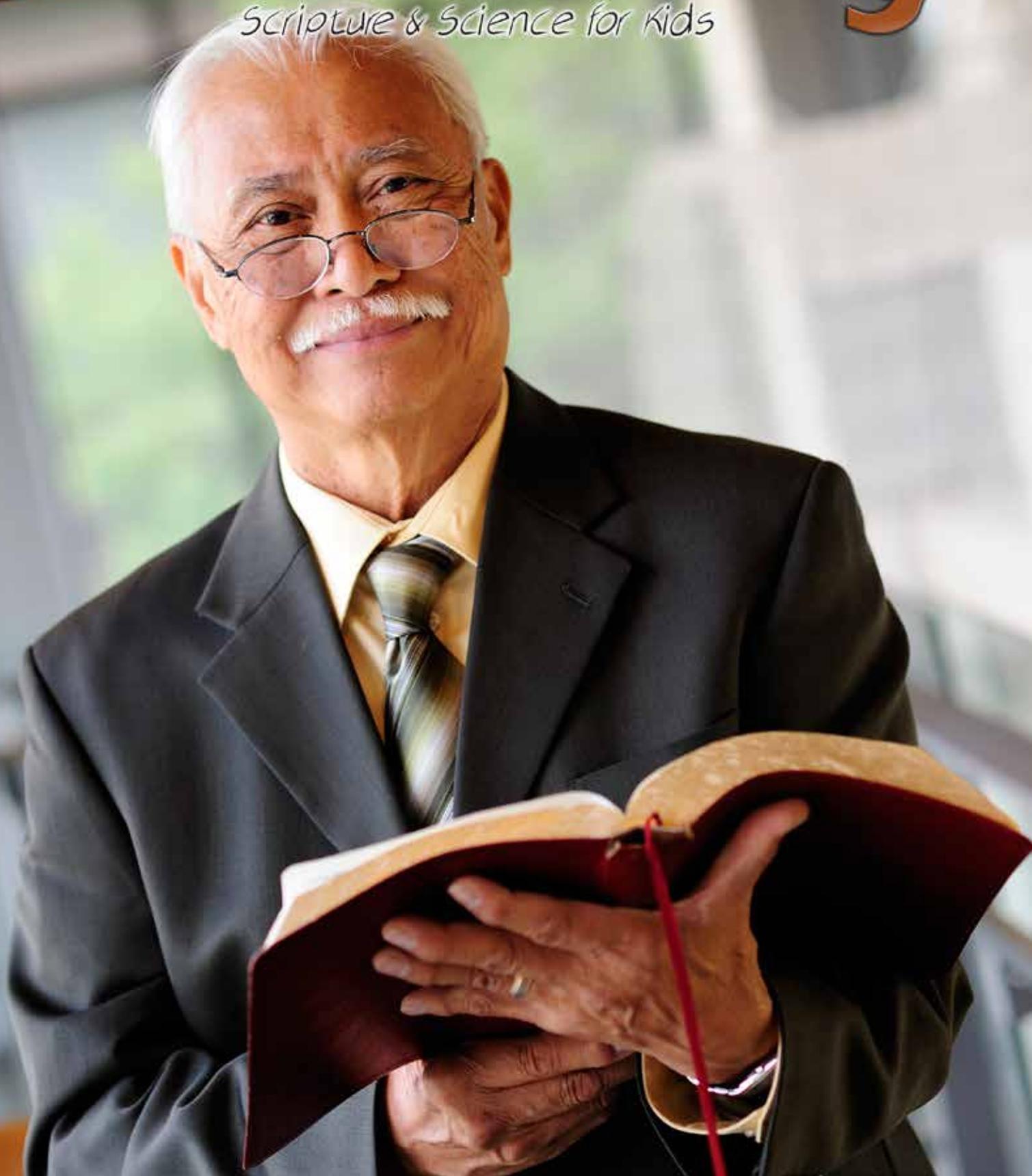


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# Discovery

*Scripture & Science for Kids*



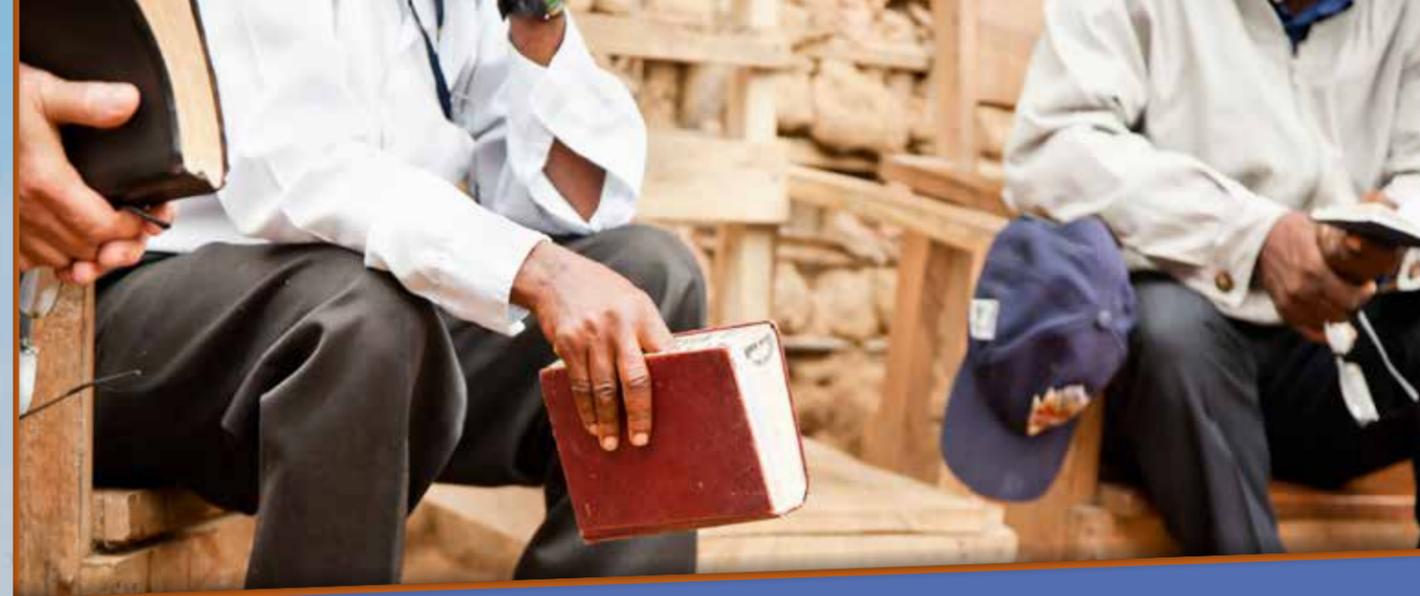
# CHRIST Leads the CHURCH

**NEARLY EVERY GROUP HAS SOMEONE WHO IS IN CHARGE. AN INDIAN TRIBE HAS a chief. A basketball team has a coach. A school has a principal. What do these leaders do? They lead the group in the right direction, enforce rules, and make sure people in the group are doing what is good and right.**

The church is a group, too. Who is the leader? Ephesians 5:3 says that "Christ is the head of the church." In Matthew 28:18, Christ said that "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." If Christ has all authority in heaven and on Earth, He must have authority over the church. The apostle Paul wrote to the Christians at Colosse that "He is the Head of the body" (the church—Colossians 1:16-18). The "He" whom Paul was discussing is Jesus—the One by Whom all things were created (verse 16). Jesus not only is head of the church, He owns the church. He "purchased" it "with His own blood" (Acts 20:28).

The Bible describes Jesus as a leader in different ways, all of which help us to understand Christ's leadership more completely. In John 10:14-16, Jesus described Himself as the supreme shepherd of the flock. Jesus is the shepherd, and we are the flock. Like sheep that follow the shepherd, we should follow Jesus—the Good Shepherd. He is also described as the bridegroom. A bridegroom is a man who gets married. In Ephesians 5:22-23, Paul wrote: "For as the husband is the head of the wife, so also Christ is the head of the church..." Similar to how the husband and father is the leader of his household, so Jesus is the leader of the church.

Concerning His authority, Jesus also taught: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father except by me" (John 14:6). That means Christ is our guide to God. He is the guide, and the church consists of His followers. The church follows Him, because He built it (Matthew 16:18), He is the head of it, and He is the way to heaven.



## The ELDERS of the CHURCH

### AS A SIGN OF RESPECT, WE OFTEN TREAT THOSE WHO ARE OLDER THAN US DIFFERENTLY THAN WE TREAT

our peers or those who are younger than us. When our parents and teachers tell us to "respect our elders," the word "elder" usually means someone who is older and wiser than us. Elders of the church are selected to watch over the church. Paul once told a group of elders to "take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). Elders in the church are not chosen because of their good looks, riches, or their place of birth. They are chosen because of their righteous lives and leadership qualities. Here are some of God's qualifications for elders. They must be "blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good-behavior, hospitable, able to teach, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous, one who rules his house well, having his children in submission with all reverence" (1 Timothy 3:2-4).

An elder is also called a "bishop." The word bishop means "one who oversees," and the overseers' duties involve looking after the condition and progress of the church. The Bible teaches that there must be at least two elders in every church. No where in the

New Testament do we read of there being only **one** elder shepherding a church. Paul commanded Titus: "You should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint **elders** in every city as I commanded you..." (Titus 1:6).

God created the eldership, and the church would not be able to have elders without God's authority. Elders play a crucial role in the organization of the church. They serve to guard the flock (the church), stand for the truth, make important decisions, and "watch out for your souls" (Hebrews 13:17).

### ELDER QUALIFICATIONS

- Blameless
- The husband of one wife
- Temperate, sober-minded
- Of good-behavior, hospitable
- Able to teach
- Not given to wine
- Not violent
- Not greedy for money
- Gentle, not quarrelsome
- Not covetous
- Rules his house well

# Special Servants: DEACONS

**THE EARLY CHURCH WAS MADE UP OF MEMBERS WHO HAD SOME VERY IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITIES (JUST AS Christians today have).** These members worshipped God faithfully, taught non-believers about Jesus, and took care of the daily needs of the poor Christians. The work that God was doing through the saints in Jerusalem and in other places caused the church to grow rapidly.

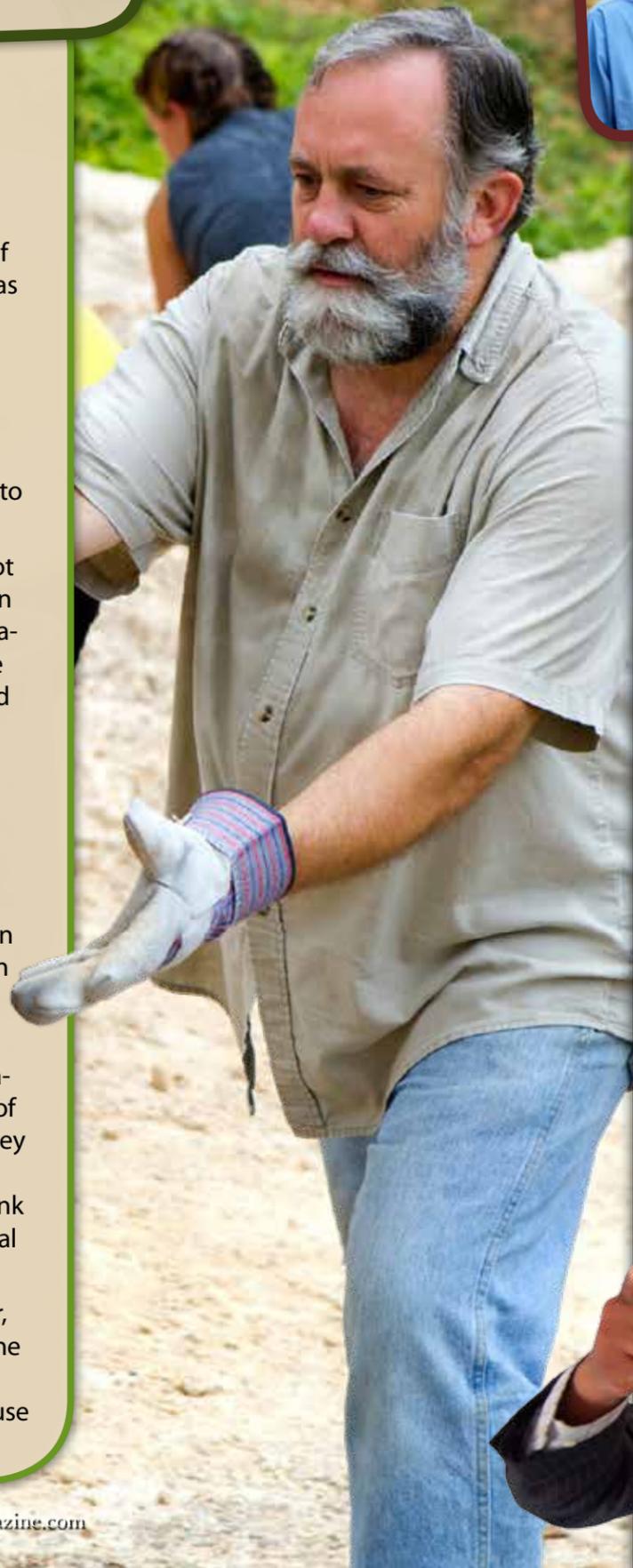
As the early Christians gave food to the needy, they overlooked one group. There were some widows who were not being given food. When this problem was brought to the apostles' attention, they called a meeting of all the Christians to decide how the situation could be resolved.

At the meeting, the apostles told the people that it was not good for the inspired apostles to stop teaching the Gospel in order to serve food. So, the apostles instructed the congregation to select seven special men who could be put in charge of serving the widows. The selected men had to have a good reputation, and be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. Many believe that these men were the first deacons.

The congregation selected Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas. The work of these men solved the problem of the widows needing assistance, and helped the church to grow. We don't read much else about these servants, except for Stephen and Philip. Stephen became the first Christian martyr whose death is recorded in Acts 7:54-60, and Philip had the honor of teaching the Gospel to the Samaritans and to the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8).

The elders of a congregation of the church often assign deacons to do special jobs for the benefit of the other members of the church. The deacons' tasks are important, even though they might go unnoticed. Paul gave the specific qualifications for the deacon's office in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. So when churches think of appointing deacons, they must make sure that the potential deacons fulfill all of the qualifications mentioned in the Bible.

Whether deacons are keeping the church's facilities in order, assisting the needy, teaching Bible classes, or taking care of the Lord's money given by the church, their work is important (1 Timothy 3:13). They are God's special servants—special because the elders have given them important, specific assignments.



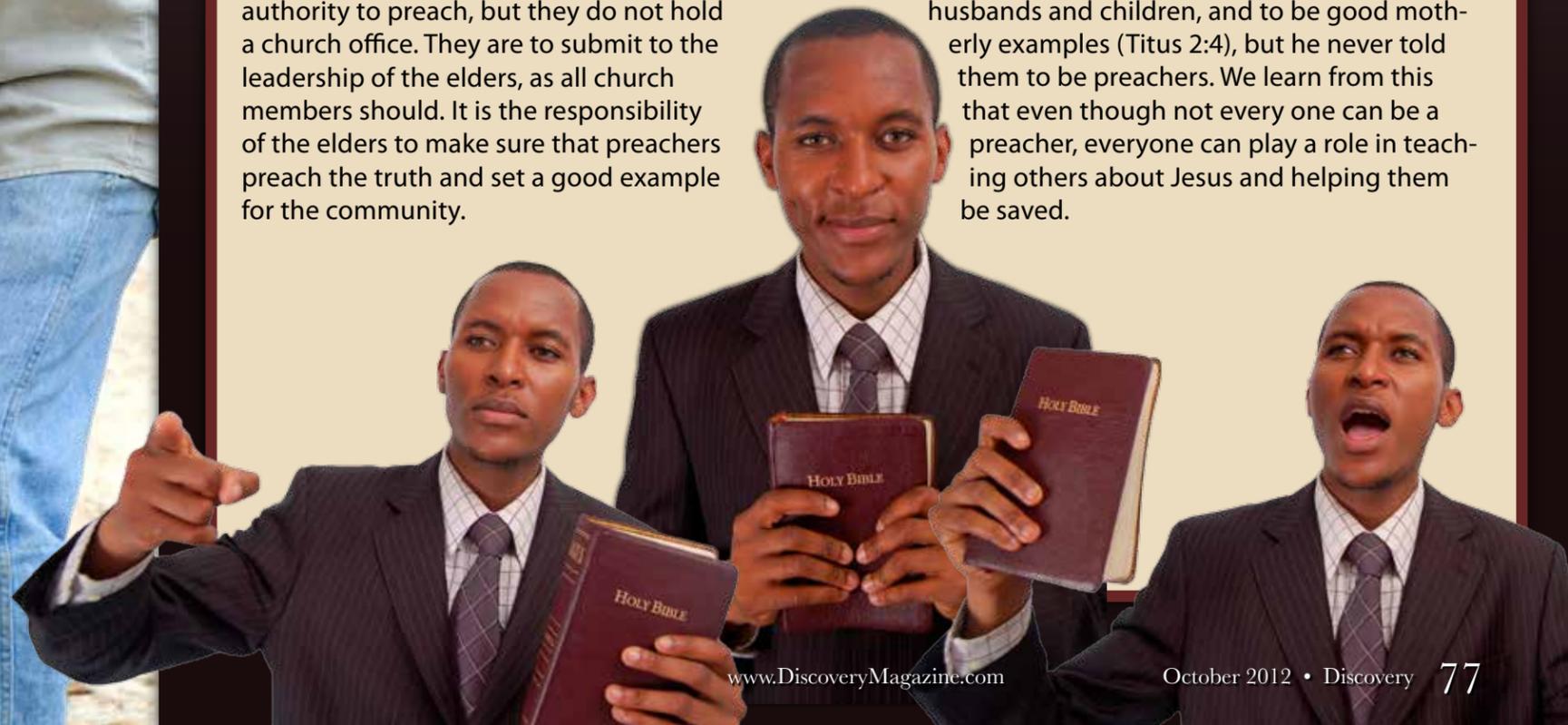
## WHEN YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT HOW TO DO SOMETHING, YOU USUALLY ASK YOUR PARENTS. WE LEARN

most of the things we know from them. But how would you learn if you had no one to help you? In response to this type of situation, Paul asked: "How shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14). Paul continues in verse 15 by saying: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things." He later encouraged Timothy to "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" (2 Timothy 4:2). Preachers are not simply to work a couple of hours on Sunday preaching and teaching God's Word. Preachers are to be "on call," ready to teach someone about Jesus whenever an opportunity arises.

Some people believe that preachers have control over the church, but this is untrue. They have the authority to preach, but they do not hold a church office. They are to submit to the leadership of the elders, as all church members should. It is the responsibility of the elders to make sure that preachers preach the truth and set a good example for the community.

In the New Testament, we read about many faithful Gospel preachers. Stephen stood up in the middle of the Jews and preached about Jesus. The Jews hated him for preaching the truth and they stoned him to death. The apostles traveled all over the world preaching in synagogues, public squares, in schools, and in homes. One time Paul preached until midnight! Peter preached to the first Gentile converts in the house of Cornelius. Another man named Apollos was a great preacher who could proclaim God's Word in a powerful way.

When we look in the Bible, we discover that not every member of the church is asked to stand up and preach publicly. Paul instructed the older women to teach the younger women to love their husbands and children, and to be good motherly examples (Titus 2:4), but he never told them to be preachers. We learn from this that even though not every one can be a preacher, everyone can play a role in teaching others about Jesus and helping them be saved.



# ACTIVITY PAGES



## WORD SEARCH

Elder  
Preacher  
Deacon  
Founder  
Woman

Missionary  
Teacher



## MATCHING

- \_\_\_\_ Purchased the church with His blood
- \_\_\_\_ Another name for elder
- \_\_\_\_ These people help take care of widows
- \_\_\_\_ The Bible describes these people as having beautiful feet
- \_\_\_\_ Though they cannot preach in mixed assemblies, they do play important roles in the church
- \_\_\_\_ A deacon who was also the first Christian martyr
- \_\_\_\_ Though he may preach to the congregation, he is not in charge of it
- \_\_\_\_ These people are not chosen for their money or wealth, but for their righteous lives
- \_\_\_\_ This term often refers to people who are old

- A. Elders
- B. Preacher
- C. Jesus
- D. Pastor
- E. Deacons
- F. Women
- G. Stephen
- H. Elderly
- I. Evangelists



## TRUE OR FALSE

- No member has more God-given authority in local congregations than elders.
- Women are extremely valuable workers in the Kingdom of Christ.
- Deacons help the poor members sometimes.
- Only elders can be teachers.
- Christ isn't the only head of the church.
- Christians are followers of Christ.
- Another well-known deacon besides Stephen was Philip.
- The woman's role in the church isn't as important as other roles in the church.
- All authority belongs to Jesus.
- Christians don't have to follow the Bible all the time.

## COMPLETE THE BIBLE VERSES (NKJV)

- "You should set in order the things that are lacking and \_\_\_\_\_ elders in every city as I command you" (Titus 1:6).
- "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and always be ready to give a \_\_\_\_\_ to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and \_\_\_\_\_" (1 Peter 3:15).
- "And \_\_\_\_\_ came and spoke to them saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in Heaven and on Earth'" (Matthew 28:18).

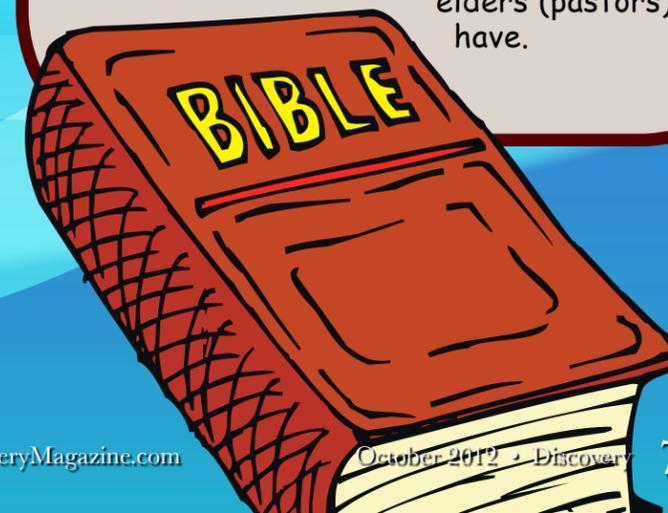
Dear Digger Doug,  
Are preachers and pastors the same thing?



Dear Reader,

Preachers and pastors are two very different positions in the church. In reality, the word "pastor" should be used when talking about one of the elders in the church. The most basic definition for pastor is "a shepherd; one who has the care of flocks and herds." If you have ever seen a shepherd guiding a flock of sheep, then you can picture this definition in your head. The elders are the shepherds, and the members in the congregation are the sheep. The apostle Peter, who was also an elder, mentioned that elders are to do certain jobs. He told elders to "shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away" (1 Peter 5:2-4).

A preacher, on the other hand, is not commanded to "shepherd" God's people. The preacher's job is to educate, not to oversee the church. Paul told Timothy that he should preach the Gospel and pay attention to the Word (2 Timothy 4:2). Basically, all Christians can teach the Gospel to other people, but this does not give them any authority over others in the church like \_\_\_\_\_ elders (pastors) have.





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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



# WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

## HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED

THAT THERE ARE MORE WOMEN AT CHURCH THAN MEN? THIS IS NOT THE CASE WITH

every congregation, but statistically there are more religious women than men. It may have been that way in the early church, too. Many women are mentioned in the New Testament, and some of them did very important things. Jesus taught an important lesson to the Samaritan woman about worship. Mary Magdalene was the first person to see Jesus after His resurrection. Paul called Phoebe, Priscilla, Mary, and Junia his "fellow-workers in Christ Jesus." Even though these women did not have many rights in society, they were able to achieve great things in the church because "there is neither male nor female in Christ" (Galatians 3:28). Women were essential to the growth of the first-century church, and they are essential to the growth of the church today.

Realizing how special women are in the church, we must now look at what God asks them to do. God has organized His church in a very specific way: "The head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God" (1 Corinthians 11:3). Everyone has

a purpose in God's plan. Men are called to lead the public worship of the church, and to serve as elders and deacons in the church (1 Timothy 2:12; 3:1-13), but women have equally important things to do. Timothy learned the Gospel from his mother and grandmother when he was a young child (2 Timothy 1:5), and Peter mentioned wives who brought their husbands to Christ by their example. Women have powerful influence through their families, and the Lord uses that to help His church grow. The New Testament also encourages women to treat the church as their family (1 Timothy 5:2). So, by their good example and teaching, women may have a powerful influence among the Lord's family (Titus 2:3-5).



## ANSWERS

COMPLETE THE BIBLE VERSES: 1. appoint; 2. defense; fear; 3. Jesus.

TRUE OR FALSE: 1. T; 2. T; 3. T; 4. F; 5. F; 6. T; 7. T; 8. F; 9. T; 10. F.

MATCHING: 1. C (Jesus); 2. D (pastor); 3. E (deacons); 4. I (evangelists); 5. F (women); 6. G (Stephen); 7. B (preacher); 8. A (elders); 9. H (elderly).

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