

The Rule Of The Church Authority

(Part 1)

“Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.” (Hebrews 13:17)

Usually the above Scripture is used to speak about submission to the church authorities and leadership. But in this message we will use the above Scripture to find out what are the duties and the responsibilities of the church leader and what he needs to do to the flock, and that will be the base for him to be respected and earn the submission of the flock to his instructions.

The leader, the pastor or the overseer of the church sure have responsibilities and important rules to play. From the above chosen Scripture we can find out the following responsibilities and commitments:-

1- Watch over: The church leader should keep watch over the church and over the new born believers and the flocks that God had placed under his or her care. To watch over include the following meanings and functions: **A. To look after. B. To watch. C. To keep an eye on. D. To guard. E. To mind.** Therefore the Lord had placed a real duty and burden on the church leader and he need to comply with God’s call for his life. Notice also the scripture declares that the church leader should keep watch over, so it is a continuous process and responsibility on his side. But if he will fail the Lord then instead of doing the watch over job that he has from the Lord he will start to neglect the flocks and the people that the Lord placed under his care. To watch over is see and observe everything especially the personal areas of people’ life and especially where sins and work of flesh is there. It require from the church leader to interfere when he sees things go wrong that may cause harm and injury to the people whom the Lord had placed under his care. The church leader should be a caring person like a mother or father caring for his children. Doing all the above in love as Paul spoke to the Thessalonians the following **“⁷ But we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. ⁸ We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. ¹¹ For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, ¹² encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.” (1 Thessalonians 2:7-8, 11-12)**

Apostle Paul on his farewell to the elders of the church of God at Ephesus he gave them the following commission **“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.” (Acts 20:28)** The same instruction here is to watch over, in order to protect the flock and nothing evil will come in and destroy the work of God as Paul expounds in later verses **“I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.” (Acts 20: 29-31)** To watch over here is to protect the sheep from the wolves (false teachers and false pastors) that may slip in and harm the church’ members and disturb the flocks.

Therefore such ministry that God had placed in the church when he had commissioned the leaders to do so is a big blessing to all the church members and His provision for them to be directed and nurtured and grow in the right way. That will be the case if two conditions are

met; **first**, the called leader abide with God’s call and faithfully and honestly perform his responsibility and **Second**, the flocks are willing to listen and obey and cope with the leader who is doing his very best to serve them.

Apostle Peter address the following to the church leaders **“¹ To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ’s sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: ² Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; ³ not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.” (1Peter 5:1-4)** This word of God direct the church leader the following things to do:

A- Be shepherds: That is part of the watch over responsibility to give the members the right spiritual food that is needed to nurture their souls and to direct them with the right advice and the right council, and to warn them from the threats and the dangers that they are not able to see, and to restrain them from going into the dangerous ways of the world and from walking in the council of the wicked.

B- Serve as overseer: Church leader is a servant of the Lord, to serve the people and care for them in the way of the Lord and oversee their lives and admonish them and correct them and direct them to the right way in all the affairs of their lives. The church leader should do that gladly because he is willing and eager to server. He should not do that to fulfill his/her ambition to be a certain figure and use the people, the money or material resources that under his/her care as a base to climb and fulfill his/her selfish ambition and greed.

C- Being an example to the flock: That requires much discipline, humility and self-control because the church leader life shall be the model for the flock to watch and imitate and follow the same. They should be teaching models for others to observe, follow and perform.

2- Give an Account: Here we found that the function of the leader is to give an account, so he/she needs to be accountable to the ministry, the church and to the Lord who had called him. To give an account is to show that you are responsible person and you need to excel and do your best in the ministry that the Lord had placed you in. And that require a real commitment and dedication to the task. To give an account includes the following meanings and functions: **A. To report. B. To tell. C. To state. D. To describe. E. To give details. F. To testify. G. To convey. H. To inform.**

3- To work: The above is the primary function of the church leader and that is his/her responsibility before the Lord. **1Thessalonians 5:12 and 13** states the following **“Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.”** As describe here the church leader should be a hard working person because the truth is this: The Lord had placed people under his/her care.

My Dear and Beloved: The Lord had called the church leader to be in high discipline to God and His word. He is called to watch, admonish, correct and direct wherever that is needed for you so that God’s blessings will flow in your life as you listen, obey and agree to pray

My Prayer: *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins to give me eternal life. Lord I commit myself to do my best service unto to you to care for those whom you have entrusted under my care and to be obedient to those who care for me and you had placed to watch over my life, this is my prayer in Jesus name Amen.*