

# The Bulletin

## Meeks St. Church of Christ

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### Is Your Preacher Really a “Pastor” According to the Bible?

by Brian Meade

In the religious world in general, the term “pastor” has come to mean the local preacher or minister of a congregation who preaches a lesson from God’s word. But is the preacher really a “pastor” according to the Bible? Let us look to the Bible to find out.

The English word pastor is found only in Ephesians 4:11, *“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.”*

The word for pastor comes from the Greek word “poimen” and is defined as “a shepherd, one who tends herds or flocks” (not merely one who feeds them).... “Pastors” guide as well as feed the flock; cf. Acts 20:28, which, with v. 17, indicates that this was the service committed to elders (overseers or bishops). (Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words p. 462)

As we see from the definition and how it is used in the scriptures, that a pastor refers to the work of the elders, bishops, or overseers.

And when the Apostle Paul called for the elders of the church at Ephesus in Acts 20:17, he was not calling to meet with a group of preachers—but those to whom he said, *“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.’* (Acts 20:28)

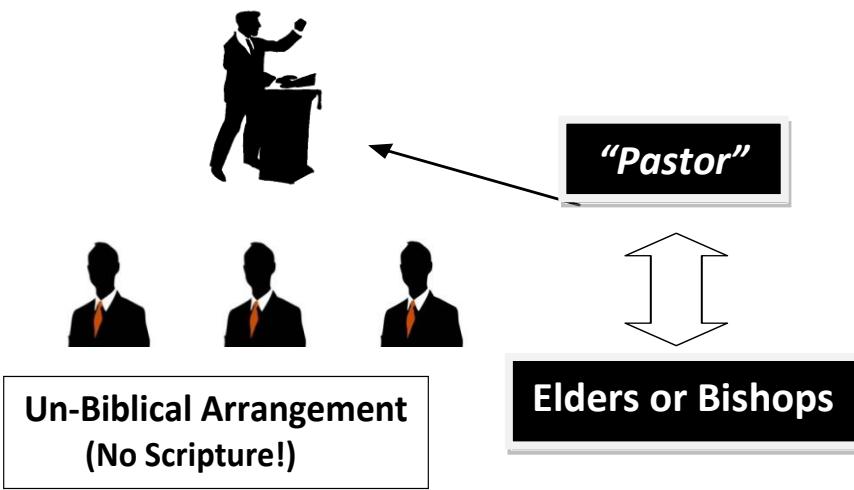
The Apostle Peter also refers to the work of the elders in I Peter 5:1-3, as those who, *“Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers”*

Furthermore, the distinction is made plain by the fact that there are detailed qualifications in 1Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 for those who serve as bishops or elders. Those who see the preacher as the pastor, often call young Timothy a pastor, but Timothy was too young to be an elder and not married with children as the qualifications require the overseer to be. Incidentally, this same reason would also exclude women from being pastors as they cannot be “*a man*” who is the “*husband of one wife*” (I Timothy 3:1-2; Titus 1:6).

Having said all of that, still most people identify the “pastor” as the person who stands up before the congregation to preach the word of God. It is a case of mistaken identity about who really is the overseer—the preacher or the elders? This is born out of tradition, rather than the Bible way of doing things.

The un-Biblical arrangement is the result of NOT seeking to do Bible things in Bible ways. This type of leadership of the local church leaves the congregation in the hands of one leader, rather than having several men serve as overseers.

The diagram below illustrates the popular concept of a “one-man pastor.”

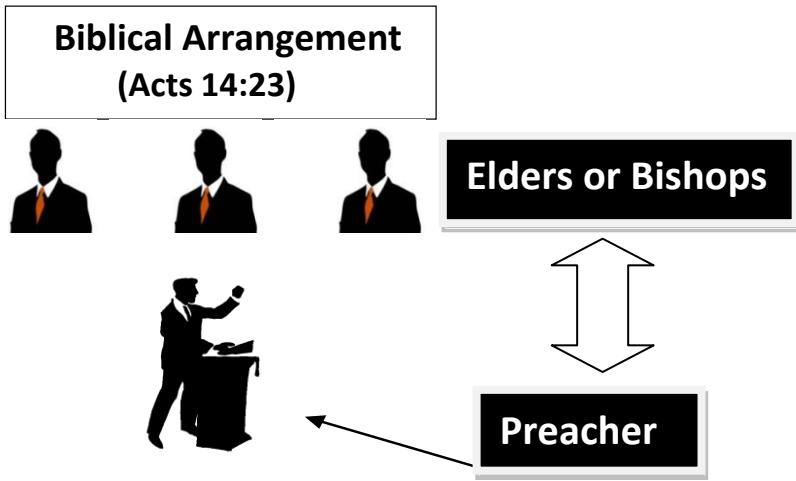


In this arrangement, there are no checks and balances on the one man “pastor’s” decisions, yet there needs to be!

Fundamentally, this is dramatic change from the rightful organization of God’s arrangement for that of an un-Biblical arrangement by men. In this un-Biblical arrangement, the elders become more of an advisory board & subject to the preacher— rather than the overseers they rightfully are!

The way that we have the full-support of scripture is to have the preacher underneath the authority of the elders or overseers of the congregation.

Note the following diagram:



In this arrangement, we have the proper checks and balances of several men who serve as overseers. As a matter of fact, every time the elders are mentioned, it is a plural number of men who serve (Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17-28; I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-5; Hebrews 13:17; James 5:14). The Bible is completely silent about one man rule in a local church and that is the greatest indictment against it! (Col. 3:17; I Peter 4:11)

But it must also be said that a preacher *can* be an elder or overseer in a local church—if he meets the qualifications and is one among several overseers. Paul told the young preacher Timothy, “*The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.*” (I Tim. 5:17) I have attended a congregation in the past where two of the elders shared the work of preaching together and both were equal in the work. There was and is no such thing as a “*head elder or bishop*” in the Lord’s church, as the only real head of the church is Christ Jesus the Lord (Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18).

In conclusion—in many ways the Biblical approach to leadership in the church is completely different than the denominational concept of the “Pastor” taking the leadership of a church.

Sadly, when men put one man in full-control and charge of a congregation of the Lord’s church, they do so in error and stray from the Biblical teaching of the New Testament.

**News and Notes:** sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Betty Hurst, Janis Johnson, Steve Switcher, Billy Mac Fredrick, Gail Armstrong, Nicky Curtis, Cheryl Ridgeway.

**Those Who Serve:**

**Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:**

**Opening Prayer:** Tim Harris Sr.  
**Preaching:** Brian Meade  
**Sermon:** "The Lord's Supper"

**Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am**

Fred Johnson  
The Book of Luke (Mike Willis)  
Page 52, True or False #1

**Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:**

**Announcements:** Tony Whittemore  
**Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading:** Tim Harris Jr.  
**Song Leader:** Hebrews 6:11-15  
**Lord's Table:** Jerry Kennemur  
**Assisting:** Sam Johnson  
**Preaching:** Adam Harris & Lee Busby  
**Sermon:** Brian Meade  
**Closing Prayer:** "Lord, Give Me Patience, Right Now!"  
Dan Cottrell

**Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.**

**November 8<sup>th</sup>:**

**Auditorium Bible Class:** Brian Meade  
Joshua, Judges, & Ruth (Mike Willis)  
Page 76, Lesson 17

**Invitation:** Paul Busby  
**Song Leader:** Dan Cottrell  
**Closing Prayer:** Tim Harris Sr.