

ELDERSHIP - A PLURALITY?

By Dr. Hoyt W. Allen, Jr.

The eldership in the New Testament was always a plurality. The old saying, "Two heads are better than one," is very true concerning the eldership of our Lord's church. In other words, if a church elects only one elder - I would contend that they are in error according to the scriptures. However, if this one has been left in the position alone, due to other elders either dying or resigning the position, I would be slow to demand that he depart the office. In other words, if he is content to **temporarily** serve alone until another man is elected to work with him, I can accept this. However, this would be a temporary setup

However, the appointing of a woman to temporarily serve as an elder, I would be very unhurried to do such. The scriptural qualification of an elder calls for a candidate to be the husband of one wife (see my article, "Woman's Role In The Church"). Thus, to side-step this God given qualification is not acceptable and should be avoided.

A church can be a church without elders, deacons, or a preacher.

The word "Church" comes from a Greek word "ekklesia", which means the "called out". In other words - the church of our Lord is comprised of those who have been called out of living sinfully and for themselves. They have understood that the Bible teaches that one must:

- 1) Believe In Jesus As Savior (Acts 16:31)
- 2) Repent Of Sins (Acts 17:30)
- 3) Confess Christ Audibly (Acts 8:37)
- 4) Be Baptized In Water (Acts 2:38)
- 5) Live A Christian Life (Acts 14:22)

A fully organized church will have elders, deacons, trustees, and a preacher. Nevertheless, God has given specific qualifications for church leaders and **MUST** be adhered to. God did not speak on this issue just to be taking up room in the Bible. Many congregations have selected leaders apart from what God's Word says and then they have reaped the consequences. That being:

- a) Confusion and division within the church membership
- b) Slow or no growth to the body (stagnation)
- c) Mediocre examples for future church leaders

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