

PRACTICAL FELLOWSHIP CONCERNING THE FUNCTION OF THE ELDERS

Afternoon Session—Message Three

The Service and Responsibility of the Eldership

Scripture Reading: Acts 20:17-20, 27, 31; 1 Pet. 5:1-4

I. Paul was a pattern to the elders—Acts 20:17-20, 27, 31:

- A. We must behave, do things, and have our being as slaves with all humility—v. 19.
- B. Paul taught the believers publicly and from house to house—v. 20.
- C. Paul declared God's eternal economy—v. 27.
- D. Paul charged the elders to shepherd the church of God, which God obtained through His own blood—v. 28.
- E. The elders should love the church as God does—v. 28.
- F. Paul admonished the believers with tears night and day—v. 31.

II. In 1 Peter 5:1-4 Peter spoke of the elders' shepherding and its reward:

- A. The elders, who take the lead among the believers in spiritual things, should take the lead to suffer nobly for Christ—v. 1:
 - 1. The elders should be witnesses of the sufferings of Christ.
 - 2. The elders should be ready to sacrifice their lives as part of their testimony.
- B. To shepherd the flock of God requires suffering for the Body of Christ—v. 2:
 - 1. The flock is not the elders' possession; the flock is God's possession.
 - 2. The elders should not regard the church in which they are taking the lead as belonging to them.
- C. To oversee according to God means according to God's nature, desire, way, and glory, not according to man's preference, interest, and purpose—v. 2.
- D. Instead of lording it over the allotments, the elders should become patterns of the flock—v. 3.