

Eldership - a practical study (3)

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[0 : 00] I had a thought. Suppose we just had one minute to open that door and that door. I won't try saying anything while you're doing it because you went here because of the traffic. If we just open those doors, get a breeze through for a minute and then that might give us a good start.

Sorry? There's a fan, yes. It's like being in Sri Lanka. Sorry?

We'll leave those doors open if people don't mind that. Are you getting a breeze? It's making no difference whatsoever to me up here. Is the traffic noise disturbing for listening?

Sorry? When the traffic lights change. Right.

Right. Let's see. Alfred, could you be on door duty? And if it becomes noisy, just close those doors. Thank you very much. Let's pray. Help us, O Lord, to hear your voice as we come to wait upon you in your word.

[1 : 40] Help us not to be distracted or put off by circumstances, but just to be able to concentrate on you. And we pray that you would speak to us as a church because we need your direction and help and provision.

And we pray it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[4 : 00] Amen.

to become a Christian and to be part of that project if you're not at this moment. Going back to the question why elders, we discover that elders are an indispensable layer in the process of what Jesus Christ is doing. And we also ask the question, what are elders?

And we came up with a variety of answers. They're overseers, they're older ones, they're shepherds, they manage the affairs of the church, they're to be role models and example setters. And what are they like? Well, they're like Jesus Christ. They're meant to be like him and they are servants and their particular serving role is to serve by leading. We also ask the question, how do you get them? And the answer is like this, that God gives and God sends and God appoints people to lead his church, mostly from within the congregation that they come to serve, but sometimes from outside.

And we're going to look again at that matter of bringing in someone from outside. And what do they do? Well, they manage the affairs of the church, they shepherd, they care, mostly by word, ministry of the word and prayer. And that answers the question, how do they do it? How do they do it?

The Bible seems to know nothing else than team working and ministry of the word and prayer.

That's in a nutshell how they do it. And I put a lot of conclusions that we came to last time, which I'll whiz through. Jesus is the ultimate elder, an overseer and shepherd. He looks after his flock.

[6 : 19] It's right and necessary to be concerned for the future church to have elders. It's not just one man, but a team. Being old is not a disqualification, neither is being younger. The idea of elder seems to carry with it the idea of wisdom. The quality of their life matters. The quality of their doctrine matters. In other words, it's not just a question of having a good heart. It's to be able to teach accurately and truthfully. There's an ability required to deploy the health-giving message to encourage and to contradict wrong sayers. And the apostolic word, sorry, this is how are they appointed by the apostolic word by the congregation, which is the Holy Spirit who appoints elders.

elders. And it is a serious spiritual matter. We find the appointing of elders accompanied by prayer and fasting in the New Testament. So those are things that we've looked at before. Okay? None of that should be a surprise because I copied it all off the sheets before. Although you might have been asleep. You might yet be asleep. You might be asleep now. So my question this morning is, is

there anything else that needs to be said at this point? And I've got three things that I would like to add?

Three points. The second one is quite a large point. The first one is quite a short point. And the third one goes all over the place. So here are three more points. So the first point is this, that this model of eldership is a flexible one. The New Testament is quite sparing with details and therefore it's quite adaptable into different situations. So if you are in Manhattan, you can have elders in your big sophisticated church where opera singers sing during the collection. You can also run a church in a Cambodian village with elders. It's as flexible as that. You can have elders with PhDs in historical theology who will inadvertently quote things to you in Latin, *ex nihilo*. And you can also have elders whose main qualification is that they ran a shoe shop and they have prayerfully and wisely read the Bible and they are people who can give wisdom and prayer into the lives of the congregation where they're appointed. There are elders who have management skills to manage a church of a thousand. You know, if you're looking after a small church or three thousand or five thousand or whatever, a world away from my experience. And you can have elders who are fully equipped with the patience and love to care for a church of 15. It's a very flexible model. That was my first point and I've done the first point.

Here's the second point. I want to go back to this matter of appointing within and calling people from outside. There is an expectation of elders arising within a church and there is a precedent for calling in specialists or something like that from outside. So let's do those one bit at a time. Let's look at Ephesians 4, 11 to 14, which I think leads us in the direction of preparing and training people from the inside of the existing fellowship. So it's Ephesians 4, verses 11 to 14.

Ephesians 4, 11 to 14. Speak of the risen conquering Christ and quote the thought of a conquering king who gets gifts and indeed prisoners from the place he's conquered. Quoting, when he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men. That's in verse 7. And then Paul says that's what Jesus does. Verse 11.

[10:49] It was Jesus, he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, some to be pastors and pastors and teachers to prepare people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. And he goes on to talk about in verse 16, the body being built up together as every part does its work. So let's just pause on this one for a moment. These are gifts from the conquering Savior. He gives apostles who are the foundations of the New Testament and the prophets. I think in the New Testament, the prophets are not quite the same as Old Testament prophets. I think these are people who minister the word of the apostles.

We have evangelists, gospel people. Now, does he mean the gospel writers or does he mean gospel workers? But when we get to pastors and teachers, we know exactly what he means because we definitely have pastors and teachers. And what they are there to do is to prepare God's people for works of service. And the word is *diakonias*, which means to serve. Actually, that's the word for a waiter in Greek, somebody who serves and brings food and drink. So he says that it's the task of the pastors and teachers to pass that on. And the result of this is in verse 12, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

And it goes on to talk about the results of that, aiming for unity of faith and knowledge and maturity and the body growing up and being built up. So without trying to take everything in that passage, I deduce that pastors and teachers are there to train other people to serve. That's what it says they're there to do. And this service produces a maturity in the congregation, in the body.

And this maturity is to do with the working and functioning of all the different parts of the body. So I'll just stop and say that's what it says in the Bible. And it's an interesting question to say, is this happening? Interesting question to say, do we find that people who gather here, as we have done this morning, are actually being prepared for works of service and are actually serving? It's an interesting question, isn't it? And then I could say, make it from general to being specific and saying, would you say of yourself, if you've come along to this church for any significant amount of time that you have, A, been prepared to serve, helped to serve, and is that happening? Because what it doesn't say, of course, is a church full of spectators who just let one or two people do everything. So I just, that's my first port of call, that the pastors and teachers train others for works of service. And my second port of call is 2 Timothy chapter 2. And I don't, no, that's not what I meant at all, is it?

[15:02] Oh dear. I meant the pass on to, I think I meant 1 Timothy. No, I didn't. What did I mean? I need some rescue here. Is it 2 Timothy? 2 Timothy. I want the bit about passing on to reliable people. Reliably.

2, that's it. Yeah, it's the one that put me off. Yeah, 2 Timothy chapter 2, verse 1 says, And so he goes on. But I just want to light on that sentence in the middle.

The things you heard from me, the Apostle Paul, through many witnesses, entrust or hand on to reliable, that's to say faithful men, who will be qualified to teach others.

And that's worth stopping on to help. And that's worth stopping on that one. Because part of Timothy's task was to perpetuate the gospel by a faithful men, able men, people who could teach others.

[16:40] And if you follow the sequence of it, Timothy had learned something from the Apostle. The things you heard from me.

And I'm going to make a little bit of a point of this. That Paul did say things. And he did teach things. And it was possible to say, you heard it.

You grabbed it. You got it. You can now pass that on to somebody else. He learned a body of teaching. And there were many witnesses.

And I looked at what the commentators say about the many witnesses. Was it that Paul was doing his talking, Timothy's sitting, listening, and a lot of other people are watching this happen.

So the thing you learned in the presence of many witnesses. Or was it that Paul did his teaching, Timothy listened. Paul taught somebody else. And somebody else said it to Timothy.

[17:39] And it was exactly the same as what Paul had said direct. And then somebody else heard it from Paul. And then said it to Timothy. And that was exactly the same. And you've got multiple pathways that the word from the Apostle came to Timothy.

And you know that you got it right. Because everybody who told it to you said exactly the same thing. Maybe that's what it meant. But the things you have heard from me.

Through many witnesses. That's what needs to be passed on to other people. And you pass it on to people who can then pass that on to other people themselves.

They're qualified to teach others. And this is a very important thought, isn't it? This is the reason for having training courses. So it's the reason why there is in Sussex.

The Sussex Gospel Ministry Training Course. And somebody here have been on the Sussex Gospel Ministry Training Course. It is fulfilling this command to teach other people so that they can teach people going onwards.

[18:53] Timothy was working in a particular context. And it doesn't say send them off somewhere to learn this. He says you do this.

So that seems to imply that while the churches can get together to help one another on this. There is a responsibility on the local church to be training people up.

Perhaps with the assistance of the college. academic world. But not taken completely out of the hands of the church.

But part of the church's responsibility. So that tells us that we should be training people. And actually that's what we're trying to do at the moment.

And we should pray for training. It's an important function of the church to be training up the next generation. So that they can pass that on to the following generation.

[19:55] That's an important thing. That was part of my second point. And once again one of my slides has disappeared.

And I was looking for it this morning. I have no idea where it went. But I'll tell you what it was going to say. What is this apostolic word? Paul could say to the elders in Ephesus.

He could say. I have not hesitated to declare to you the whole will of God. Old fashioned language says the whole counsel of God.

Got that? But he says. It's not on the screen so you've got to remember it. He said to the elders at Ephesus. I declared to you the whole counsel of God.

Meaning to say. That he didn't miss out an important part of the gospel. That somebody else has to come and fill in later. That the whole thing.

[20:58] The whole body of teaching was there in principle. Obviously you can expand on it. And you can elaborate it. You go into detail. But the whole thing was there in the message of Paul.

And I think that's the thought with Timothy. I've passed on to you to the whole thing. Jesus has the same thought in John 17. Where he speaks about his first generation apostles.

He says. I've given them the word. Praise to his father. I've given them the word you gave me.

They've received that word. And through that word. Other people will be saved.

So there's a completeness about it. And there's a wholeness about it. If it was incomplete. Then okay.

The Jehovah's Witnesses. Or the Mormons could come along and say. Well you've got the Bible. But there's some important things missing. And we can supply them. But Paul wouldn't let us do that.

[21 : 58] He'd say. No I've given you the whole counsel of God. There's no important component missing. That's why your Bible. If it's anything like my Bible.

Has got a last page. And a cover. It's not a lever arch file. Where you can clip in extra pages.

When more revelation comes along. Because Paul didn't manage to tell us everything. And Jesus didn't manage to tell us everything. So we've got more pages to add. Is that right? Is your Bible like mine?

Yes. Yes. Good. What is this message? Well here on the screen. Is the. Statement.

Which I think is out there. In the lobby. Which summarizes. The. Gospel. That Paul taught.

[22 : 59] And. You can read it on your way out. You might not want to read the whole thing. From the screen here. But it says. It tells us about God. Who is. Three in one. He exists eternally.

In three distinct. But equal persons. The Father. The Son. And the Holy Spirit. God is unchangeable. In his holiness. Justice. Wisdom. And love. He is the almighty creator.

Savior. And judge. Who sustains. And governs all things. According to his sovereign will. For his own glory. So it says. That's. That's the word about God. And it says.

About the Bible. God has revealed himself. In the Bible. Which consists of the old. And new testaments. Alone. Alone. Don't add any more. It. Word was inspired by God.

Through human authors. So that the Bible. And. Really. Given. In its entirety. The word of God. Without error. And fully reliable. In fact.

[23 : 56] And doctrine. The Bible. Alone. Speaks with human. With final authority. And is always sufficient. For all matters. Of belief. And practice.

So that's the. Summary. Of the main points. About the Bible. And it goes on. To speak about. The human race. As being sinful.

And speaks about. The Lord Jesus Christ. As fully God. And fully man. Conceived by the Holy Spirit. Born of a virgin. Living a sinless life. In obedience to the Father.

He taught with authority. And all his words are true. On the cross. He died. In the place of sinners. Bearing God's punishment. For their sin. Redeeming them by his blood.

He rose from the dead. And in his resurrection body. Ascended into heaven. Where he is exalted. As Lord of all. He intercedes for his people. In the presence of the Father.

[24 : 54] And. I won't read it all out. I don't think. But there are main points. About salvation. About the Holy Spirit. About the church. About baptism.

And the Lord's Supper. And about the future. And that's a summary. Of the word. The message. Which. Paul spoke to Timothy.

Timothy says. Yes. I'm going to teach that. To other people. And they teach it. To other people. And that's us. We have heard. This. Message.

From the apostles. That's in the Bible. And people have taught it. To us. Haven't they? And it's our job. To be teaching that. Onwards. To others. So.

Let me just say. Where we got to. We were talking about. People from within the church. And we were talking about. Training them up. And the focus of this training.

[25 : 51] Is that they. Believe. And teach. The. Apostolic. Gospel. That is to say. The gospel message. Which the apostles.

Had in the first place. That's the only message. There is. That's the complete message. That's the one. That is to be taught. And it's summarized. In such statements.

As that. Okay. So. I'm still on my second point. Which says. Although there is an expectation. Of elders arising. With a church. There is a precedent.

For calling in specialists. From outside. So what about the specialists. From outside. Let's go back. And revisit this. This was in Acts. Chapter 11. In Acts.

Chapter 11. We read. In verse 19. That those who had been scattered. By the persecution. In connection with Stephen. Travelled as far as.

[26 : 58] Phoenicia. Cyprus. And Antioch. Telling the message. Only to Jews. Some of them. However. Men from Cyprus. And Cyrene. Went to Antioch.

And began to speak. To Greeks. Also. Telling them. The news. About the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand. Was with them.

And a great number. Of people believed. And turned to the Lord. News of this. Reached the ears. Of the church. At Jerusalem. And they sent.

Barnabas. To Antioch. And when he arrived. He saw the evidence. Of the grace of God. He was glad. And encouraged them. All to remain. True to the Lord.

With all their hearts. He was a good man. Full of the Holy Spirit. And faith. And a great number. Of people were brought. To the Lord. Then Barnabas.

[27 : 52] Went to Tarsus. To look. For Saul. And when he found him. He brought him. To Antioch. And for a whole year. Barnabas. And Saul. Met with the church.

And taught. Great numbers of people. The disciples. Were called. Christians. First. At Antioch. So here's the. Counter example. Of the specialist.

Brought in from outside. And it's worth. Just spending a moment. Or two. Looking at it. Says in verse 20. That. There was gospel telling.

Going on. Men from Cyprus. And Cyrene. Cyrene. He went to Antioch. And told them. The good news. About the Lord Jesus. So it wasn't as though. There was no gospel.

There was gospel. And it was being successful. There were good things. Happening. So we're not talking about. Everything being in disarray. And in a mess. Good things were happening.

[28 : 48] Verse 23. When he saw the evidence. Of the grace of God. He was glad. So Barnabas. Who was sent to investigate this. This is good. I'm very glad.

About what's happening. And there were a lot of converts. Verse 24. It says. Doesn't it. A great number of people. Were brought to the Lord. So. The Lord was blessing it.

The thing that was. Happening. Is. That there is new. A new situation. Developing. Ethnically. And culturally. That previously.

They were in the habit. Of speaking. Only to Jews. Verse 19. But. These. Bold. Radical. Innovators. From Cyprus. Began. Speaking. To people. Who weren't. Jews. And many. Of these. Non-Jews. Believed.

[29 : 46] So these are people. Who don't know. The Old Testament. These are people. Who don't have a. A background. In. Knowing who God is. And so on. So that.

Is why. This. New person. Is brought in. So in verse 26. Barnabas went. To Tarsus. To look for Saul. And brings him.

To Antioch. And what they actually do. Is they teach. The Christians there. So we notice. The work was not in sin. He's not saying. That something terribly. Mistaken.

That has to be. Repented of. It wasn't wrong. And needing. Correction. But there was. A need. A special need. That they couldn't meet.

From within. Their own ranks. And in this case. The need is. To teach. Converts. Who don't know. The Old Testament. And who. Is the person.

[30 : 40] Who so well. Understands. The Old Testament. That he can. Bring this. Into a Gentile context. And see how it affects. The Gentiles. Well the answer is.

Saul of Tarsus. So. Get. On. The first. Chariot. Out of here. And go and get. Saul of Tarsus. And that's exactly. What he did.

And it is a sort of. Headhunting operation. Isn't it? It's interesting. That he. They don't say. Well let's put an advert. In. Whatever. Christian newspaper.

We've got. He says. I know exactly. Who we need. He's already busy. He's not. Twiddling his thumbs. But we need that guy.

More than. They need him. So they went. And. It is a sort of. Headhunting. Isn't it? They went to get him. From somewhere. To somewhere else. Where he could be more use.

[31 : 33] And nowadays. We don't have the. The issues of. Suddenly having people. In the. In the church. Who don't. Don't know the old testament.

That's been an issue. For a long long time. We've got the hang of that. But there are specialist skills. That. People have. For example. Running a larger church. Is different. Running a smaller

church.

To running a larger church. And. That. That. There are. Specialist skills. For that. Church planting. Is something. That some people.

Are particularly good. And gifted at. And they know about that. Running a church. On multiple sites. Is something. That. Most people. Won't have experience of.

But some people. Might have specialist knowledge. Particular gifts. In apologetics. So there are some. Pastors and ministers. Who are particularly good. At speaking to.

[32 : 30] Audiences. That are. Unbelieving. Hostile. Coming from a different world view. So Ravi. What's the. That chap's name. Zach. You tell me. Zacharias.

I think Tim Keller. Is particularly good at this. Isn't he. Presenting the gospel. To. People who are. Immersed. In a completely different. World. So there are some.

Examples. Of specialist skills. That. Churches. Might. Say. We need somebody. From outside. Because. None of our lot. Can. Knows very much. About that.

So that was my. Second point. And the second point. Is. That there is an expectation. Of elders arising. Within a church. There is also.

A precedent. For calling in specialists. From outside. Okay. That was my second point. Here's my third point. My third point. Is that there is more.

[33 : 26] To. Leadership. Than. Maintenance. As. There's more. To. What. Churches. Should.

Expect. Of. And receive. From. Their elders. Than. Simply. Keeping. Things. Ticking. Over. That's what I'm saying. And I'm going to try.

And prove that to you. And I'm going to admit. That it's difficult. To get this thought. Simply. By looking. At the qualifications. For elders. So we've done that. We've looked in detail.

At the places where. The qualities. Of elders. Are described. And I think. What those qualities are. Don't appoint. Somebody. Who doesn't meet those.

I think that's what those is. Don't appoint. Somebody. Who doesn't meet. Those qualifications. It's not saying. Appoint everybody. Who does meet. Those qualifications. Saying don't. Appoint somebody.

[34 : 22] Who doesn't meet. Those qualifications. And. But. That doesn't tell us. This bit. We could. Possibly.

Press the button. Of shepherd. And say. If people are being. Shepherded. And led. Where are they being. Led to. So we could do it. That way. And that might be.

A profitable thought. So do shepherds. For example. Lead people. To Jesus Christ. Or do shepherds. Lead people.

Up the garden path. So I know. Some of you. Have been in churches. Where you're not convinced. That the. The pastor. Shepherd. Elder. Leader.

Is actually leading people. To Jesus Christ. But is just leading them. To nonsense. And rubbish. And pointlessness. So. Where do shepherds. Lead their. People to.

[35 : 17] Is a good question. But I'd like to do it. This way. I'd like to say. Let's go back. To that larger question. Of where do elders. Fit into the big plan. Of God. God.

I think this is where. Paul. Got his. Direction from. So would you like to. Look at. Look with me. At Isaiah chapter 2.

As a. Representative. Chapter. And I. Invite you to think. This thought. That when the apostle Paul. Looked in the Bible. To see what was he doing. He would not. Have looked in the New Testament. Because he hadn't written it yet. He would look in the Old Testament. Because that was the Bible. And he would say. What am I. Involved with. What do I find myself. Involved with. All of a sudden. Through Jesus Christ. And I would say. He would look at. Isaiah chapter 2.

[36 : 12] And he would get an answer. From that. Here's what Isaiah chapter 2 says. This is what Isaiah. Son of Amos saw. Concerning Judah and Jerusalem. In the last days.

And Paul would be thinking. In the last days. Through Jesus Christ. We are in the last days. In the last days. The mountain of the Lord's temple. Will be established. As chief among the mountains. It will be raised above the hills. And all nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say. Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord. To the house of the God of Jacob.

He will teach us his ways. That we may walk in his paths. The law will go out from Zion. The word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And the learned Rabbi Paul.

Would have been thinking. Now what does this mean? Does this actually mean. That the physical. Geographical city of Jerusalem. Is going to be lifted up.

[37 : 12] Higher. That God's going to put an earthquake. Under it and lift it up higher. And that all the nations. Will get on their chariots. And horses. And walk their way to Jerusalem.

And I think he would have thought. Actually that's not the way. God is going to do things. In the New Testament. I think Paul would have said. This is a visionary picture.

Of the New Testament church. This is a visionary picture. Of the importance. Of the community of God. Through Jesus Christ. Rather than through being.

At such and such a latitude. And longitude. And he says that this place. Is lifted up. Not because. It's been put on. Stilts. But because it is so.

Important to the plan of God. And that as the gospel is proclaimed. People will come. From all different places. To believe in the Lord Jesus. And I think he would have taken that.

[38 : 12] As a powerful vision. The vision of many people. From all nations. Coming to the Lord. So I picked on this one. But there's many many other places.

You get a similar. Exciting. Prophetic vision. Of what God will do. In the New Testament times. Excuse me.

And that vision. I would say. In its power. In its comprehensiveness. In its vividness. In its reality. Is the vision. That's meant to drive. New Testament churches. I think New Testament churches. Ought to look at this. And say. I realize it's sort of picture language.

But isn't it exciting. That's what we're involved in. That's the whole thing. That we are. At work. To. To. To fulfill.

[39 : 10] This is what we're caught up in. And in a church like ours. You might look around and say. I can see people from different nations. I can see there's somebody from Poland. I can see there's somebody from Wales.

You see there's somebody from Italy. You see there's somebody from Nigeria. Somebody from England even. And look at this is happening. The Lord is bringing people.

To. To himself. In this way. And I think this vision. Is. The vision that propelled. The New Testament.

And was meant to propel the New Testament leaders. And there to turn that vision into strategy. And to say. Well here we are. In Antioch. What can we do to fulfill this vision?

Or here we are. In Rome. What can we do to fulfill this vision? Or here we are. In South Chaley. What can we do to fulfill this vision? Or here we are.

[40 : 08] In Preston Circus in Brighton. What can we do to fulfill this vision? There's the vision before us. It's sort of. Vivid and pictorial. But. On the ground.

What are we going to do? What next step shall we take. For that to happen here? And I will. I'm trying to. I'm trying to convince you. That leaders.

Are meant to think those thoughts. They're meant to catch the vision. And then put it into a strategy. To say. This is what we do next. This is the next plan.

That we put into operation. Starting. Tomorrow. Or starting. In August. Or whenever it is. But these are the steps. We're actually going to take. To make that happen. And I'd like to give you.

An example. So. Let's go back to Nehemiah. Which. Was read to us. Let's. I had a lot of trouble.

[41 : 09] Finding Nehemiah. When Ray was reading. I found it before. And it disappeared. From my Bible. I found it again. So I'm going to talk. For a little while. In case you're just. Working out. Where Nehemiah is.

Oh. I don't know. I've got. Three, four, three. In that one. And what I want to say. About Nehemiah. Is. Not that he's. A church elder. But he's. A spiritual leader. And it's worth. Looking at. The way. This. Function.

Of leadership. Operated. In. Nehemiah. So. As we've. Seen. He saw. The city of God. Destroyed. And its gates. Burned.

With fire. And he knew. What the vision. For the city was. Didn't he? He knew. That that wasn't right. He knew.

[42 : 03] That God's plan. Was. That his city. Would be built. And in that part. Of. In the old testament. Times. That literally. Meant. Building a city. You know.

With bricks. And. Sand and cement. And whatever things. You used. In those days. The vision. Is implemented. Differently now. But it's the same vision.

He knew. What the vision. Of the city was. And he cared. About it. And we saw. How much he cared. Because he wept. Didn't he? When it wasn't. Like it should be. He wept. And he prayed. And clearly. There was in his heart. A vision of what it ought to be. And a realistic sense.

Of what it actually was. And. A prayer. And Alistair Begg. Put it very nicely. Preacher Alistair Begg. Something like this.

[42 : 58] He says. He saw what it ought to be. And where they actually were. And he had. And he saw the ability. Of almighty God. To bridge that gap. He saw.

What it ought to be. Where they were. And the ability. Of almighty God. To bridge that gap. And as such. He's functioning. As a spiritual leader.

And if you read on. You'll find. In very practical ways. He says. We're at point A. We want to get to point H. Let's say.

So we need to find. B. C. D. E. F. G. To get to H. And he. Has the vision. And he puts it into a strategy. He gets people together.

Motivates them. And they do indeed. Work together. For the building. Of the city. And. I'm trying to convince you. That. That.

[43 : 53] Attitude. And quality. And role. Of Nehemiah. Is what is required. In the. Building of the church. Of Jesus Christ. And it's.

The elders. The eldership. That. To whom that falls. Let me give you another example. Of Paul. So we're going to go to. Romans 15. And he writes this long letter to.

The Roman Christians. And you might think. That he'd written it. Just because. He was looking for a publishing opportunity. For a piece of systematic theology.

But I think there's more to it than that. He certainly does give them loads of theology. He explains his. The whole counsel of God. In considerable detail. But he does say. That he has a reason for it. Romans 15. Verse 23. He says. Now there is no more place. For me to work in these regions. And since I've been longing. For many years. To see you.

[45 : 02] I plan. To do so. When I go. To Spain. I hope to visit you. While passing through. And have you assist me. On my journey there. After I've enjoyed.

Your company. For a while. That's what he says. Interesting. Just to pick up. On the way he's thinking. Because I think. He has the same vision.

Of. The. Kingdom of Jesus Christ. The international. Scope of it. The fact that. Many more people. Ought to love.

And follow Jesus. Than. Than currently do. And. He can see. What it ought to be. And he can see. The. Steps. That needed to be taken.

To implement that. And. That's what he's talking about. Isn't he? He says. I've been working in these regions. Verse 23. But I've got a plan. And when I've finished here.

[46 : 00] I plan to go to Spain. Now. Excuse me. He's not going to Spain on holiday. Some of us. Might aspire to a plan.

To go to Spain on a holiday. But that's not what he's going. He says. They haven't heard the gospel yet. So I have a plan. To go there. That's where I'd like to go.

And. In order to get. To point S. In Spain. From point A. In. Wherever I am now. I need to go through. This. This. This. This. This. And Rome.

You're on that. You're on that. Line. And so. In order to get to Spain. He says. I'm planning. To visit you. Verse.

24. I plan to do so. When I go to Spain. I hope to visit you. While passing through. So. He has a plan. He has a vision. And a strategy. To implement it. And this involves.

[46 : 56] Getting the Romans on board. And. Them helping him. And I think that's why. He wrote the letter. I think he's saying. You don't know me. You don't know what I.

You've heard of me. But I want you to know. Exactly. What I believe. Exactly. What I think. So. Here's a long letter. And when you've read it.

I want you to be ready. To welcome me. Because my plan. Is to go to Spain. And I shall need. Bed and breakfast. A bit of food. I shall. My sandals. Will probably have worn out.

By then. So. If any of you. Have got some spare sandals. That would be really great. And a few things like that. Because. I'm on my way to Spain. And I want you to be part of my plan. Are you with me?

Do you see the same thing. In. In Paul. As there was in Nehemiah. A vision. A strategy. A motivating of people. And I think that is. The sort of.

[47 : 53] Spiritual leadership. That. That. The kingdom. Requires. And. That. There need to be people. To.

Implement. So. Those are my three points. And. I may well have lost. One or two slides. On the way. But. I think. So. Here are the three points.

Number one. Was a short point. The model of eldership. Is that. Very flexible. So. So. The eldership. In one church. Might not. Look like the eldership. In another church.

The eldership. In one church. Might even. Be dignified. With the title. Vicar. And rector. What on earth are they? But. We know. They're elders. They just got the wrong. Name written over the office.

This. Works. In. New York. And it works. In Newport. My second point was. Although there's an expectation.

[48 : 50] Of elders arising. Within the church. There is a precedent. For calling in specialists. From outside. So this puts us in line. For in-house training. And development. That's what we're meant.

To be doing. It also points out. The importance. Of the apostolic message. That's the subject matter. That's the thing. That has to be. Passed on. This word.

This message. And. It. It. Allows us. To think of. Headhunting. Or. In some other method. Acquiring from outside.

People with specialist skills. And experience. And I suggest. That in order to do that. We would need to look at our own situation. Say. What specialist skills. Do we need?

And my third point. Is that there's more to leadership. Than maintenance. That leadership. Needs a biblical vision. Of Christ's. Large. Exciting.

[49 : 46] Global. Purposes. Jesus. Shall reign. Where'er the sun. Does his successive journeys run. His kingdom stretch. From shore to shore. Till moon shall wax.

And wane no more. Gird on your sword. O mighty one. Go out. And achieve great victories. That's the vision. That needs to propel. Churches. Through their leaders.

That's the vision. That's the vision. That Nehemiah saw. That's the vision. That Paul saw. And that's the vision.

That we need to see. And we need leaders. Who will see that too. I've finished. This will be.

A matter that we'll be discussing. At our. Members meeting. Coming up. And in the letter to members. Some of this material. Will be. Mentioned. But. Very happy to talk about this.

[50 : 41] As the time goes on. Because it's a very important matter. For us as a church. But in order to close. Our meeting. We will sing. Church arise. And put your armor on.

Hear the call of Christ. Our captain. Let's stand. And sing. When the music starts.