

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan

I TIMOTHY 3

I Timothy 3

Chapter three opens with the Apostle Paul instructing Timothy on the two offices in the local assemblies of Jesus Christ. The **office of leadership** called in western churches, the "**Pastor**" from Latin, *pāscere*, to *pasture or feed*. The office of helper or server, *διάκονος, diakonos*, pronounced (dee-ak'-on-os). There are only two offices in the local assembly which we call the church. Many denominations use these three words and designate them as three (3) separate and distinct offices. This is simply not the way the New Testament writers use these terms. I have listed some verses below so that you might have an example of how the terms are used by the Apostles Peter and Paul. **The three words are used interchangeably for the same office.** The words describe various functions of **one office** (See terms listed below at the bottom of this article).

"This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work." (I Timothy 3:1) The word bishop is the Greek word "**overseer**" in this verse.

*"From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church...Therefore, take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church" (Acts 20:17,28; **Emphasis mine**)*

*"The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God, which is among you, serving as overseers..." (I Peter 5:1-2a; **Emphasis mine**)*

The word **Elder** is the most frequently used of the three words describing the office of leadership. The word presbuteros below is obviously where the term and denomination Presbyterian comes from, because of the form of church government used to administrate their churches. It is called "**Elder Rule**" or "**The Presbytery**." This concept is from the Jewish concept of leadership and is the way of the New Testament church, not Elder Rule, but Elder lead.

The word **Episkopos**, is a word that is also associated with a denomination called "Episcopalian." The reason is that, is derived from the form of government used by the denomination. The denomination has "overseers" who are in charge of more than one church and oversee "Leaders" called by different names other than overseers.

The word **Poimén** is usually found in the verb form instead of as a noun in the New Testament. The reason is because this name for the office of leadership has to do with the activity of the leader, namely feeding the flock and finding daily food and drink for them. In I Peter 5 (see above verse) it is translated in the King James Version "**feed**" because that is the primary task of the shepherd. In our culture this word Shepherd is often associated with chaplaincy care by the leader. This is not the primary task of the New Testament role of **Elder/ Overseer/Shepherd**, this may be a portion of what he is called upon to do, but the primary task of any New Testament Shepherd is to preach and teach the word of God.

Πρεσβύτερος, presbuteros-
pronounced (pres-boo'-ter-os), Meaning, **Elder**
ἐπίσκοπος, episkopos-
pronounced (ep-is'-kop-os), Meaning, **Overseer**
Ποιμήν, poimén-
pronounced (poy-mane'), Meaning, **Shepherd**

Prayer and Action Steps

**Dear Lord, thank you for giving us leaders to help us learn about who You are and what You have done for us.
Please guard and protect those who lead us each day.
Amen**