

NRP Webinar Series 1: God's Government

Week 1: Discovering the Principles of the New Testament Church Government

1. There are 2 distinctive offices that are identified in the New Testament Church

- a. Elders and Deacons
- b. We have two ways of coming to understand what these offices are and how they function.
 - i. The first is the biblical narrative and the story history.
 - ii. The second is the text that gives specific instructions to these offices.
(Important to remember that these 2 must line up)

2. Terms used to define these offices:

- a. Elder - not age but maturity.
 - i. Why was this term employed?
 - ii. This term was familiar to Jewish culture and believers borrowed it as it related to government and the cultural respect of the synagogue.
 - iii. Much like the term prophet used in the Old Testament and the New Testament, yet with different functions.
- b. The second term we see for elder is bishop or overseer.
 - i. I Timothy 3:1-2
 - ii. Titus Note 1 Peter 2-25. Bishop/ guardian
 - iii. Shepherd and bishop linked together.
 - iv. Philippians 1:1 Overseers/deacons The distinction of the two offices.
 - v. Bishop or overseer describe responsibility and authority (Guardian)

3. Acts 1-20 Bishoprick (KJV); Homestead (NASB) This is referring to apostolic ministry

- a. Greek:
 - i. Episkope - to invest, oversee or visit
 - ii. Elder - maturity
 - iii. Bishop - responsibility -authority
 - iv. Shepard - function gifting
 - v. II John 1:1 - John calls himself an elder
 - vi. III John 1:1 - John calls himself an elder
 - vii. I Peter 5:1- Peter calls himself an elder
- b. We can conclude that elders are ministry gifts.
- c. Apostles, pastors, teachers, prophets and evangelists tell us what kind of elders they are.
- d. A critical conclusion is that any one claiming a ministry gift that operates beyond their local church must be recognized and endorsed at their local church.
- e. First question - Who sent you?
 - i. This would also apply to church planter
 - ii. Acts 13:1; Acts 15:3, 40, 41