

The Church Elder and Church Members

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Preacher: John Lowrie

[0 : 0 0] Hebrews chapter 13, Hebrews chapter 13. Thank you, Gerald, for leading our worship. A lot of impressive stuff there up to this point, certainly. Kids matter, that's an impressive work, and we need to really support and help those involved in that as well. Also, an impressive workout as well.

That was quite something. I was suffering a wee bit. I was up walking up Dunkeld area yesterday, 1,500 feet walking, so that was good fun. So, yeah, my knees got a bit of bashing yesterday and this morning doing that. But I was also impressed by bang on 11 o'clock, you had two minutes silence. That's an art. That is a skill, I'll tell you. In any church service, bearing in mind all the stuff we had, and my watch is radio controlled, and I thought, wow, right on the button. That was very, very impressive. And we, what's that? That was very good, very, very good.

No, that's great. And we do remember those who are still engaged in war. We bring all these things before the Lord, those who put their life on the line, that we might have peace in our day, not just in this country, but throughout the world as well. Hebrews 13, we're bringing our wee series that we did on eldership to a close this morning. So, this is the last passage I want us to consider. And this is the part where it's very much we've looked at the elders and put them under the microscope. This is where you could say your average church member now goes under the microscope and how we relate to our elders. So, just a few verses. Let's read from Hebrews 13, reading from verse 17. Hebrews 13, 17. Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you. Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way. I particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon. Now, may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead, our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will. And may he work in us what is pleasing to him through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. Let's just ask for the Lord's help as we come to his word now.

Our loving Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word that truly is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. We thank you for the many times, Lord, that it teaches us. It teaches us about ourselves and about yourself, about your character, your love and your grace and your mercy. We thank you, Lord, that it teaches us about our Son as the Savior of the world. We thank you as well, Lord, for the times that even rebukes us and chastens us and brings us back onto that straight and narrow path that leads to life.

But we thank you, Father, for those passages which teach us, which educate us, which inform us about how best we should live. So, Father, we pray as we look at leaders of the church, as we think of elders once again, finally this morning, we pray, Father, that you would speak to each one of us, encourage us. We thank you for the blueprint, Lord, that you have designed for the local church. Lord, we accept it from your hand. We see its wisdom. We pray, Lord, that that will come across this morning. So, Father, be with each one of us as we turn to your word now, in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. We're bringing this wee short series, three weeks, to a close about the role of the church elder. Here are some of the things we've looked at already. We've looked at the role of the elder. What does the elder do, the leader, overseer, bishop, or whatever? A lot of these terms are interchangeable. These are fairly obvious. We feed, we are to feed the flock, feeding God's people from his word, and that's fairly obvious. It's one of the main tasks that the elder has to be able to teach. So, he feeds the flock. We protect the flock from false doctrine, from other sheep as well, perhaps. We lead. It's a governing role where we direct the affairs of the church. We are supposed to be the prime movers in a lot of things, aided by the church as well. But we are leading and guiding. We vision cast. We give direction, hopefully. We care practically for the flock, and we, above all, love them. If we love the flock, we will not go far wrong.

[4 : 39] Last time, we looked at the qualifications of the church elder, and we looked at three main areas. The morality, it's high. It's a high standard, because these qualities, you remember, are very Christ-like, but you remember we said last week that the qualities are ordinary, in the sense that every Christian has to show these with the exception of the last one, an ability. But we are to be faithful, faithful to our wives if we're married, one woman, man, stable, balanced in our emotions, controlled in our tongue and our temper, alcohol, materialism, self-control. Men is very much the watchword in morality, but also spirituality. We are to be a holy people, people who love God, who walk with God, who love His Word, who love the gospel, who love God. A hospitable person under spirituality. We are a people person. We care for the flock, and we're called to this work, not just called by the church, recognized by the church mostly, but called by the Holy Spirit. An inner compulsion to be involved as an elder in this noble task. And then lastly, we looked at the ability.

You have to be able to teach. It's the one thing that sets us apart from deacons, and perhaps from other members of the church. These other ones are common to each one of us, but we have to be able to teach, and we have to be able to, if you want to know if somebody has the ability, look at their family. Look at how he manages his little church, how that works, and enable to do the work. Balancing time and the priorities of work and family, that you actually can do the work. And we looked at that last time. Why are these qualifications so important? They're important because we have been entrusted with God's most treasured possession. Those for whom Christ died, shed his blood to purchase. And it's easy to see the sheep as those who might drive you nutty, but you are special, and we always need to keep that before us, and we should love the flock. So you are God's most treasured possession, his people, his sheep. We're also entrusted with God's plan of salvation. Many leaders, shall we say, have sold the jerseys when it comes to the authority of the word, and also the gospel itself. We safeguard, we stand firm, and we look after these things. And above all, through all of this, God's glory is at stake. If we lead well, God is glorified, the church are helped, and the church are blessed. Now we're looking at the other side of the coin. We've put the elders under the microscope, and we've looked at the role, we've looked at the qualifications. It's interesting, one of the elders said to me, when do I hand my notice in or whatever. The task is a high calling. It really is. If any elder looks at their stuff and goes, yeah, it's a stroll in the park, it is not. And hopefully that will come across this morning as well. It is not an easy task. So this morning we're looking at the church elder and church members. We're looking at, we've put us under the microscope. Now is a chance to put the members under the microscope, how churches relate to their pastor or to the elders in the church. There's not a lot of teaching done on this, and there's not a lot in the Scriptures, but there are, there is teaching how the church, how the members are to relate. And we read this passage about having confidence in them, submitting to them, to their authority, and so forth. And that's what we're going to look at this morning. I think I've said to you before, I've been to so many induction services where the speaker brings the charge to the pastor. This is how you are to shepherd the flock.

And having sat through so many of these and been involved in so many of these myself, often that the difficulties come, not so much with the pastor not knowing what he's to do. That, that can create problems. But sometimes the church don't really know how to relate to him and to the elders. So, in many ways, this is preparing you for your new pastor as well, but it's also preparing you how to relate to your elders as we move forward. This is God's blueprint, and therefore, when we follow his blueprint, we have a healthy church and a church that the Lord will bless. This is why this is quite important and why it's good to do this. Elders or pastors are sometimes the most browbeaten people in the church. Let me read to you from Kent Hughes's book. It's not his book, it's actually his commentary on Hebrews. Kent Hughes has written quite a weighty volume on Hebrews, and this is what he says.

1987, Barbara and I co-authored a book entitled Liberating Ministry from the Success Syndrome. I think I've mentioned that book to you at some point. It's a good book. It's a good book, targeted to encourage fellow ministers and Christian workers in their labors for Christ, especially those ministering in less visible places. The book chronicled our early struggle in a small church and how we came to grips with success, first biblically and then practically. The result was a surprising flood of letters and phone calls asking for prayer and advice for invitations to speak. So, over the last five years, we have spoken to numerous denominational conferences and gatherings of pastors, both old line and independent from Maine to California.

In our travels, we discover this. Pastors, I would probably say elders as well, but certainly pastor, as a group, are one of the most hurting and abused segments of our society. That is something you don't often hear, is it? Just coming back from the leaders' conference, you very much get an impression pastors want to be affirmed by each other, and often you hear talks about go back and keep going, keep pressing on. I have many books on leadership. I've given away a lot of them before I came up, but these are one or two that I've kept. Serving Without Sinking, How to Serve Christ and Keep Your Joy. There are loads of books that have leadership and the word joy that seems to just evaporate when you're a pastor or even an elder in the church. It really is quite an important thing.

[11 : 19] Another book called Coping with Criticism, a strapline turning pain into blessing. Here is one, this was recommended at two conferences ago, Facing Snarls and Scowls. That's a book, I mean, you wouldn't think if you'd saw to somebody outside the church, this is a book that church leaders actually read, Preaching Through Hostility, Apathy and Adversity in Church Revitalization.

When you think about that, church revitalization, you can face hostility. You're going to try and build the church up and it can be a hostile environment. Serious, serious stuff on leadership and leading and guiding the church. And therefore, I think this is a timely reminder for us.

Do we encourage our elders and our pastor? Is this something we take seriously? Now, these books shouldn't surprise us. If you know anything of the Bible at all, Old Testament and New Testament, there's not a leader, there's not a man of God, woman of God, who doesn't get a hard time.

Moses gets a hard time. David gets a hard time. The prophets all got a hard time. Paul got a hard time. Even Jesus got a hard time. So, this shouldn't surprise us unless you're thinking, boy, you're a miserable guy today, John. Just doom and gloom and negativity. It's just human nature, isn't it? If husbands and wives can hardly agree and it's not always harmonious, how much more in a local church? When somebody's saying an awful lot from the pulpit, you're bound to upset somebody.

And that is the nature of it. And because of that, many pastors simply give up, and elders, and they don't want the job. They don't want the noble task that the Scripture calls it.

[13 : 11] They'd say, no, it's not for me. I mean, I've taken on a couple of pastorates and notoriously difficult ones where it was said, and I quote various expressions, I wouldn't touch it with a barge pole, it's a poison chalice, and so forth. Don't go near it. And me, muggins here, yeah, I'm up for the challenge. Yeah, we'll give this a bash, and we'll see how we go on. And sad to say, the noble task can become a poison chalice if we are not careful. So, here is an attempt, then, to just deal with this. It's a difficult sermon to preach on. I must confess, I like the first two.

I like looking at the role of the elders and the qualifications. This, I don't particularly like preaching this, but it's a necessary one. And I'll try and be as gracious as we can as we look at this together. Words that obey and submit don't, especially when it's relating to me when I'm preaching, and to the elders as well. You're preaching yourself in many ways in the role. But that's what we're going to look at. And the Bible, God gives us clear instructions. Look at verse 17, depending on the version you're reading, have confidence in your elders, submit to their authority, and so forth. Obey, submit, words like that. They come not, we don't know who wrote Hebrews, but this comes from God. How we are to relate to our elders in the church. If the task for them is heavy, so the task for you is equally heavy, to trust your elders, to move in confidence with them.

These are also for the members of the church, about obey and submit. If you're not a member of the church, do you really have folk over you? Do you feel you have to submit to folk that you have not signed on the dotted line? I'll leave that with you. You can think about that. That's why I think everybody should join a church. Be accountable to somebody. Have somebody over you to care for you, to look after you formally. Dedicate yourself to them. I mean, most of the, some, every church I've been in, I've had a call from the church. They pay my wages. They vote. They support. They stand up, and they say, we will support this guy. There's a bond. I feel responsible for them. They are responsible to me. If you're not a member, you're excluded from that just by the practicalities of the way churches work. So, if you're not, can I encourage you? Because this whole obey, submit, really is to do with church membership as well, as we look at that together. So, four things very quickly. The first one is by far the longest, and the other ones will go very rapid. I'm going to go through these quickly. I don't think I'm telling you something you don't know. Obedience. Obey your leaders if you're using ESV or an old version of the NIV or have confidence. Basically, that is the command here. Leaders, as we saw, are to govern. They are to lead the flock, and therefore our role is to obey them is to follow them. And they have an authority in that way who are over you, the Scriptures say. Now, authority, first of all then, under obedience, is through the position, not the person. It's hard to follow folk if you just don't like them as people. But that's not the point here. It is the position that commands that we are to follow them in that way. As Christ is the head of the church, he governs his church. How does he govern it? He governs it through the leaders that he places in the church. This is true of every aspect of life. You have a prime minister, and you have a head teacher. You have a family, a mom and a dad over their children, and so forth. You have directors in the workplace. Things need to happen in that way. Otherwise, you have the blind leading the blind. Qualified people who are able to lead. And that is what God does when he places elders within his church. The Holy Spirit raises them up, and he gives them that authority. Based on the position, as I said, it's the position that commands this. It's a bit like parents. It's very easy to think, well, mom and dad don't have a clue. I'm not going to really obey them. We are to submit to our parents.

We are to respect our parents, and so it is with those in the church. And it's something we need to take seriously. Francis Chan, in his wee books, an excellent wee book called Letters to the Church, we studied as a fraternal in London. He talks about the strange times when God appears to overreact.

You remember the cart, the new cart, when the Ark of the Covenant was placed on the cart, and it stumbled, and the fellow put his hand out to stop it, and the Lord struck him down dead. And he links us to the local church and its design, the design of the church regarding its elders, and how people need to take that seriously. If God has designed the church in a particular way by putting people there to lead and to guide and to care for the flock, not with a heavy hand, but with gentleness, then it makes sense that we recognize this, and we submit to that role. But let David, I will not raise my hand against the Lord's anointed, despite the fact Saul was off the wall. He wouldn't do this.

[18:48] And that's something we need to take on. It is he, Ephesians 4, God, who gave some to be pastors and teachers. It is his, and it's good to remind ourselves of that. We don't elect a pastor or elders.

It is the Holy Spirit. It is God himself. So, leadership role is for those who are over us, and they have authority because of the position. But also, the authority comes through the Word.

We obey, not just because of the role that they have, but because we minister God's Word, that the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Not our authority, but we have authority only as we preach this, thus says the Lord, not thus says the elders, thus says the Lord. And therefore, you should follow, as we teach, as we teach God's Word.

Paul says, if anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. So, we expound Paul's instruction, and therefore, we look to those who follow that. So, God works through his elders, qualified to teach others. And that's why Paul says, the elders who direct the affairs of the church are worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching, those who preach God's Word. We hear, we obey, not because they are elders, but because of the authority of God's Word. 1 Thessalonians 5, brothers, respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord, who admonish you. This comes from God's Word. Does that make sense?

We minister because of the position, but because of the role as well. Now, why are we to do this? Paul tells us in Ephesians, why are we to obey? Hebrews 13, not Paul writing this, we don't know who wrote this. Why? Because, first of all, they keep watch over you. That is our job, to care and to protect. So, we're not your enemies, we're there to care and to protect. Secondly, we must give an account, verse 17, as those who must give an account. James says this, not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

[21 : 10] Luke 12, from everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded. And from the one who has been trusted with much, much more will be asked. That's why you don't want to rush in to be an elder, because we will have to give an account. We will have to stand before God and judge more severely than most of you folk. How have you cared for my flock? How have you promoted the gospel?

How have you linked into the community? The responsibility is great, and in many ways, this should bring forth sympathy. Also, so that their work will be a joy, going back to this book here, serving with joy, and so forth. Do this, verse 17, so that their work will be a joy, not a burden.

There's nothing encourages the Lord's leaders when they see God's people working or walking with the Lord. 3 John, third letter of John, verse 4, I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. And then you remember when we looked at Philippians, Paul says, hold out the word of life on the day I may boast on the day that I did not labor or run in vain. We're not wasting our time. People are walking. God has been glorified. We're not banging our heads off a brick wall.

But there's nothing discourages us more when you just get sniped at or misunderstood or the folk don't want to follow you. They think you're a dumpling or whatever. There's nothing discourages you more when that is the case. And as I said, Moses very much excluded him. You remember when he got so frustrated with God's people, he struck the rod. And this mighty man of God who put up with so much, even defended God's people when God was going to strike them down. And that one act excluded him from going into the promised land. You can see it, but you're not going. You didn't honor me in that.

But Moses got so—you remember Numbers 11? Moses heard the people, every family wailing. Moses was troubled, we are told. Why have you brought this trouble upon me? What have I done to displease you?

[23 : 35] You put the burden of all these people on me. Did I conceive them? Did I give them birth? Why do you tell me to carry them in my arms as a nurse carries an infant? Where can I get meat for all these people?

They keep wailing to me, give us meat to eat. I cannot carry these people. And then he says, the burden is too heavy for me. If this is how you're going to treat me, what a thing for a pastor to say, put me to death right now. If I have found favor in your eyes, do not let me face my own ruin.

You're a mighty man of God. And he's better than any pastor that I know. He's certainly more godly than I'll ever be. And if he just—Lord, it's just too much. I pray for the church, this, that, and other, but I seem to be getting grief. It can happen very, very easily. And sometimes it's not a joy.

David, you remember, they wanted to stone David. Paul as well has to write letter after letter, being misunderstood, and so forth. And it robs us of joy. So, think, ask yourself the question, do I bring joy to the elders, or do I just give them grief constantly? That's the thing. So, God says in his word here, do it so that their work will be a joy and not a burden. And others might think, wow, that's a job I'd like to do, other young men in the church. Also, obey for your own good. That would be of no benefit to you. The actual wee phrase here is a particular way of speaking. It's, I think the word is litotes, which is understatement. That would be of no benefit to you. What it actually means is that would be a disaster. If you just give your—it's not just, well, you know, it might have worked out better for you, it would be, you're off your head. It's a disaster. Just don't do it. That's what this is saying. So, here is obedience. We obey our leaders because they are the prime movers. They are called to lead and to guide because of the role and because they minister God's word. It's not blind obedience, but only as they expound God's word, as they are those godly people. If your elders cease to be godly, fail in the qualifications.

Dismiss your elders. But don't have a dog and bark yourself. That's what I'm basically saying. Let them lead. Let them govern you. Let them lead the way ahead. It is one of the things that when you look at this whole area, it's a bit like marriage. The number of folk that I have conversations especially non-Christians, marriage—we're not getting married. We'll just live together because they just look at guys. They look at husbands and wives and think they just fall out.

[26 : 29] They're a waste of time. So, we just don't do it. So, we don't get married. We live together, keeping one eye on the back door. If it doesn't work, I'm off. And I say, what is wrong with the institution of marriage? Two people in love committing themselves to each other till death do part.

for better, for worse, richer, for poorer. Two people who will bind themselves together no matter what happens, forgive and forget, move on. What is wrong with that? But because people fail doesn't make the blueprint wrong. And I think it's the same in eldership. Because elders sometimes maybe don't always get things right. Doesn't make—doesn't nullify these verses that are still worth following.

When elders lead well and love the flock, it's not hard to obey them. Because they know they have your interests at heart. We don't grudge obeying the Lord. Although we find it hard, the old nature is there. But we know the wisdom in it. Why? Because he loves us. He cares for us.

And if your elders do the same, then care for them. Encourage them in this way. Secondly, very quickly, I'm going to go through these next three. Submission. The two words are different. Obey your elders or have confidence in them. Submit to their authority. It's—I like this one, submission. It's the area where we sometimes struggle with. We might buy into the whole obey, yeah, I can recognize that, the authority given to them through the ministry of the Word and so forth.

Submit to them. This is basically to do with the lesser issues of life. If we're happy to believe, right, doctrines of grace or whatever, justification by faith, yeah, I'm going to obey that. That's fine. Yep, I agree with that. Ten commandments, you've just expounded it, I'll obey. But submitting, these are the lesser things of life. And basically, it means to give way. Here's a give way sign, just to remind you. That's what it means. It just means in a smaller issue. You could fight with them. But submit to them. Just give way. I remember the very first time I went from Northern Ireland into Southern Ireland and seen the signs, yield. I'd never seen that before, and I went, wow, isn't that great? That's what it means.

[28 : 48] Just submit. Just yield to them. In other words, pick your battles. Don't fight with elders on every way. Wee thing. It's the one thing that robs you of joy. It's never one—I don't speak for a pastor for 30 years. It's not one big thing. You don't have somebody grabbing you by the throat in the morning and pinning you up against the door saying they're going to punch your lights out. It's not that. It's the small, wee, niggly, stupid things that just wear you down. It is those things. And it's not the obedience to something. So it's just the area of submitting and just saying, can I just say? It's that wee—those three words, whatever, should be banished from your vocabulary. It's the cumulative effect. I don't know if I've ever told you about a time when I was a young guy and me and my mates beat up somebody. Have I told you that? No. No, no. Right, okay.

I wasn't a thug. I wasn't going around. We were more Tom Sawyer kind of guys stealing apples from the next door neighbor's garden. We weren't the criminals. We weren't the mugging folk. But on one occasion, we roughed this guy up and just kind of play. Yeah. And then we left him. He was still standing. And there was six of us. And we left. And then about two hours later, we walked by his house. And his mother came out and shouting and bawling. Rightfully so. She says, what have you done to my son? He went in the house and he passed out in the hall. And my first reaction was, yeah, of course he did. We never done anything. If he passed out, he's just at it. We never did anything. And then immediately I thought, what did I do? What was my part? Well, I had a couple of wee dings, a wee fist, a wee boot here, there. There was six of us. If they all did the same, this guy had about 24 or about 40 blows. No wonder he passed out in the hall. But from my perspective, I hadn't done much. I had just done a couple of wee things. I find it hard to believe he passed out in the hall. That's what happens in the pastorate. It's just my wee thing. I'll just say this. No realizing there could be another 15 have already done wee things before you. And over a period of time, it wearies you. I'm really the best person to tell you this. If you learn nothing, just take that to heart. It's just a wee thing.

Can I just say? And it's just, it's just a, and if you've got another can I just say and another one and another one, don't be surprised if your pastor's on his knees. Joy has gone, wishing he was a bus conductor. And what have I done? What happened to the noble task? It doesn't take much. So just think of, well, I only said a wee thing. So have all these other folk. It happens too easily. You really don't need to get it off your chest. Pick your battles. As elders and pastors have to pick their battles.

Pick your, just let it go. Let it go. It's not worth it. So, submission. Submission. That is the thing. Thirdly, love and respect. Love and respect. 1 Thessalonians 5. Now, we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord, who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. So here is, respect them who are over you. Hold them in the highest regard in love. I'll tell you, there are many pastors, elders up and down the country, their congregations need to hear those words because it's just not being worked out. Do this in love and respect. Respect them for what they do. They work hard or they should be working hard.

This requires trust, doesn't it? I find as a pastor, I not only need to work hard before the Lord, I need to be seen to work hard. So if I'm given the opportunity, well, I visited so-and-so, I did this, I was praying to him. You have to tell folk, because I'm sure folk think when the elders meet tomorrow morning, for the first couple of hours, we play cards, we play Cluedo or whatever it is, and then we discuss a wee bit of work. We have a cup of coffee and then we go down to the pub for our lunch. It doesn't happen that way. I mean, the elders, so if we have an elders meeting that goes on for a marathon, I'm enjoying the elders meeting that meet 10 in the morning. Mine's usually meet half seven on a Monday night and go on to about 11 o'clock. So see, when we do that, I tell folk that. Marathon session last night, I dare say as I say, they think we're playing cards. But you don't see a lot what the elders do, the way we wrestle, the books you read, the things you need to get a grip of. You don't see that. It requires trust to respect them. I don't know, but I'm trusting that they're hard-working elders. They work hard over you. And it's not easy. Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 5, he says, respect them, those who work hard, who admonish you. I don't know if somebody comes and admonishes me whether I go, aren't they just great? I've just been admonished. I think I'll respect them and love them. It just seems too negative. But they're there to care for you. So as an elder comes and if he dares to admonish you, do you respect him? Do you love him for it? These are big, big verses. It is not easy. Fourthly, I'm finished. Prayer. Pray for us. Verse 18 in Hebrews 13.

[34 : 26] Pray for us. Paul mentions this many times in his letter. He doesn't say, I'm Paul. He mentions all the time, pray for me. Please pray for me. Pray that I'll stand. Pray that I'll witness. Pray that I'll live as I should. And that's the mighty apostle Paul. John would say this. Peter would say this.

Pray for us. We need prayer because of the role. We need prayer because of the high qualifications. And we need prayer because of the opposition that often comes our way. We things that can be flies and our ointment and so forth. It's often said, isn't it, that churches get the elders they deserve.

If you don't pray regularly for your elders, don't be surprised if you get the elders you deserve. And if you don't pray for your elders, you have no right to criticize them if you don't pray for them.

Same as if we don't, we can't criticize you if we're not praying for you. Pray. Pray for the elders that the Lord would lead and guide. So, find this series, small series on church eldership. It might be another 10 years before you ever hear another series on this. It's one to tick off. We've got done that. One you need to keep picking up. Elders are important to the welfare of the church. We must take this seriously. It is God's design. It is an important role, a caring role as under shepherds of Christ. The qualifications are high. And when they function well, they are easy to love. They are easy to respect. But it's something that we still must do. And where you have this, you have a healthy church family, and the Lord will add to that family. You're just tinkering if we neglect these mighty verses. Pray that the Lord will raise up men within our church, our eldership, our getting older, I'm getting older as well. Pray that the Lord will raise up over the months and years that lie ahead men who will see it as a noble task, and that we'll love and respect and support them in that role as they love and protect and feed and care for you as they should. We're going to stand and we're going to sing. It's hard. She's trying to get good songs on eldership. They are hen's teeth. You just can't get them. Somebody needs to sit down and write some good songs about the leaders of the church.

That's not a bad thing. But there's good ones about the Lord, and we're just going to sing. There is a higher throne.