

# ELDERSHIP ESSENTIALS

By Jason Hilburn

## SYNONYMS FOR THE SAME OFFICE

(From three Greek words—*presbuteros, episkopos, poimano*)

**Elders** (*most common term in the Bible*), **bishops, overseers, shepherds, pastors**

**They could also be called rulers:** “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls...” (Heb. 13:17; cf. Heb. 13:7; 1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).

OFFICE	SCRIPTURES
<b>BISHOPS = ELDERS</b>	“...ordain <b>elders</b> in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a <b>bishop</b> must be blameless...” (Titus 1:5-7; cf. 1 Tim. 3:1-7; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).
<b>ELDERS = OVERSEERS</b>	“And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the <b>elders</b> of the church...the Holy Ghost hath made you <b>overseers</b> ...” (Acts 20:17, 28).
<b>OVERSEERS = SHEPHERDS</b>	“...take heed to...all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you <b>overseers</b> , to <b>shepherd</b> the church...” (Acts 20:28 NKJV; cf. 1 Pet. 2:25).
<b>SHEPHERDS = PASTORS</b>	The Greek word for “ <b>shepherd</b> ” ( <i>poimano</i> ) in Acts 20:28 and 1 Peter 5:2 is from the same root in “ <b>pastors</b> ” ( <i>poimen</i> ) (Eph. 4:11). <i>Poimen</i> is most often translated as “shepherd(s)”. The word “pastors” is related to the word “pasture,” indicating those who oversee the flock.

**ALWAYS A PLURALITY OF THESE MEN** mentioned over each congregation—  
never one man as “the pastor” over a congregation.

“...they had ordained them **elders** [plural, JPH] in every **church** [singular, JPH]...”  
(Acts 14:23; cf. Acts 15:22; 20:17, 28; Phil. 1:1; Titus 1:5; Heb. 13:7, 17; James 5:14).

**NOT THE SAME AS AN EVANGELIST**, who is mentioned separately.

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, **evangelists**; and some, **pastors** and teachers”  
(Eph. 4:11).

**MUST MEET GOD’S REQUIREMENTS** (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-11; 1 Pet. 5:1-3).