

How the LORD Provides Elders

Numbers 11:16-30, Titus 1:1-9

Halifax: 16 December 2018, 10:30 AM

Introduction

We are at a time in the life of our congregation when we need more elders.

- A congregation can function with two elders—a minister and a ruling elder, but ideally there ought to be at least three elders to make up a local session.
 - This is especially the case where our elders still have children at home and where most of our members did not grow up in solid reformed churches...
 - And now, all the more, the LORD has seen fit to thrust us into the work of establishing a preaching post in the Truro area.

For this cause, the session has asked you for nominations for elders and we have received quite a few.

- Over the next few weeks we will be interviewing the men who were nominated to see if they are willing and able to serve.
 - First, we will ask you to let us know privately if you there is anything you know of that would disqualify them from service...
 - And then we will be asking all of you to indicate by vote as a congregation which ones you want and we will lay hands on them.

Since this is an important matter in the life of our congregation, I have taken a break from our regular sermon series in Mark to preach about church government by elders.

- It is always hard to know where to start in preaching on such a subject...
 - But I have decided to follow this order:
 - First, to show you from Scripture that Christ has appointed government by elders in His church.
 - We did that last week.
 - Second, (our subject for this week), to show you from Scripture how elders are to be chosen by the church.
 - Third, to show you what the work of the elder entails.
 - I will plan to do that next week.

Let me begin today by reminding you of what we looked at last week.

- Last week, I showed you that Christ is the head of the church.
 - And He has appointed that His people should be governed by a body of elders (a presbytery) who serve as bishops (overseers—*episkapoi*).
 - In the Old Testament, the body of elders was made up of priests together with scribes and ruling elders; and in the New Testament it is made up of ministers of the word (preachers) and ruling elders.
 - As in the Old Testament, there is to be a body of elders at every level of the church:
 - A presbytery or body of elders at the congregational level,
 - A presbytery or body of elders at the regional level (as at Ephesus or Jerusalem where there were many congregations under one presbytery),
 - And a presbytery or body of elders overseeing the church at even broader levels... national and even international (as at the council of Jerusalem).

- We know this, as I showed you last week, because this is the government we find that the apostles established in the New Testament...
 - They acted as Jesus commanded them, and we are commanded to follow the traditions of the apostles that are set down for us in Scripture.
 - The church had no right after the apostles to appoint individual men to be bishops at every level where Christ through His apostles appointed a body of bishops or a presbytery.
 - Nor does the church in our day have a right to appoint a congregation to govern in place of a body of elders in each church.

But now we must move on to our topic for today about church government.

- How are we to get our elders?
- How are they put into their office in the church?

We will look at three things today about this:

- First, that the LORD is the one who gives us elders.
- Second, we will look at the qualifications an elder must have.
- Third, we will look at the process we are to follow in choosing out elders.

Let's begin with the first point:

I. The LORD shows us in Scripture that He is the One who gives us elders.

A. We must never forget that the elders as overseers are His gracious gift to us.

1. When Paul met with the presbytery at Ephesus as is recorded for us in Acts 20, he said this to them: **Acts 20:28: Therefore take heed to yourselves and to 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.**
 - You see how he reminds them that “**the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.**”
 - It is not in the first place man, but God who makes men overseers in His church.
2. We will look at the work of the elder in detail next week, but note well that they are here called, as in many other places, overseers... the Lord has made them overseers.
 - That is the word *episkopoi* (bishops or overseers).
 - As a verb, it means visit, not merely in the sense of dropping by, but in the sense of visiting with a purpose...
 - It conveys both the idea of visiting to access (to learn of need) and then of visiting to minister to need.
 - Jesus is called *the* Episkopos (or the bishop) of our souls.
 - He has visited us from heaven, first scoping out or seeing our need, and then ministering to our need as a prophet, priest, and king... to save us from our sins...
 - to visit us with words of truth that give us life...
 - to visit us that He might atone for our sins on the cross...
 - and to visit us that He might subdue us and bring us to God.

3. And so, in His great love for us, He has made men in the church overseers (or bishops) who visit us...
 - both in the sense of evaluating our needs and in the sense of ministering to those needs—be it counsel, admonition, encouragement, comfort, correction, rebuke, assurance... whatever our spiritual need may be.
 - In Jeremiah 3:15, He gives us this promise: **And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.**
 - This is how He provides His gracious care of His church.
 - In 1 Corinthians 12:18, we are told: **God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.**
- B. Since He is the one who raises up elders for us,
1. That means that this is something we ought to pray for.
 - If God says, **“And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding,”**
 - we ought to pray for Him to do this.
 - Promises are meant to be prayed for—
 - Jesus expressly told us that we should pray for workers in His harvest.
 - **Luke 10:2: Then He said to them, “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”**
 - Do not expect to have elders that will feed you with knowledge and understanding if you do not pray for them.
 2. That He raises up elders for us also means that we ought to give thanks for them and esteem them as His representatives.
 - 1Th 5:12-13: **And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake.**
 - If we do not, why should we expect the LORD to continue to give them to us?
- C. But in saying that He gives them to us, there is an important qualification to make.
1. It is important to understand that He does not give them to us in the same way that He gives us prophets or apostles.
 - It is the same in that He is the one who gives elders gifts for service...but...
 - It is not the same in that He directly sends prophets and apostles...
 - but the church is responsible to identify and ordain elders.
 2. Because of this difference, we have guidelines in the Bible for identifying elders.
 - The LORD has given us a list of qualifications that they are to have, and we are to make use of this list.
 - God can make prophets out of anyone He chooses.
 - For example, He chose a donkey to prophesy to Balaam, but we should not choose a donkey to serve as an elder.
 - He chose David to be a prophet, but we could not choose David to be an elder because he had more than one wife.
 - And the LORD chose Deborah and Philip’s daughters to be prophets, but we could not choose them as elders because an elder must be a man according to scripture.

II. Let's take a look now at what qualities an overseer must have.

- Please turn with me to Titus 1 and we will look at the qualifications that Holy Spirit has given us in Scripture:

A. First, note that an overseer is to be a mature man.

1. In Titus 1:5, Titus is instructed to appoint elders (*presbuteroi*) in every city.
 - Now the word *elder* itself refers to a mature man.
 - An elder can refer to one who is advanced in age, but it also refers to one who is spiritually mature and not necessarily advanced in years.
 - In 1 Timothy 3:6, Paul says to Timothy that an elder must not be a novice because such a one would be in danger of being puffed up with pride.
2. In our day, it needs to be stressed that an elder is to be a male, not a female.
 - In the list of qualifications, it says that he is to be the husband of one wife. It does not say that he is to be wife of one husband.
 - Furthermore, there are not examples whatsoever of female elders.
 - Perhaps even more importantly, women are expressly prohibited from ruling in the church in 1 Timothy 2:11-12. The words are very plainly spoken: **Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. ¹² And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.**
 - Even women who were prophets were not permitted to speak in the assembly, for Paul says:
 - **1 Cor 14:34-35: Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. ³⁵ And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.**
 - They could speak prophecies or teach outside the church (the assembly) but not in the assembly when the church was gathered for public worship.
 - This is a boundary that God has set in His word.
 - This does not mean that women are inferior to men.
 - It means that they have a different role that God has appointed.
 - Even in the Trinity, the Father has the role of leading and the Son has the role of submitting to Him... for instance, the Father commanded Him to become a man and to go to the cross and the Son obeyed Him.
 - But you never have the Son sending the Father and the Father obeying the Son; it is always the Father sending the Son.
 - This does not mean that the Father is a higher being than the Son or better than the Son, just that He has a different role.

B. The next thing we see is that the elder must be blameless in his home.

1. The word *blameless* means that you can't bring a legitimate accusation against him.
 - Obviously, it does not mean that he is perfect—nobody is...
 - but rather that he is living a consistently godly life—
 - That he is not, as far as can be seen, living in rebellion against the LORD but serving Him faithfully and consistently.

- Of course unprincipled people even accused Jesus of being a glutton and a drunkard and John the Baptist of having a demon (Luke 7:32-34),
 - But such accusations, to honest people, actually enhance a faithful man's reputation rather than destroying it.
2. The elder is to be blameless as to his family life.
- a. Titus 1:6 says that He is to be **the husband of one wife**.
 - This does not mean that he must be married, but rather that if he is married, he is to be a one-woman man.
 - Literally, that is what it says: a one-woman man.
 - A one-woman man means that he does not have eyes for women other than his wife... he is devoted to her.
 - She is his companion by covenant and he is committed to her as Christ is to the church, and loves her with that kind of devoted love.
 - Polygamy, divorce on unbiblical grounds, and fornication are all disqualifying issues.
 - However, if a man has repented and has proven himself with a consistent record of faithfulness, it is possible for him to become qualified.
 - b. Titus 1:6 goes on to say that he is to have **faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination**.
 - 1) A faithful covenant child is one who submits to his parents in the most important matter of all—continuing in God's covenant.
 - They continue by professing the truth and by continuing to serve Christ.
 - *Dissipation* speaks of prodigal living and extravagance and includes wastefulness, immorality, and drunkenness.
 - *Insubordination* is simply lack of submission—refusing to obey their father and mother.
 - 2) This is a legitimate test because God has promised to bless us and our children...
 - And when our children in the covenant rebel, they are certainly to blame themselves... *but so are their parents*.
 - Yes, men like David had rebellious children, but it is easy to see why when you consider that he had more than one wife, is said to have withheld discipline from his sons, and was involved in an adulterous affair.
 - The LORD even tells us that it is *because* of these things that he had trouble in his home.
 - Likewise, Eli had rebellious sons because he did not restrain them.
 - 3) A man who has failed in this way might not be disqualified forever, however, if he truly repents.
 - However, if he refuses to accept responsibility for his children and points the finger at them in a way that excuses himself, he has not fully repented of his sin as a father and should not be an elder.
 - It is only if God has humbled him and he can see clearly and accept his responsibility... then he can become qualified to serve.

- 4) Sadly, this requirement has often been ignored, even in solid churches.
 - The result has been that excuse making in parenting has been passed down from the elders to the members of the congregation...
 - Instead of parents humbling themselves and looking at how they have contributed to their children's rebellion, God's promises to parents have been denied.
 - Instead of living by faith, humbly seeking the grace of God to obtain the promises, a culture of self-justification has become the norm.

C. Next, we are told that the elder should be blameless as a steward of God.

- Titus 1:7 says, **a bishop must be blameless as a steward of God...**
 - and then there are five things he must not be and six things that he must be if he is to be a blameless steward.
1. A steward is one who has been given the responsibility to look after another person's property.
 - a. Joseph, in of the Old Testament, is a tremendous example of a faithful steward.
 - We are told that Potiphar, Joseph's master, put everything he had in Joseph's hands because he fully trusted him.
 - He probably even felt that Joseph would manage his stuff better than he himself would.
 - b. Certainly no steward can be as devoted to the Lord's household as our Lord is,
 - but an elder must not be devoid of a true love and devotion to the church over which the Holy Spirit has made him an overseer!
 2. Let's look at the five things that must not be true of him if he is to be God's steward.
 - a. First, he must not be self-willed...
 - A self-willed man forgets that it is God's house that he is looking after.
 - Instead of submitting to God, he does things his own way.
 - Instead of seeking God's glory, he seeks his own glory.
 - He will be either be stubborn and inflexible, unwilling to listen to the good counsel of others...
 - or he will be very pliable—a people-pleaser—in either case a poor steward.
 - He will have little true regard for others, and will look after his own interests—instead of the interests of his master!
 - He will very likely give way to immorality and other sins because it is not about God but about him.
 - Not a good man to be an elder!
 - b. Second, he must not be quick-tempered.
 - That is another sign that he is not a steward of God...
 - He has a chip on his shoulder.
 - When you are living for God, you don't flare up so easily.
 - You are there to minister, not to be ministered unto.

- Your anger is for your master's sake, not for your own.
 - Moses was a very meek man—a man who knew that he was bearing reproach for God...
 - but when he forgot that once, God was so displeased that He would not let him enter the Promised Land—because he did not regard God as holy.
 - If a man is characterised by a quick temper, he should not be an elder because he is too important in his own eyes and God is not holy in his eyes.
 - c. Third, he must not be given to wine.
 - This means “one who stays near wine.”
 - Proverbs 31:4-5 reminds us that is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes intoxicating drink: lest they forget the law and pervert the justice of all the afflicted.
 - If a king cannot look after his kingdom when he is drunk, how can an elder look after God's kingdom?
 - He us unfit for the solemn work to which he is called.
 - No child of God should be controlled by any spirit but God's Spirit.
 - Drunkenness takes you away from the Holy Spirit's influence.
 - How much worse for an elder!
 - d. Fourth, he must not be violent... literally, a striker or a fist-fighter.
 - One who serves in God's house does not use weapons of the flesh—
 - His sword is the word of God.
 - His goal is not to force behaviour, but to reach the heart of those he ministers to by gently sharing the word.
 - e. Fifth, he must not be greedy for money.
 - A greedy steward cannot be trusted because he has two masters—his master and his money.
 - He will neglect service to his the Lord that he might serve money.
 - Or he will serve in order to gain to himself instead of for his master.
 - I tell you, there is little that will eat away your love for Christ and your faithfulness faster than covetousness and discontentment.
 - You are supposed to be telling people that Christ is all, but to you He is not all... your ministry will fail.
 - A lover of money cannot be a blameless steward.
- That is the five things that disqualify a man from being a steward...
3. Now let's look at six things that a man must be if he is to be steward in God's house (1:8).
- a. First, he must be hospitable—a lover of strangers.
- He is to have a heart that cares for people and reaches out to them—
 - Our master does not want us to stand aloof, but to welcome the stranger into our house so that we can lead him to the riches of Christ.

- And He also wants us to encourage the body of Christ around a welcoming table.
- b. Second, a man must be a lover of what is good if he is to be an elder.
- An elder must know the difference between good and evil.
 - There are some religious men who have fallen into the snare of despising things like marriage, feasting, good company, beautiful music, art, and architecture.
 - These men err, for God has given us these things and we are to use them and enjoy them for His glory... and to teach others to do so!
 - He is to set an example of how to enjoy the good things God has given us with thanksgiving...
- c. Third, a man must be sober-minded... rational and discreet.
- He must not blow things out of proportion—or give himself over to irrational fears.
 - He needs to be mature about get rich quick schemes, health fads, conspiracy theories...
 - His goal is to disciple people in the way of the LORD, not to be intoxicated with the things that captive the minds of the ungodly.
- d. Fourth, a man who wants to be an elder must be just.
- Not one who judges according to his own standards or one who follows the world's ever changing perspective of what is right and wrong...
 - but one who understands God's commandments and how they apply.
 - And not only that, but one who behaves in a just manner...
 - not cheating people, not lying, not failing to pay bills on time, not accusing people falsely or charging them unfairly.
 - As a steward of God's house, he lives by God's rules.
- e. Fifthly, he must be holy.
- That is, a man who is devoted to God—that is what this word means.
 - He is a man who worships God in secret, in his family, and in public.
 - He is a man of prayer.
 - He lives for the glory of God.
 - As a steward, he is devoted to his master.
- f. Sixthly, he must be self-controlled.
- He will not be able to devote himself to God's work if he is not.
 - Chrysostom describes him as “one having his passions, tongue, hand, and eyes at command.”
 - A wagging tongue, laziness, worrying, distraction—all these can keep him from the service of God's house to which he is called.

TRANS> So what have seen so far...

- That the one qualified to serve as an elder must be a mature man, he must be blameless in his family and blameless as a steward of God...
 - And now lastly, we are told that...
- D. A man whom the LORD has prepared to be an elder will be one who is established in the word and able to instruct others in it.
- Titus 1:9 says: **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.**
1. This is very important.
 - God has revealed Himself and His Son to us through His word and Spirit.
 - An elder must have a good understanding of the scriptures and be able to apply them to life.
 - He must be able to correct errors and gently lead people in the truth.
 - He must be able to explain the truth clearly and in plainness.
 - He needs to understand the way of salvation so that He can lead people to Christ and establish them in all the benefits of His saving work.
 - And He needs to understand God's commandments and ordinances so as to correct those who fall into sin and show them the way to walk.
 2. We require that church officers hold to the Westminster Standards as an expression of their own faith.
 - Paul speaks of holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught.
 - That means that he must have a systematic understanding of the Bible, not seeing it as so many disjointed fragments, but a whole integrated system so that if one piece is taken out, everything else is skewed.
 - For example, he must see that if Christ is not seen to be fully God, then the cross is no longer God dying for us...
 - And that will lead to supposing that we must do works...
 - And likely that hell is not a place of everlasting punishment.
 - And that will diminish the gratitude of believers... someone less than God has died...
 - And that will affect their service to God.
 - And it will cause them to suppose that their judgment is not so skewed that they must depend on God's word...
 - The problems will be endless—if Christ is not seen as God.
 - That is the kind of understanding an elder must have so that he can hold fast the faithful word that he has been taught.
 - 3. It should be pointed out, however, that those who preach are to be held to an even higher standard as they are called to preach.
 - Remember that the office of ruling elder is carried over from the Old Testament, but the office of minister of the word is new in that it replaces the priest.
 - In the Old Testament, the gospel was set forth especially by the priests whereas in the New Testament it is set forth especially by preaching.

- The new office of minister of the word is prominent and the office of ruling elder continues as an overseer in a church that is more Scripture-based than ever before.
 - Thus, the ruling elders must be sound in doctrine and able to correct errors and set forth the truth, but the ministers of the word must be able to preach.
- As we saw last week in Acts 20, the regional presbytery is to keep watch over those who preach to ensure that their doctrine is sound.

TRANS> Much more could be said about this, if time would allow...

- But now we must move on and look at the third thing the LORD shows us about providing elders to us—and that is at how they are to be approved for service.

III. What is the process that the LORD has given us to follow in choosing out elders to serve among us?

A. First, let me give you some guiding principles about this.

1. Let me say with this that we are not given specific details in Scripture about the exact process,
 - but we *are* given basic principles that must be followed if we wish to be true to our Lord.
2. What we see, overall, is that there are three parties involved in determining which men should be put into service as elders or bishops.
 - The individual himself must see that he is called.
 - The members of the congregation must deem him to be suited to the office.
 - And the elders who are already in service must recognise that he is qualified, and be able to lay hands on him.
3. We must be careful in how we work this out.
 - a. First, we must be careful that we do not ignore any of these three parties in determining who is called to serve.
 - If we do, we put ourselves in danger of appointing those who are not called of the LORD, not prepared by Him for the work, and this can do much harm to the church.
 - b. But we must also beware of being excessively cautious lest we deprive the church of the service of those that He has called.
 - That will also cause great harm to the church.
 - We need to realise that in a matter like this, disobedience can come from not ordaining men that should have been ordained...
 - just as much as it can from ordaining those that should not have been.

B. Let's look at the role of each of the three parties in recognising which men are called to serve as elders.

1. We can find information about the requirement of the elder himself in 1 Timothy 3:1 where Paul says:
 - 1Tim 3:1: **This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.**

- Of course there are men who desire the position of a bishop for the wrong reasons... that they may be seen as important or whatever...
 - But if a man truly desires to serve the LORD because he loves the LORD and because he loves His people, that is a good thing indeed.
 - Part of the way the LORD calls a man is by giving him a desire to serve.
 - He sees the need, he sees that the Lord has gifted him, and he wants to be used for Him.
 - There is no place for pride here, but neither is there a place for false humility that is more of an avoidance of responsibility than humility.
 - If you are gifted of the Lord, own it and use it for His glory.
 - But if you know yourself to be unfit for some reason, or if you are in a situation of life that prevents you,
 - then by all means do not agree to serve... but you will do well to pray that you will become fully qualified and able to serve.
2. And now let me show you how the congregation and the elders work together in identifying who should serve.
- a. When we read Paul's instructions to Titus in Titus 1:5, it almost sounds like Titus is simply to choose out the elders at Crete singlehandedly.
- Paul says: **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—**
- 1) But notice the words, "as I commanded you."
- Titus was not to go about this in his own way, but he was to do it according to the instructions that Paul had given him...
 - Jay Adams suggests the translation: *appoint elders in every city according to the programme that I laid out for you.*
 - These words "as I commanded you" actually refer to the provisions that are set forth in a will.
 - Paul expected Titus to follow his instructions about appointing elders to the letter, the way you would follow the directives of one in his last will and testament.
 - The way Titus was to carry this work out had been clearly specified.
- 2) But what are we to do?
- Paul does not repeat those instructions to Titus here or elsewhere.
 - Nor are we told how Titus went about doing this work of appointing officers.
- 3) But things are not as bad as they might seem.
- The LORD revealed the way of appointing officers to all of His prophets and apostles, and they all followed them.
 - It was not different for Paul than it was for Peter or John.
 - As with the LORD's Supper, Paul received directly from the LORD the same revelation about it that we have in the gospels.

- So if we want to know what method was used to ordain officers, we only need one example and it is enough.
- b. Don't think that when Paul tells Titus to *appoint* elders, He was giving him authority to appoint them without consulting the people—
 - 1) There can be no doubt that Paul commanded Titus to do the same thing the apostles did in Acts 6 when they appointed officers in the church—
 - Since the same God that instructed the apostles in Acts 6 also instructed Paul, we can only assume that He told them the same thing!
 - He is not a God who contradicts, and as He directed one, he would also direct the other.
 - The advantage of Acts 6 is that there we are given the details of the process which is only alluded to when Paul tells Titus to appoint elders by the method that he had commanded.
 - 2) The word *appoint* used by Paul in Titus 1:5 is used in Acts 6:3 when the apostles say:
 - **Acts 6:3: “Therefore brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.”**
 - And you see here in Acts 6:3 how it says that the people were the ones that chose them out...
 - After these seven men were chosen out by the people...
 - Then the apostles prayed and laid hands upon them to set them apart to their office. You can see that in verse 6.
 - 3) There is the method—the people choose—the leaders ordain...
 - Who could improve on such a method?
 - There is a double approval to help insure that a wise choice is made!
 - an approval by the members, who selected their leaders...
 - and an approval by the existing leaders who lay hands on them (and are to refuse to do so if they do not consider them to be qualified for the office).
 - God's ways are so good and so wise!
 - We only harm ourselves when we give either the congregation or the leaders the sole responsibility for appointing church officers!
 - Let us follow the pattern that God has given us in His Word!
 - It is a thing that is commanded by God!
 - What Paul says to Titus, God says to us...
 - “appoint elders **as I commanded you.**”
- c. Although we do not have a full description of the process elsewhere, we can find evidence that the same method was used.
 - Let me give you just a couple of examples...
 - 1) In Acts 14 when Paul and Barnabas went back and appointed elders in all the churches they had planted,

- Luke uses a very descriptive word Acts 14:23 when he says: **So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.**
 - At first, it can sound like they just appointed elders without consulting the congregation,
 - but the word translated appoint is *khi-rot-on-eh'-o* which means *to appoint by vote...*
 - Now if we did not have the method for appointing officers spelled out for us in Acts 6, we might not be so sure, but since we do, this word informs us that the congregation voted for these elders.
 - We might look at the Old Testament as well... when elders were first chosen... Moses said, Deut 1:13: **'Choose wise, understanding, and knowledgeable men from among your tribes, and I will make them heads over you.'**
- 2) We also have supporting evidence that the existing elders are always to do what was done in Acts 6 and lay hands on the men appointed to office.
- a) In 1 Tim 4:14, Paul speaks of Timothy being set apart to office and says: **Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership** (or the *presbytery* as it may be translated).
 - b) Even more helpful is the advice that Paul gives to the presbytery about laying hands on officers when he says: **1Ti 5:22: Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.**
 - This reminds us that when the presbytery lays hands on those chosen by the congregation, it is not just an automatic acceptance of the congregation's choice.
 - If the elders do not believe a man is qualified, they are not to lay hands on that man.
 - They are only to lay hands on those that they approve.

TRANS> So you see that elders are not to appoint themselves... nor are elders to appoint them unless the congregation chooses them, nor are congregations to make the final decision without the approval of the elders.

- Those are the basic guidelines given to us in Scripture that we are always to follow when we ordain elders.

Conclusion: But never forget...it is our gracious LORD who raises elders up for His church.

- When He has qualified a man, He brings the candidates and the members and the governing body of elders together in the matter.
- And then He uses these elders to visit His people, to discern and to minister to their spiritual needs as a loving Saviour.
 - To Him be all glory and praise!