014/5/1 13:27

The apostle John also called himself an elder in his epistles. Was he married?

Re: - posted by lovejt (), on: 2014/5/1 22:36

I've heard someone say Paul was an 'Elder of elders'. The Holy Spirit will witness to a disciple that this person is or is not an elder/leader. That is what to look for ultimately.

Re: Elders--Married Only? - posted by twayneb (), on: 2014/5/1 23:03

I think it is important that we do not accidentally apply our own idea of what an elder is to the biblical text. Bishop and elder are used interchangeably in the new testament to mean an overseer, or one who oversees the flock. Apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher are all ministry gifts to the body to grow the body into maturity. Paul was an elder, and also an apostle. Some elders functioned as ministry gifts to the body. All were to minister to the body. But I do not see a requirement of marriage. Only that elders with families must rule them well. I agree though that elders are to be men.

Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2014/5/2 10:25

1 Corinthians 9:5 shows that Paul was unmarried but the other apostles were married. However, still not definitive proof.

I definitely lean more toward the side of needing to be married. I do think it was too simple to put "if" in the Greek

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2014/5/2 11:24

Havok, I will ask a related question for consideration in this question. Does this mean that an elder not only has to be married, but also has to have children? If you read the text, we find he must have his children in subjection. If we accept that Paul is saying marriage is a requirement, then to be scripturally consistent we must also accept Paul as saying that children are a requirement.

Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2014/5/2 11:56

To be perfectly clear, I am not saying I am sure of either one, but a simple reading of the text shows that an elder ought to be married, have children, and rule his household well--his children need to be faithful, not accused of dissipation or in subordination.

I am asking, because the people at my church are beginning to discuss what a biblical church looks like including: structure, character, purpose, etc.

My pastor meets all of the qualifications (whether we are being strict or lenient on the definition of the qualifications). But, as we move forward, I am hoping that we seek to bring every stitch of what we do into submission to Jesus Christ. Not just to be doctrinal for doctrines sake, but because I believe that we ought to be faithful in the small things as well as the

he major things.

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2014/5/2 12:32

havok: I totally understand brother. I asked the question because it helps us think about the question in another light. I am in total agreement with a church that has a desire to come into alignment with the word of God in every area. We SHOULD do this. I am not really sure that the Bible is clear on what governmental structure is required except that the body should have elders that meet Biblical qualifications overseeing the flock and that the body needs apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers for the sake of bringing the body into maturity. All five of these are elders, but not all elders function in one of these five rolls.

I have real concerns with some of the leadership structures that I see in the American church, primarily the top down, CEO style of leadership structure that is so common with its clergy / laity distinctions. And yet this structure is not always bad, and I have seen some very healthy churches that function under this model. Ultimately, every local fellowship will go in the general direction of the leadership in that fellowship. Bad leadership = problems and flakiness. Good leadership, that is Biblical leadership will result in a stable, growing, solid, mature body that will in turn produce more stable, Biblical leaders.

Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2014/5/2 12:57

"And yet this structure is not always bad, and I have seen some very healthy churches that function under this model."

That's what makes the Lord so awesome in this regard. He didn't make it so that if we were not totally knowledgeable or we were immature in an area, that the entire rest of it would collapse. That gives us room to grow spiritually and seek the Lord. Or else, how would a brand new Christian or brand new fellowship of believers have any hope?

Now, I am not saying we should walk in disobedience, but it takes the pressure off of us to get everything right--especially for those of us who have the tendency to think that we gotta get it all right before the Lord will use us or move in our hearts. I am learning day by day, it takes a move in our hearts to get us to the point that we see that apart from Jesus Christ we can do nothing and that only by his grace can we grow.

I like what Leonard Ravenhill said: 'On the other hand, remember there is no finality to the Christian life this side of eternity. While we are in the flesh, we "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." '

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2014/5/2 22:08

Eusibius declares that the Apostle Paul was married - quoting from Clement's writings. The fact Scriptures is silent on this would indicate it was irrelevant to the preaching of the Gospel.

Source: Ecclesiastical History by Eusibius Pamphilus. Chapter XXX: "The Apostles that lived in marriage."

Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2014/5/3 7:42

iv always understood that paul was making a distinction between some one who was the husband of one wife and a man who had been divorced wrongly in his past and still technically being the husband of two or more wives,,this being unacceptable for eldership due to the past rearing its ugly head in many different ways

i dont think the scriptures are silent on paul ,,i understand paul said that he and barnabas were the only ones who did not have a wife paul was very clear in more than one verse that he had no wife ,,when writing certain letters