

The Old Paths

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“Faithful Elders”

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It is a privilege to worship where there are faithful, godly men serving diligently in the role of elders. It has been my joy to know many men through the years who have served in such a way. When faithful elders are diligently watching over the flock several things will be accomplished.

1. Each one in the flock will be tended and cared for and will not feel left out. Godly elders are ever vigilant and aware of the status of each and every one in the flock. As a result, each member feels secure in the fact that if they grow weak there will be concern shown quickly. Godly, faithful elders tend the flock.

2. False teachers will know they will be discovered and will not find an open pulpit to present their heresies without challenge. Faithful elders are those who have studied and stayed aware of the ever changing atmosphere in the church. They welcome preaching and teaching on dangerous doctrines that may come in among them. They make sure the flock is informed of errors and instructed on how to scripturally answer those errors. They also want to know the names of those who may bring in “damnable heresies” while presenting themselves as “wolves in sheep’s clothing.”

3. Sound preaching and teaching will be welcomed. The membership will be able to support with confidence those who stand in the pulpit due to the fact that the elders will not be shy to ask men how they stand on current issues that trouble brethren. Elders will not rely simply on someone’s opinion about another’s faithfulness; they will check it out themselves. Faithful elders want the flock fed healthy truth and desire that all grow up in Christ and not remain children. They thoroughly believe Romans 1:16 and make no apology for the power of the Word. They do not desire men who will come and tickle ears, but seek for men to come and preach who will convict the flock of sin, if necessary and encourage faithful, diligent service.

4. Faithful elders will be active in teaching. They will take their charge as elders seriously and realize that they will answer to God for the way they rule. They will not seek ways to get around their duties. They will be accessible to the congregation and no one will feel as if they are putting an elder out when they ask to talk with them. They will be men who will make it a point to visit with the flock not only when one is struggling but also when they are doing well. They will know the flock. They will be hungry to learn as well as to teach. They will be supportive of every class, public and private that is going on. They will lead not only by word but by example. They love

the truth and those who promote it, teach it and live by it.

5. Faithful elders will practice discipline. They will love the flock enough to chastise and correct with love those who walk disorderly. They will seek to gain them back but will be unashamed to follow through if necessary in withdrawing from “every brother who walks disorderly” (2 Thess. 3:6).

6. Faithful elders will not shirk their responsibilities. They will be in charge of the teaching and feeding of the flock. They will not designate that duty to someone else. They will know what is being taught and will direct the teaching of the flock. Too often many elders turn the feeding of the flock in Bible classes over to others, instead of handling this most important task themselves. God did not charge the deacons or others with the feeding of the flock but He did command elders to do this (1 Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28).

They will make time to spend with the brethren and visit with them when they are sick and when they are well. They will be watchful for the souls of the brethren (Heb. 13:17).

7. When faithful elders are present and active in a congregation you will find brethren submitting to their rule (Heb. 13:17). You will find brethren who are encouraged to grow and thrive in their service and you will find a degree of maturity among all. Those who are rebellious or who want to serve the world will not “feel right” in the midst of such a strong congregation and will either change their ways or never join themselves to such a strong group.

8. In congregations where there are faithful elders you will find elders and members who are doing their best to grow into the roles of preachers, teachers, elders and deacons. They will not be satisfied with mediocre growth but will desire to be excellent in their service of the Lord and striving to attain the prize. The elders will be watching and appointing men to serve who have the scriptural qualifications to be elders and deacons. Consequently, the congregation will continue to have solid leadership.

9. Brethren will be expected to live godly lives. Sermons will be requested by the elders on the evils of the flesh and the dangers of engaging in such behaviors. Their will be no compromise accepted with the world. Only clear, distinct and scriptural teaching on these subjects will be endorsed and anything else will be rebuked clearly, firmly and quickly.

10. The congregation will be secure and happy in Christ. You will find brethren who love the Lord and desire to go to heaven and teach their neighbors. Activity, zeal and enthusiasm will mark the work. Everyone will be searching for ways to grow and bring others to Christ. Worship and service in such congregations will be a joy and privilege. The weak will be nurtured and encouraged but will not be ignored and allowed to die spiritually.

If you are privileged to be in such a congregation with faithful elders take time to thank them for their faithful, diligent service. Such men spend countless hours on behalf of the brethren. Their wives are also active and ready to serve the brethren. Together godly elders and their wives are selfless in their service to the congregation. They support preaching not

only in their own congregations but encourage it in other groups by the attendance at gospel meetings. Truly faithful elders hunger and thirst after righteousness and desire to go to heaven more than anything else and take their charge seriously. They watch their lives to make sure they are walking correctly and are not too proud to repent if needed. Thank God also for faithful elders who rule well (1 Timothy 5:17).

A mean mother never allows candy or sweets to take the place of a well-balanced meal. A mean mother insists on knowing where her children are at all times, who their friends are and what they do. A mean mother breaks the Child Labor Law by making her children work — washing dishes, making beds and other cruel chores. She makes life miserable for her children by always insisting they tell the truth. A mean mother produces teenagers who are wiser, and more sensible. The world needs MORE MEAN MOTHERS --- AND FATHERS!

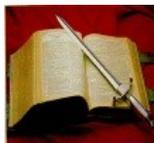
Fear Of Truth

James W. Adams

My daughter's friend expressed great interest in the doctrine of "Premillennialism." It so happened that I was at that time engaged in a series of studies involving the subject on a television program. My daughter suggested to her friend that she might tune in, watch, and listen. Her friend said, "Is he for it or against it?" When informed I was opposed to it, my daughter's friend said, "In that case, I don't want to hear it!" There are many who feel the same way. They refuse to hear or read anything contrary to their preconceived beliefs and practices lest they find their cherished idols to be mortal delusions. On the other hand, truth has nothing to fear from investigation. Like pure silver, the more you rub it, the more it shines. It is said that "a philosopher of Florence could not be persuaded to look through one of Galileo's telescopes lest he should see something in the heavens that would disturb him in his belief of Aristotle's philosophy" (Buck). So it is with many; they fear testing their beliefs by the word of God lest they find them to be untrue.

(Words Fitly Spoken, p. 60)

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