INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT ELDERS

I Timothy 5:17 The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor; especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.

What Elders Do

“Direct the affairs of” translates *“proistemi,”* “lit., ‘to stand before,’ hence, to lead, attend to (indicating care and diligence)” (Vines). “Lead” or “rule” are the most common other translations.

I Timothy 3:4 He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect.

I Timothy 3:12 A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and household well.

“Preaching” is *“logos”* usually translated “word” in the sense of that which communicates. Jesus is the Word, He fully communicates all that the Father is. Some translations take it to mean the Word of God as in Hebrews 4:12 where it has the definite article (the). “Directing the affairs” of the church well involves the work necessary to clearly communicate and teach the Word of God.

Double Honor

I Timothy 5:17&18 The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For Scripture says, “Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain,” and “The worker deserves his wages.”

Honor is *“time,”* which means value, preciousness, price. I Corinthians 6:19d&20a You are not your own; you were bought at a price.

I Corinthians 9:7-9 Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not drink the milk? Do I say this on merely human authority? Doesn’t the Law say the same thing? For it is written in the Law of Moses: “Do not muzzle and ox while it is treading out the grain.”

I Corinthians 9:12a&14 If others have this right of support from you, shouldn’t we have it all the more?...In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.

It is worth noting that “The worker deserves his wages” is quoted as Scripture from Jesus’ words in Luke 10:7.

Receiving Accusations

I Timothy 5:19 (NASB) Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.

Deuteronomy 19:15 One witness is not enough to convict anyone accused of any crime or offense they may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

I Corinthians 10:11 These things happened to them as examples and were written down for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come.

I Corinthians 10:9&10 We should not test Christ, as some of them did – and were killed by snakes. And do not grumble, as some of them did – and were killed by the destroying angel.

Numbers 21:4-6 They traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea, to go around Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way; they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!” Then the LORD sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died.

Numbers 16:1&2 Korah son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and certain Reubenites - Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth – became insolent and rose up against Moses. With them were 250 Israelite men, well-known community leaders who had been appointed members of the council.

Numbers 16:3 They came as a group to oppose Moses and Aaron and said to them, “You have gone too far! The whole community is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is with them. Why then do you set yourselves above the LORD’s assembly?”

Numbers 16:11c “It is against the LORD that you and your followers have banded together. Who is Aaron that you should grumble against him?”

Numbers 16:31-33 As soon as he finished saying this, the ground under them split apart and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their households, and all those associated with Korah, together with their possessions. They went down alive into the realm of the dead, with everything they owned; the earth closed over them and they perished from the community.

Numbers 16:35 And fire came out from the LORD and consumed the 250 men who were offering the incense.

Numbers 16:41 The next day the whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. “You have killed the LORD’s people,” they said.

Numbers 16:49 But 14,700 people died from the plague, in addition to those who had died because of Korah.

Numbers 17:5 “The staff belonging to the man I choose will sprout, and I will rid myself of this constant grumbling against you by the Israelites.

Numbers 17:10 The LORD said to Moses, “Put back Aaron’s staff in front of the ark of the covenant law, to be kept as a sign to the rebellious. This will put an end to their grumbling against me, so that they will not die.”

Public Rebuke

I Timothy 5:20 But those elders who are sinning you are to reprove before everyone, so that the others may take warning.

We have seen way too many cover-ups of the sins of spiritual leaders in the last few years: pedophile priests; Jimmy Swaggart and many others.

Avoid Partiality

I Timothy 5:21 I charge you, in the sight of God and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism.

Ephesians 3:10&11 His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I Peter 1:12d Even angels long to look into these things.

Romans 2:11 For God does not show favoritism.

Things to Remember

Being an Elder is like being a father.

A vital part of being an Elder is clearly communicating the Word of God.

Those who devote their full time to spiritual leadership should be compensated

in a way that leaves them free to focus on ministry.

A charge against an Elder should not even be listened to unless there are two witnesses. There will always be people who are upset at the consequences of their sin and want to blame leadership for it. There will also always be people who want to be leaders who are not qualified and resent those who are.

Elders (or any spiritual leaders, whatever the title) who sin should be publicly rebuked when they sin.

These principles are to be applied without favoritism.