

The Purpose of Elders' Meetings

Christ Fellowship Bible Church

28 "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 "Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears."

— **Acts 20:28-31**

1. To Refine Character

Elder meetings can refine men of God as biblical character is discussed and godly conduct is pressed upon each man. Character, heart, integrity, purity, and affections are such character qualities that men speak of during elder meetings that can refine one another. As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. When men gather together with regularity, character is refined, sinful dross is exposed, and piety is promoted.

2. To Build Group Morale

Elder meetings prove to be invaluable because they build and strengthen group morale. A team of elders is not a 'board' nor is it an 'athletic team' or simply a 'community/non-profit event'. Rather, an elder team must be a close knit of men — a band of brothers — that grows closer every time the group gathers, talks, prays, and fellowships.

3. To Provide Pastoral Accountability

Elders must meet together with great frequency also to discuss accountability issues. This should include accountability in personal bible study and prayer in times of 'meeting with God.' Accountability can also include updates on marital communication, intimacy with the spouse, discipline and discipleship/instruction of the children in the Word and ways of the Lord, and purity with the opposite sex (online, text, mind, heart, work, hotels, etc.). Elder meetings provide a needed venue to examine and reexamine these very important aspects of the elder's heart.

4. To Sharpen Pastoral Skills

To function as an elder is to be a pastor. To be a pastor is to shepherd God's sheep. To shepherd God's sheep is to feed, to guard, to carry, to nurture, to protect, and to love. As the elders meet, these pastoral skills can be discussed and sharpened even more. How are the elders doing in teaching and instructing the flock? How about home visitation? How about protecting the flock from false teaching *outside* and false teachers *inside* the flock? How about loving and nurturing the hurting sheep? Elder meetings create wonderful opportunities to sharpen these shepherding skills.

5. To Clarify Doctrine

Elders have the unspeakable privilege of guarding the flock of God. Elders must study to show themselves approved as workmen who do not need to be ashamed. Thus, elder meetings can, and should, promote wonderful opportunities for clarifying, discussing, examining, and honing doctrine. What issues need to be examined? What doctrines have come to the surface in the church body? What are people dealing with? What is false teaching elsewhere in the area? Online? On TV? -- that people are exposed to? Elder meetings should clarify and enhance and promote biblical study and doctrine so as to help protect and feed God's flock.

6. To Generate Vision

When the men gather together, the vision of the church should be discussed with some frequency. Is the vision biblical? Is it concise, clear, unambiguous? Is the church fulfilling the vision? Are there parts of the vision or areas that are related to the vision that can improve? To generate discussion regarding the vision & mission of the church — that is, *where the church is heading and why the church exists* — should constitute a portion of the meetings as the men gather together to biblically honor Christ and His Word by striving to generate the vision and re-present it before the flock so that all clearly understand why the church exists and what their responsibilities and roles are as members of the flock.

7. To Ignite the Power of Prayer

When God's people gather to pray, God is present in their midst. The prayers of a righteous man accomplish much. How much more when many godly men gather together to pray diligently on behalf of each other, interceding for the flock, praying through Christ, in the Holy Spirit, for the glory of God! Perhaps nothing ignites the power of prayer and the efficacy of prayer as much as Godly people gathering to pray frequently and passionately and waiting and expecting God to answer the requests. When elders gather together for meetings, a goodly portion of the meeting can and should be consecrated to prayer, worship, adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and intercession.

The Goal: to have Christ-centered meetings that glorify God and result in better pastoral care of His flock.

Thus, by God's grace, every elder meeting endeavors to have Spirit-indwelt and Spirit-appointed shepherds gather to devote themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word so as to care for God's flock, to make biblical decisions regarding the vision, mission, and direction of the Church, to discuss counseling matters, and to promote a greater cherishing of Christ and His gospel in the hearts and lives of the Church's leaders so that the glory of God is preeminently magnified and the flock of God is well-fed, well-cared for, and well-protected.

—adapted from *Meetings that Work* by Alexander Strauch