

**BEING A PROPER PERSON IN LIFE
TO CARE FOR THE CHURCH IN GOD’S ADMINISTRATION**

(Thursday—First Morning Session)

**Message One
The Basic Factor
of God’s Administration among His People
and the Principle of Keeping the Kingship and Headship
Uniquely for God Himself**

Scripture Reading: Exo. 3:16; 4:29; 12:21; Acts 14:23; 1 Sam. 8:5-19; Matt. 23:8-10

- Exo 3:16** Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, I have surely visited you and seen what is being done to you in Egypt.
- Exo 4:29** And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel.
- Exo 12:21** Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, Draw out and take lambs according to your families, and slaughter the passover.
- Acts 14:23** And when they had appointed elders for them in every church and had prayed with fastings, they committed them to the Lord into whom they had believed.
- 1 Sam 8:5** And they said to him, You are now old, and your sons do not follow in your ways. Appoint now for us a king to judge us like all the nations.
- 1 Sam 8:6** But the matter displeased Samuel when they said, Give us a king to judge us. Then Samuel prayed to Jehovah.
- 1 Sam 8:7** And Jehovah said to Samuel, Listen to the voice of the people according to all that they have said to you; for it is not you whom they have rejected, but they have rejected Me from being King over them.
- 1 Sam 8:8** Like all the deeds that they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt to this very day by forsaking Me and serving other gods, so they do also to you.
- 1 Sam 8:9** Now therefore listen to their voice, but you shall solemnly warn them and declare to them the practice of the king who will reign over them.
- 1 Sam 8:10** So Samuel spoke all the words of Jehovah to the people, who had asked him for a king.
- 1 Sam 8:11** And he said, This will be the practice of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them for himself to his chariots and as his horsemen, and they will run before his chariots;
- 1 Sam 8:12** And he will appoint them for himself as captains of thousands and as captains of fifties, and to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war and the equipment for his chariots.
- 1 Sam 8:13** And he will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers.
- 1 Sam 8:14** And he will take your best fields and vineyards and olive groves, and give them to his servants.
- 1 Sam 8:15** And he will exact a tenth of your seed and of your vineyards, and give it to his eunuchs and servants.
- 1 Sam 8:16** And he will take your male servants and your female servants and your best young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work.
- 1 Sam 8:17** He will exact a tenth of your flocks, and you will be his servants.
- 1 Sam 8:18** And you will cry out in that day on account of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves; but Jehovah will not answer you in that day.
- 1 Sam 8:19** But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said, No; but there will be a king over us,
- Matt 23:8** But you, do not be called Rabbi, for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers.
- Matt 23:9** And do not call *anyone* on earth your father, for One is your Father, He who is in the heavens.
- Matt 23:10** Neither be called instructors, because One is your Instructor, the Christ.

I. Our God is a God of purpose; in order for His purpose to be carried out, there is the need of His administration, His government—Isa. 9:6-7:

- Isa 9:6** For a child is born to us, A son is given to us; And the government Is upon His shoulder; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.
- Isa 9:7** To the increase of His government And to His peace there is no end, Upon the throne of David And over His kingdom, To establish it And to uphold it In justice and righteousness From now to eternity. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts Will accomplish this.

- A. The divine concept concerning God's administration is the same throughout the Bible, that is, the same in both the Old Testament and the New Testament—Exo. 4:29; Titus 1:5.
 Exo 4:29 And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel.
 Titus 1:5 For this cause I left you in Crete, that you might set in order the things *which I have begun* that remain and appoint elders in every city, as I directed you:
- B. God's administration in the Old Testament, as in the New Testament, involved apostles, prophets, and elders; on the human side, these three groups are the main constituents of God's administration—Psa. 105:26; Exo. 4:29; 1 Sam. 3:20; Eph. 2:20; Acts 14:23.
 Psa 105:26 He sent Moses His servant, And Aaron, whom He had chosen.
 Exo 4:29 And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel.
 1 Sam 3:20 And all Israel, from Dan to Beer-sheba, knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of Jehovah.
 Eph 2:20 Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone;
 Acts 14:23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church and had prayed with fastings, they committed them to the Lord into whom they had believed.
- C. From Exodus onward, we see that God deals with His people through the elders; the elders are crucial because they are the leading ones among God's people and represent God's people—Exo. 3:16; 4:29; 12:21; Titus 1:5.
 Exo 3:16 Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, I have surely visited you and seen what is being done to you in Egypt.
 Exo 4:29 And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel.
 Exo 12:21 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, Draw out and take lambs according to your families, and slaughter the passover.
 Titus 1:5 For this cause I left you in Crete, that you might set in order the things *which I have begun* that remain and appoint elders in every city, as I directed you:

II. According to the revelation of the entire Bible, the elders are the basic factor of God's administration among His people—Acts 11:30; 14:23; 20:17:

- Acts 11:30 Which also they did, sending *it* to the elders through the hand of Barnabas and Saul.
 Acts 14:23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church and had prayed with fastings, they committed them to the Lord into whom they had believed.
 Acts 20:17 And from Miletus he sent *word* to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church.
- A. The basic category of persons in God's administration is the elders; the elders existed before Moses was raised up as the first apostle—Exo. 3:16; 4:29; 12:21.
 Exo 3:16 Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, I have surely visited you and seen what is being done to you in Egypt.
 Exo 4:29 And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel.
 Exo 12:21 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, Draw out and take lambs according to your families, and slaughter the passover.
- B. The basic factor in God's administration today is the elders; the apostles and prophets do many things, but the basic constitution of God's administration is the elders, for it is the elders who directly administrate—Acts 14:23; Eph. 2:20.
 Acts 14:23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church and had prayed with fastings, they committed them to the Lord into whom they had believed.
 Eph 2:20 Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone;
- C. The direct administration in both the Old Testament and the New Testament was with the elders—Acts 11:30; 20:17.
 Acts 11:30 Which also they did, sending *it* to the elders through the hand of Barnabas and Saul.
 Acts 20:17 And from Miletus he sent *word* to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church.

D. The genuine administration of God in the local churches depends basically and directly on the elders—Titus 1:5, 9.

Titus 1:5 For this cause I left you in Crete, that you might set in order the things *which I have begun* that remain and appoint elders in every city, as I directed you:

Titus 1:9 Holding to the faithful word, which is according to the teaching *of the apostles*, that he may be able both to exhort by the healthy teaching and to convict those who oppose.

III. In the sight of God, it was a great wickedness, a great evil, for the people of Israel to insist on having a king—1 Sam. 8:5-19:

1 Sam 8:5 And they said to him, You are now old, and your sons do not follow in your ways. Appoint now for us a king to judge us like all the nations.

1 Sam 8:6 But the matter displeased Samuel when they said, Give us a king to judge us. Then Samuel prayed to Jehovah.

1 Sam 8:7 And Jehovah said to Samuel, Listen to the voice of the people according to all that they have said to you; for it is not you whom they have rejected, but they have rejected Me from being King over them.

1 Sam 8:8 Like all the deeds that they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt to this very day by forsaking Me and serving other gods, so they do also to you.

1 Sam 8:9 Now therefore listen to their voice, but you shall solemnly warn them and declare to them the practice of the king who will reign over them.

1 Sam 8:10 So Samuel spoke all the words of Jehovah to the people, who had asked him for a king.

1 Sam 8:11 And he said, This will be the practice of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them for himself to his chariots and as his horsemen, and they will run before his chariots;

1 Sam 8:12 And he will appoint them for himself as captains of thousands and as captains of fifties, and to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war and the equipment for his chariots.

1 Sam 8:13 And he will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers.

1 Sam 8:14 And he will take your best fields and vineyards and olive groves, and give them to his servants.

1 Sam 8:15 And he will exact a tenth of your seed and of your vineyards, and give it to his eunuchs and servants.

1 Sam 8:16 And he will take your male servants and your female servants and your best young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work.

1 Sam 8:17 He will exact a tenth of your flocks, and you will be his servants.

1 Sam 8:18 And you will cry out in that day on account of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves; but Jehovah will not answer you in that day.

1 Sam 8:19 But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said, No; but there will be a king over us,

A. It was the degradation among the children of Israel in the Old Testament that caused a king to come in; the desire of the children of Israel for a king was according to the custom of the nations, which is abominable in the eyes of God—vv. 5, 19:

1 Sam 8:5 And they said to him, You are now old, and your sons do not follow in your ways. Appoint now for us a king to judge us like all the nations.

1 Sam 8:19 But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said, No; but there will be a king over us,

1. Israel had been chosen by God to be a particular people on earth; therefore, they should have been absolutely different in every respect from the nations, but they took the way of the nations by rejecting God as their King—Exo. 19:6; 1 Sam. 8:5.

Exo 19:6 And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel.

1 Sam 8:5 And they said to him, You are now old, and your sons do not follow in your ways. Appoint now for us a king to judge us like all the nations.

2. By insisting on having a king, the elect of God turned from God to a man; in so doing, they offended God by rejecting Him as their King and thus replacing Him—v. 7.

1 Sam 8:7 And Jehovah said to Samuel, Listen to the voice of the people according to all that they have said to you; for it is not you whom they have rejected, but they have rejected Me from being King over them.

- B. The thought of a human king is altogether offensive to God; God does not want to have a human king among His people, because once a king comes in, the headship of God is usurped—12:12.
- 1 Sam **12:12** And when you saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, you said to me, No; but a king will reign over us, though Jehovah your God was your King.
- C. The principle of keeping the kingship and headship uniquely for God is consistent throughout the Bible—Matt. 23:8-10; 1 Pet. 5:2-3.
- Matt **23:8** But you, do not be called Rabbi, for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers.
- Matt **23:9** And do not call *anyone* on earth your father, for One is your Father, He who is in the heavens.
- Matt **23:10** Neither be called instructors, because One is your Instructor, the Christ.
- 1 Pet **5:2** Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;
- 1 Pet **5:3** Nor as lording it over your allotments but by becoming patterns of the flock.
- D. We must see that in God's economy for His administration, He desires to keep the kingship uniquely for Himself—1 Sam. 8:7:
- 1 Sam **8:7** And Jehovah said to Samuel, Listen to the voice of the people according to all that they have said to you; for it is not you whom they have rejected, but they have rejected Me from being King over them.
1. The Bible clearly reveals that God does not want to have a human king in His administration, because He does not want anyone to replace Him by usurping His headship and kingship.
 2. The headship and kingship must be left to God alone—1 Chron. 29:10-11.
- 1 Chron **29:10** And David blessed Jehovah in the sight of all the assembly. And David said, You are blessed, O Jehovah, God of Israel our Father, from eternity to eternity.
- 1 Chron **29:11** Yours is the greatness and the power and the splendor and the victory and the majesty, indeed all that is in heaven and on earth; Yours, O Jehovah, is the kingdom, and You are exalted as Head over all.
- E. God wants to have only the apostles, prophets, and elders as His sent ones, His spokesmen, and the leading ones among His people, for these do not usurp His headship—Acts 13:1-2; 14:23; Eph. 2:20.
- Acts **13:1** Now there were in Antioch, in the local church, prophets and teachers: Barnabas and Simeon, who was called Niger, and Lucius the Cyrenian, and Manaen, the foster brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.
- Acts **13:2** And as they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Set apart for Me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.
- Acts **14:23** And when they had appointed elders for them in every church and had prayed with fastings, they committed them to the Lord into whom they had believed.
- Eph **2:20** Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone;
- F. Although the apostles, prophets, and elders are part of God's administration, the kingship should be kept for God Himself—Isa. 6:1, 5:
- Isa **6:1** In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting on a high and lofty throne, and the train of His robe filled the temple.
- Isa **6:5** Then I said, Woe is me, for I am finished! For I am a man of unclean lips, And in the midst of a people of unclean lips I dwell; Yet my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.
1. The apostles, prophets, and elders do not interfere with, offend, or usurp the kingship of God—Acts 2:42; 11:27; 14:23.
- Acts **2:42** And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.
- Acts **11:27** And in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch.
- Acts **14:23** And when they had appointed elders for them in every church and had prayed with fastings, they committed them to the Lord into whom they had believed.

2. When God's people bring in a king, this is a direct offense against God's kingship—1 Sam. 8:5, 19; 12:12.

1 Sam 8:5 And they said to him, You are now old, and your sons do not follow in your ways. Appoint now for us a king to judge us like all the nations.

1 Sam 8:19 But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said, No; but there will be a king over us,

1 Sam 12:12 And when you saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, you said to me, No; but a king will reign over us, though Jehovah your God was your King.

G. Whatever we may do, no matter how good, "spiritual," and even scriptural it may be, it is evil in the sight of God if we reject Him as our Head and our King; it is not a matter of right or wrong but a matter of whether we take God as our King or reject Him—1 Chron. 29:10-11; Psa. 72:1, 11; 145:1.

1 Chron 29:10 And David blessed Jehovah in the sight of all the assembly. And David said, You are blessed, O Jehovah, God of Israel our Father, from eternity to eternity.

1 Chron 29:11 Yours is the greatness and the power and the splendor and the victory and the majesty, indeed all that is in heaven and on earth; Yours, O Jehovah, is the kingdom, and You are exalted as Head over all.

Psa 72:1 O God, give Your judgments to the king, And Your righteousness to the son of the king.

Psa 72:11 And all the kings will bow down before Him; All the nations will serve Him.

Psa 145:1 I will extol You, O my God and King; And I will bless Your name forever and ever.

IV. Because God desires to keep the headship and kingship absolutely and uniquely for Himself, He needs a group of elders in each locality who participate in His administration without offending His headship—Acts 14:23; 20:17; Titus 1:5:

Acts 14:23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church and had prayed with fastings, they committed them to the Lord into whom they had believed.

Acts 20:17 And from Miletus he sent *word* to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church.

Titus 1:5 For this cause I left you in Crete, that you might set in order the things *which I have begun* that remain and appoint elders in every city, as I directed you:

A. The eldership does not offend God's headship, but if anyone becomes a king, this offends God's headship—Matt. 20:25-26.

Matt 20:25 But Jesus called them to *Him* and said, You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great exercise authority over them.

Matt 20:26 It shall not be so among you; but whoever wants to become great among you shall be your servant,

B. The elders in the local churches may be capable and strong, but they must be careful not to become kings—1 Pet. 5:1, 3.

1 Pet 5:1 Therefore the elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory to be revealed:

1 Pet 5:3 Nor as lording it over your allotments but by becoming patterns of the flock.

C. The plurality in the eldership is crucial because it helps to prevent anyone from becoming a king—Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5:

Acts 14:23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church and had prayed with fastings, they committed them to the Lord into whom they had believed.

Titus 1:5 For this cause I left you in Crete, that you might set in order the things *which I have begun* that remain and appoint elders in every city, as I directed you:

1. If there is one elder above the others, that one is a king, which is an insult to Christ's headship and kingship—Matt. 20:21, 25-26.

Matt 20:21 And He said to her, What do you want? She said to Him, Say that these two sons of mine will sit, one on Your right and one on Your left, in Your kingdom.

Matt 20:25 But Jesus called them to *Him* and said, You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great exercise authority over them.

Matt 20:26 It shall not be so among you; but whoever wants to become great among you shall be your servant,

2. Among His people today, God desires to have a plurality of elders; this will allow God's economy to be carried out yet avoid offending God's headship.
- D. The elders in every local church should be diligent in directly seeking the Lord for everything; for every need they should pray, fellowship, and wait on the Lord to receive direction, guidance, and leading directly from Him—1 Tim. 2:8.
 1 Tim 2:8 I desire therefore that men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and reasoning;
- E. The elders in a locality should not allow one elder to become a king—Matt. 23:8-10:
 Matt 23:8 But you, do not be called Rabbi, for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers.
 Matt 23:9 And do not call *anyone* on earth your father, for One is your Father, He who is in the heavens.
 Matt 23:10 Neither be called instructors, because One is your Instructor, the Christ.
1. Every elder must exercise discernment and pray to seek the Lord's leading while respecting the Lord's leading in the other elders—Eph. 5:21.
 Eph 5:21 Being subject to one another in the fear of Christ:
2. If all the elders are exercised in taking the lead, there will be no opening for anyone to become a king, which is contrary to God's administration— Heb. 13:7, 17.
 Heb 13:7 Remember the ones leading you, who have spoken to you the word of God; and considering the issue of their manner of life, imitate their faith.
 Heb 13:17 Obey the ones leading you and submit to *them*, for they watch over your souls as those who will render an account, that they may do this with joy and not groaning; for this would be unprofitable to you.
- F. In order to receive God's blessing, we must not open the door for a king to come in, nor should we desire to be a king—Matt. 20:26; Rom. 15:29; Eph. 1:3.
 Matt 20:26 It shall not be so among you; but whoever wants to become great among you shall be your servant,
 Rom 15:29 And I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.
 Eph 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ,

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE ELDERS BEING THE BASIC FACTOR OF GOD'S ADMINISTRATION AMONG HIS PEOPLE

The basic category of persons in God's administration is the elders. We can see this concept in the Bible. The elders of the children of Israel already existed before Moses was raised up as the first apostle. We should not rely entirely on the apostles and prophets. The apostles are sent by God to accomplish something, and the prophets speak for God. However, those who administrate directly among God's people are the elders. Thus, the elders are the basic factor of God's administration among His people.

The elders of Israel became lazy and idle, preferring the convenience of the kingship according to the custom of the nations (1 Sam. 8:19-20). Christian denominations today follow this principle. For the sake of convenience, the members of a denomination donate money to hire a pastor as a king to do everything for them. This offends God's headship. The elders in the local churches may be capable and strong, but they must be careful not to become kings. The eldership does not offend God's headship, but if anyone becomes a king, this offends God's headship. The thought of a human king is altogether offensive to God. In 1 Samuel 8 the elders' request for a king greatly displeased God, who told Samuel, "It is not you whom they have rejected, but they have rejected Me from being King over them" (v. 7). This indicates that although the apostles, prophets, and elders are part of God's administration, the kingship should be kept for God Himself. The apostles, prophets, and elders do not interfere with, offend, or usurp the kingship of God. However, when God's people bring in a king, this is a direct

offense against God's kingship. The apostles, prophets, and elders must be careful to keep the kingship for God.

The principle of keeping the kingship and headship uniquely for God is consistent throughout the Bible. This is the reason the Lord told His disciples, "Do not be called Rabbi, for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers" (Matt. 23:8). Christ alone is our Teacher, Master, Leader, and King. Peter exhorts the elders, "Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God;...nor as lording it over your allotments but by becoming patterns of the flock" (1 Pet. 5:2-3). The elders should shepherd and oversee the flock, but they should not be lords. To be a lord interferes with God's kingship. We must see that in God's economy for His administration, He desires to keep the kingship uniquely for Himself.

If we prefer to be idle and have someone else do everything for us for the sake of convenience, this will open the door for a king to come in, just as Saul came in as a king among the children of Israel. The elders especially should not be idle or take the way of convenience. They need to be diligent and willing to bear the burdens. In order to receive God's blessing, we must not open the door for a king to come in, nor should we desire to be a king. The Bible clearly reveals that God does not want to have a human king in His administration, because He does not want anyone to replace Him by usurping His headship and kingship. The headship and kingship must be left to God alone. God sends His apostles and establishes His prophets and the elders among His people, but He has no desire for there to be a king.

THERE NEEDING TO BE A PLURALITY OF APOSTLES, PROPHETS, AND ELDERS

According to the Bible, there should always be a plurality of apostles, prophets, and elders. After calling His disciples, the Lord appointed twelve apostles (Matt. 10:2). Whenever the Lord sent out His disciples, He sent them two by two (Mark 6:7; Luke 10:1). The Lord never sent out an apostle alone. In Acts 13:2 Paul and Barnabas were sent out together as apostles. There is always a plurality in the apostleship. The same is true of the prophets and elders. There should always be several elders in a local church. The plurality in the apostleship, the prophethood, and the eldership is crucial because it helps prevent anyone from becoming a king among the churches.

There was no permanent leadership among the early apostles. Peter took the lead in Acts 2:14, but in 15:13 James rose up to take the lead. This record shows that Peter was not the permanent, unique, official, or organizational leader. Instead, he was only a momentary leader; later, James became another momentary leader. If there is one apostle, prophet, or elder above the others, that one is a king, which is an insult to Christ's headship and kingship.

The Lord has shown us that God does not want to have a human king in His administration. There was a king in the Old Testament, but that was against God's desire. Thus, there is no king among God's people in the New Testament age. It was the degradation among the children of Israel in the Old Testament that caused a king to come in. The desire of the children of Israel for a king was according to the custom of the nations, which is abominable in the eyes of God. We must be impressed that we should not have a king. We welcome the apostles, prophets, and elders, but we have only one king, who is our God, Savior, and Lord.

We must see this principle and stand against anyone becoming a king among the local churches. The basic factor in God's administration today is the elders. The apostles and prophets do many things, but the basic constitution of God's administration is the elders. It is the elders who directly administrate. Because God desires to keep the headship and kingship absolutely and uniquely for Himself, He needs a group of elders in each locality who participate in His administration without offending His headship.

In the Old Testament the first apostle was Moses. Following Moses, many were raised up to speak for God. These were prophets, God's spokesmen. Eventually, the Lord Jesus came as the Apostle and the Prophet (Heb. 3:1; Deut. 18:15, 18). Christ is the Apostle who is sent with God's

authority and the Prophet who speaks for God. Christ initially appointed and sent out twelve of His own apostles. After Pentecost He sent many more, including Paul. Among these apostles some were also prophets. These early apostles appointed elders in the local churches they established (Acts 14:23). Since that time God's administration among His people has been primarily with the elders.

THE PROPER BALANCE IN THE ELDERS' RECEIVING HELP FROM OTHERS YET BEARING THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR OWN LOCALITIES

There should be no king among God's people in the churches today. The elders in every local church should be diligent in directly seeking the Lord for everything. For every need they should pray, fellowship, and wait on the Lord to receive direction, guidance, and leading directly from Him.

On the one hand, the elders should never think that because they are capable, they do not need help from the other churches or anyone outside their locality. Such pride is wrong. On the other hand, neither should they be open to everyone without discernment and ask for help from the other churches and servants of the Lord every time a need arises, in order to avoid bearing any burdens. This is also wrong. We need to be humble and open to others, yet we also must be diligent and not always rely on others' help. Therefore, whenever a need arises, we should first pray in order to seek the Lord directly. After we pray, the Lord may send someone to give us some extraordinary help or open the fellowship so that we receive help from other churches, but ordinarily we must take care of our own local affairs.

No matter how weak certain persons may be, when they are married and have a family, they find a way to take care of their family. Similarly, all the elders must learn to take care of their own localities. They should not always look to others for help but must be diligent and faithful and must open directly to the Lord in prayer. Nothing is better than our direct contact with the Lord. If the elders pray, seek the Lord, and wait on Him, the help will often come directly from the Lord.

We need to change our attitude, because our idleness, laziness, and habit of relying on others open the door for a king to come in, not only among a group of churches but also locally. The elders in a locality should not allow one elder to become a king. Every elder must exercise discernment and pray to seek the Lord's leading while respecting the Lord's leading in the other elders. The elders must be diligent, active, and faithful to the Lord, not expecting someone else to do everything for them for the sake of convenience. To dominate is wrong, and to be lazy is also wrong. If all the elders are exercised in taking the lead, there will be no opening for anyone to become a king. To have a king is contrary to God's administration. Among His people today, God desires to have a plurality of elders. This will allow God's economy to be carried out yet avoid offending God's headship. (*Basic Principles concerning the Eldership*, pp. 11-15)