

Church – The Beginnings, Part 64

Paul's Charge to the Ephesian Elders - Part 1 - Acts 20:17-38

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NEW LIFE FELLOWSHIP

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Acts 20:17-38 - From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. ¹⁸ And when they had come to him, he said to them: "You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, ¹⁹ serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; ²⁰ how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, ²¹ testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. ²² And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there,

²³ except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. ²⁴ But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. ²⁵ And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. ²⁶ Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. ²⁷ For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. ²⁸ 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. ²⁹ For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰ Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. ³¹ Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

³² "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. ³³ I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. ³⁴ Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. ³⁵ I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

³⁶ And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. ³⁷ Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, ³⁸ sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.

1. The Elders of Ephesus in Miletus – Leadership Conference

- Precepts, Principles and Patterns

The **Pattern** for Leadership (Eldership) is **multiple** per congregation (per local church family).

(see Philippians 1:1 → saints, elders, and deacons)

The focus is on the **local church family**, not leadership over multiple congregations, but singular focus. The only exception is the capital "**A**" **Apostles** – as we see in Peter, John, and Paul. They did have leadership influence over multiple congregations (see Rev. 1 – 3 re: John, etc.). From that point forward there is no 3-**Ps** that addresses leadership that would span multiple congregations such as our modern concept of "Bishop".

2. Paul uses himself as an Example – as a Pattern of Life and Ministry for these Elders to follow – as they lead their congregation, together.

1 Cor. 11:1 → Imitate me, just as I also **imitate** Christ.

1 Timothy 1:12-16 → Jesus made Paul a template/pattern for all who would come to Christ thereafter.

Paul worked night and day – for his own income, but also with his Missionary Team to make sure that the church in Ephesus was strong in Christ and in His Word – doctrinally sound in Christ.

(read 1 Timothy and Ephesians for more on this)

3. Paul's 20:20 Pattern – meeting Publicly and from House to House

This was a **continuous Pattern** of gathering together as a local church family – from Pentecost (Acts 2) and onward. This continued onward, even when they had public meeting places of their own (owned their own buildings) – they still met **Publicly** and from **House to House** – up until it became **illegal** shortly after the Roman Emperor Constantine (the First) married the church to the state (i.e.: the beginnings of the Roman Catholic church – ref: Roman Emperor Theodosius (the First)) - 400s A.D.

LINK: <https://NLFJI.org/2Wings>

4. Ministry of the WORD – what was the substance and content?

The Word of God Preached: calling sinners to Repentance ... Repentance away from sin, Repentance toward God in Christ Calling Sinners to Trust in Christ for their Salvation.

After Salvation: Equipping, Teaching, Training of the saints.

a. Based on the Example of Life in Christ (Paul's manner of living)

b. Based on the Full Revelation of God (the whole counsel of God) (The Bible → 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16-4:4; 1 Tim. 5:17-18)