

“LET HIM CALL FOR THE ELDERS”

Heath Rogers

“Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord” (James 5:14).

I have always been a firm believer in members communicating with the elders. Most of us have seen what happens when they don’t. The following scenario has played out in many congregations.

Something unfortunate happens and some members get upset. They stew over their frustrations for a time and finally get fed up because the elders haven’t done anything about it. They write a letter to the elders, or call one of them, and inform them they have decided to leave the congregation and will be attending at another church.

The church has lost a member (or a family - perhaps several families). The announcement is made at the close of a Sunday morning worship service and the members are just as shocked and discouraged as the elders.

What happened? What went wrong? Perhaps the elders are at fault, but it is too late for them to do anything. The families are now gone, and they aren’t coming back.

Someone may say, “The elders are supposed to oversee the flock. They should have known what was going on.” This criticism may be justified. If the elders are taking a hands-off approach to their work and are failing to know what is happening in their flock, they are in the wrong and will have to give an answer to the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:4).

However, the elders aren’t mind-readers. They don’t have ESP. Watching over the flock doesn’t mean going to all the members on a routine basis, asking, “Is anything wrong?” and demanding that they vent all their frustrations. The members would resent elders doing this, and rightly so. While elders have a responsibility to oversee the

flock, it is not reasonable to expect them to be omniscient.

I can see one obvious fault in the scenario given above: the members who left should have “called for the elders” long before they decided to leave. This would have given these overseers time and opportunity to address the situation and fix any problems in a manner that pleased God and kept the congregation intact.

The elders have great responsibilities towards the members of the local church, but the members are equally responsible to the elder’s efforts. The elders must feed the flock, but the members must eat. The elders must watch out for the souls of the members, but the members must take the perseverance of their souls seriously and obey the elders. The elders are to care for the special needs of the members, but the members must make those needs known to the elders.

Are you sick? Call for the elders. Are you concerned about something? Call for the elders. Are you discouraged? Call for the elders. Do you have questions about a decision made by the elders? Call for the elders. Do you have ideas and want to be more involved in the work of the church? Call for the elders. Do you appreciate the elders and want to express your gratitude for their hard work? Call for the elders. They will be glad you did, and so will you. ✍

– via *Knollwood Reminder*, July 12, 2020



FINIS

“Finis” means the end, the conclusion. This is the final issue of “The Central Voice” which started January 2012. The Central congregation began around 2006 and met at the Clarion Inn on Fowler Avenue, and then moved to its present location on North Florida Avenue. August 30th will be the last worship service. Some of the original members have gone on to their reward and others have moved away. Throughout its existence the gospel was preached and defended. The truth has been taught and souls were saved.

The most important thing is that God was glorified in all things. I have enjoyed bringing this bulletin to you each month. I hope that it helped you. May God bless each of us as our work in the kingdom of Christ continues.

MWG