

Elders who Rule Well
(1 Timothy 5:17–25)
Grace Chapel January 3, 2010 Dr. John Niemelä

INTRODUCTION

COMPENSATING ELDERS (5:17–18)

All elders who rule well are worthy of a double honorarium, but those that also labor in the word & in teaching are especially [worthy of a double honorarium] (5:17)

Logic of 1 Timothy 5:17: All elders are to rule well, some are to labor in word & teaching

Those who both rule well & labor in the W+T are most worthy.
 Those who neither rule well nor labor in the W+T are least worthy.
 Elders who rule well but do not labor in the word & teaching are worthy of double honor, but elders who labor in the word & teaching (but do not rule well) are not.

	Some rule well	Some don't rule well
Some elders labor in word & teaching	<i>1 = most worthy</i> ☺\$\$	<i>3 = unworthy</i> ☹ \$\$
Some don't labor in word & teaching	<i>2 = 2nd most worthy</i> ☺\$\$	<i>4 = unworthy</i> ☹ \$\$

All elders are to rule well. Some are to labor in the word and teaching.

This leads us to conclude that a church should have at least one teaching/ruling elder. Other elders may focus more upon ruling.

Local church ABC: Elder 1: Teaching and ruling elder
 Elder 2: Ruling elder (or teaching and ruling elder)
 Elder 3: Ruling elder (or teaching and ruling elder)
 Etc.

The logic of the passage favors a plurality of elders in each congregation.

Else: Church ABC pays elder who rules well; doesn't labor in W&T
 Church XYZ pays elder who rules well & labors in W&T

Does this seem reasonable for Paul to tell Church ABC? No.

[In light of elders who rule well being worthy of a double honorarium] Scripture (Deut 25:4) says not to muzzle an ox treading grain and [another Scripture] (Lev 19:13 & Deut 24:15) says that a worker is worthy of his wage (5:18)

You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out *the grain*. (Deut 25:4)

You shall not cheat your neighbor, nor rob *him*. The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until morning. (Lev 19:13)

You shall give him his wages on his day before the sun sets, for he is poor and sets his heart on it; so that he may not cry against you to the LORD and it become sin in you. (Deut 24:15)

HANDLING ACCUSATIONS AGAINST ELDERS (5:19–21)

Charges against elders require 2 or 3 witnesses [before proceeding] (5:19)

One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established. (Deut 19:15)

A biblical example of a judge who discredited a single witness

Sinning [elders] are to be rebuked before the congregation, so the rest may fear [preventing them from regarding disobedience lightly] (5:20)

A biblical example of a congregation that did not discipline serious offenses (the example is in regard to a non-elder)

Paul invokes God and the elect angels as witnesses as he warns Timothy not to allow partiality to prevent him from carrying out these instructions regarding elders (5:21)

CAUTION AGAINST APPOINTING DISQUALIFIED MEN AS ELDERS (5:22–25)
A warning against hastily ordaining anyone (5:22)

Timothy, who frequently had stomach problems, would benefit from a little wine, rather than exclusively drinking water (5:23)

This verse is a parenthetical aside. Note how the passage flows if we skip verse 23.

²² Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.

²⁴ Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding *them* to judgment, but those of some *men* follow later. ²⁵ Likewise, the good works of *some* are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden.

What is the point of the parenthetical aside? 1 Corinthians (written 6½ years earlier) tells us about Timothy

For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church. (1 Cor 4:17)

Now if Timothy comes, see that he may be with you without fear; for he does the work of the Lord, as I also *do*. (1 Cor 16:10)

Some try to argue that the only reason Paul said this was because of bad water in Ephesus, but their argument doesn't match what Paul said.

Paul advocated for Timothy to drink a little wine, not much wine

Please observe: This is not a command for everyone to drink a little wine.

[The first reason for not laying hands on anyone suddenly (verse 21) is that] some men sin openly (their sins going ahead of them to judgment), while other men's sins remain hidden for a while, [while others grow in their walk with the Lord (5:24)

[The second reason for not laying hands on anyone suddenly (verse 21) is that, some men's good works become conspicuous, while other men's bad works also become conspicuous (5:25)

CONCLUSION