

What Is A "Pastor"?

One of the most misused terms in the denominational world today is "pastor." The word "pastor" occurs one time in the New Testament in Ephesians 4:11. The Greek word *poimen*, from which "pastor" is derived, is translated elsewhere as "shepherd." The word means, "one who tends herds or flocks." The word is used metaphorically in the New Testament of one who would "tend" and "feed" a flock of God (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-2).

Those appointed to this task in the New Testament were referred to as elders, bishops, or overseers. God had very specific qualifications for these men (1 Timothy 3:1-11; Titus 1:5-9). And there were to be multiple elders or overseers in each church (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5).

Today, many churches have a single "pastor" over a congregation who preaches, makes most of the decisions and lays out a direction for the church. For several years, churches have appointed women as "pastors" in clear violation of 1 Timothy 2:11-12 and 3:1. It is possible for an elder, pastor or overseer to be a preacher, but a preacher is not a "pastor" by virtue of the fact that he preaches.

We must "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11). Having a single "pastor" over a church is not the way of the Bible. If we are to please God, let's turn away from denominational perversions of the church's organization and accept the pure teaching of scripture.

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