

## Youth NEWS



- The November Jr./Sr. High Devotional and the Family Youth Devotional will be hosted by the Pitchford and Randle Families on Sunday, November 12 following evening services.
- A reminder of the Fall Youth Retreat hosted by University church of Christ at Peach Valley, November 10-12, grades 6-12.

## Education NEWS

### In Search of the Lord's Way

The lesson for Sunday, November 12 at 7:30 a.m. on KMOL is entitled, "Only One Life." You have only one life; what are you doing with it? Some use their lives to make a difference in this world, while others are only chasing after a wind. In this lesson, we're going to see how we can make our lives matter.

### SUNDAYS

**Bible Classes** .....9:00 AM  
**Morning Worship** .....10:00 AM  
**Evening Worship** ..... 5:00 PM

### Tuesdays (September through May)

**Men's Bible Study** ..... 10:00 AM  
**Ladies' Bible Study**..... 10:00 AM

### WEDNESDAYS

**Midweek Bible Study** ..... 7:00 PM

### ELDERS

Will Cleveland  
 Tom Pitchford

### EVANGELIST

Ronnie Scherffius

### SUPPORTED WORKS

James and Emily Cammock  
*Hamilton, New Zealand*

John Moore  
*Bible Land Passages*

Mani Pagidipalli, M.D.  
*India*

Cecil Shaw  
*Ocho Rios, Jamaica*

Student Support  
*Southwest School of Bible Studies*

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NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR MID-TOWN MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

The **Midtown** CHURCH OF CHRIST  
**Messenger**

NOVEMBER 5, 2017

### "DO THE ELDERS RULE BY EXAMPLE ONLY?"

by Ronnie Scherffius

In last week's bulletin we asked the question, "How much authority do the elders have?" Some have suggested that elders lead by *example only*, but as we noted from such passages as Acts 20:28 and 1 Timothy 3:4-5, the Bible clearly indicates that there is a sense in which the elders have an overseeing rule over the flock of God, to which rule the flock must submit and obey. Let us conclude this study noting one final passage.

The Hebrews writer leaves no question that the authority of the eldership goes beyond that of *example only*: "**Obey** them that

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock"

1 Pt. 5:2-3

have the **rule** over you, and **submit** yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13:17). Stated

with great clarity is the fact that in the church there are some who "have the rule," and those over whom they rule are to "obey" and "submit." There can be no doubt that those who *have the rule* refers to the eldership! The elders serves as overseers and shepherds (Acts 20:28), must be men who have demonstrated the ability to rule their own house (1 Tim. 3:4-5), and are to "take the oversight" of the congregation. This being noted, let's examine the two terms *obey* and *submit*. First, in the Greek language both of these verbs are written in the "imperative mood," meaning that what is said expresses a command! The term *imperative* is defined as "Not to be avoided or evaded; obligatory; binding; compulsory" (*WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY, 1913*). Thus, it is *imperative* that we (the church) obey and

submit to those (the eldership) who have the rule over us.

Next, the Greek word translated *obey* means “to listen to, obey, yield to, comply with” (*THAYER’S GREEK-ENGLISH LEXICON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT*). It is unfortunate that some modern translations soften this verse and remove the authority of the eldership. *The Message*, a demonstrably unreliable translation, renders the first part of this verse as follows: “*Be responsive to your pastoral leaders. Listen to their counsel.*” It would be difficult to find a weaker translation! The terms *obedience* and *responsiveness* are not even close to equal, and *submission* and *listening* are as far apart from one another as east is from west! The NIV, another popular but highly unreliable translation, renders this verse as follows: “*Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.*” While correctly translating submit and highlighting the eldership’s authority, to translate the Greek word **πειθω**; (*peitho*), “have confidence” is highly questionable and weakens the meaning of the writer. According to Thayer, the verb as used by the writer in this verse literally means “to listen to, obey, yield to, comply with.” A form of the Greek verb can, in fact, mean to have confidence AND is rendered so in various passages (2 Cor. 2:3; Gal. 5:10; Phil. 1:6; et al), but such a translation here is weak at best. The proper translation here is obey (cf. Rom. 2:8; Gal 3:1; 5:7; James 3:3).

Consider next the word *submit*. This Greek verb is found only here in the New Testament and has the meaning “to yield under, or to give up”. Thayer writes that this word, “from Homer down” has the

sense “to resist no longer, but to give way, yield” and that the word used metaphorically carries the sense “to yield to authority and admonition, to submit.” Question: “If the elders have authority in *example only*, then how do we obey/submit to their example?” One neither obeys nor submits to examples BUT to commands and/or admonitions!

Does this mean that the eldership has the authority to rewrite Scripture, reform worship, and reconstruct the church to suit their own philosophy or agenda? The answer is an unequivocal NO! In fact, such an idea is prohibited by Paul (Gal. 1:8-9). The eldership does, however, have the authority, even the obligation, to guide and protect the souls of the local congregation which they oversee. For inspiration declares they, “must give account” (Heb. 13:17) as shepherds over the flock of God. We thus conclude that according to the Scriptures, the eldership has the authority to see that the purity of the body is maintained, the soundness of the pulpit unquestioned, the work of the church carried out in the most effective way, and the condition of the flock protected, nurtured and spiritually nourished.

To the elders Peter wrote, “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being examples to the flock” (1 Pt. 5:2-3). Brethren, our heart’s desire and prayer ought to be that our elders are **never** satisfied with a mere exemplary life, but that they strive to be those shepherds who properly oversee; that they do not seek to be lords over us but in the love of Christ rule over us as godly men and devoted shepherds.

## News

### & ACTIVITIES

#### Today!

There will be an update from the Elders to the Men today at 4:30 p.m.

#### Sunday, November 26

Ronnie Scherffius will answer bible questions placed in the mailbox in the foyer every fourth Sunday evening.

#### Wednesday, November 29

There will be a Fifth Wednesday Singing.

#### Friday, December 8

The Annual Ladies’ Christmas Ornament Exchange will be held on Friday, December 8 at 6:30 p.m. More details to come!

- Mark your New Year calendar for Mid-Town’s Ladies’ Day Saturday, January 20.
- There will not be a fourth Sunday meal due to Thanksgiving.

#### Records You Helped Make

For the Week of  
OCTOBER 29, 2017

#### Attendance

Sunday Bible Class.....130  
Sunday Morning Assembly.....161  
Sunday Evening Assembly.....115  
Wednesday Attendance.....99

**Offering: \$4,550**

## Keep in PRAYER



#### MidTown Members:

Buster Bailey  
Jeff Cannady  
Les Daltry  
Jan Farris  
Faye Henderson

Dee Gilpatrick  
Betty Key  
Kathy Laws  
Sandy Malone  
Ann Pantel  
Glenodine Pitts  
Paul Purswell  
Mickey Tisue  
Clark Withers

#### & Friends Family:

Victor Benitez,  
*brother of Virginia Escojido*  
Cheryl Dobbs,  
*friend of Pam Clifton*  
Jennifer Dobbs,  
*friend of Pam Clifton*  
Bert Haynes,  
*father of Pam Stryker*  
Kim Neel-Farthing,  
*daughter of Joyce*  
Gillette Ferguson,  
*brother in Vernal, Utah*  
June Green,  
*mother of Janice FitzSimmons*  
Rose Leske,  
*sister-in-law of Sandra Marie*  
Liz Lopez,  
*friend of Nina Siegel*

Janell Marshall  
*family of Karon Barton*  
Fred Porter,  
*brother-in-law of Della Rampley*  
Sarah Randle,  
*mother of Steve*  
Harish Reddy,  
*brother-in-law of Archana Verma*  
Sammy Snead,  
*brother-in-law of Ronnie Scherffius*  
Cynthia Sneeringer,  
*mother of Angela*  
Prem Verma,  
*father-in-law of Archana*  
Kennedy Young, Sr.,  
*uncle of Naomi Flonnory*