

Why I Appreciate Elders

There is too much disregard for elders today. This is symptomatic of our day where human wisdom is substituted for divine revelation. I want to express six reasons why I appreciate elders for the other side of the discussion.

First, I appreciate elders because this is God's plan. The one that does not respect elders fails to respect God's word and God's way (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). I cannot be faithful to the Bible and disregard elders.

Second, I appreciate elders because of the responsibility they accept. No men on earth have a graver responsibility than elders. The President of the United States with all of our problems does not bear the responsibility of elders. Elders are responsible for carrying the gospel to every creature (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). But that is not the end of the elders' responsibilities. They must watch after souls (Hebrews 13:17). They will give an account of the souls that are under their oversight. I appreciate the man that is willing to accept the responsibility of an elder.

Third, I appreciate elders because of the time they give to the Lord's work. While others are free to use their time in various ways, elders must use much of their time in fulfilling their duties. There are meetings where time must be given to planning the work, dealing with problems, and many other tasks. This requires a great deal of time. I appreciate the man who is willing to take the time necessary to do the work of an elder.

Fourth, I appreciate elders because they work with the least encouragement of any people I know. I have often wondered how long I would continue to preach if I received criticism as elders do with so little encouragement. Few people in any congregation think to give a word to encourage the elders. I appreciate men that will give years to helping the church grow, struggle with its problems, accept criticism, receive little or no encouragement, and continue to do its work.

Fifth, I appreciate elders because of their families. They have done a good job in training their children and in building a stable marriage. My hat is off to the man that has a family that makes it possible for him to serve as an elder.

Sixth, I appreciate elders because of the sacrifices they make to serve. Time that might be spent with his family is often used in doing the Lord's work. I appreciate families that are willing to allow the husband and father to spend time dealing with the problems, planning the work of the church, and being concerned about the welfare of people that are under their oversight.

Adapted from Franklin Camp