

The background of the image is a vibrant blue with a sunburst or starburst pattern. The pattern consists of numerous triangular rays of varying shades of blue, radiating from a central point towards the edges of the frame. The rays create a sense of depth and energy.

SUBMITTING TO AN ELDERSHIP



THE INTIMIDATION FACTOR



Human leadership models can sometimes sneak their way into our thinking on church leadership. Because we associate elders too closely with a boss at work, a disciplinarian at school, or a civil leader, we keep them at arm's length. The following scriptures will help dispel this misunderstanding...

“CALL FOR THE ELDERS”

“Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much” (James 5:14-16).

“WORTHY OF DOUBLE HONOR”

- We find in 1 Timothy 5:17-19 that the *“elders who rule well”* should be *“considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching... Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.”*
- Elders deserve the “benefit of the doubt” in any accusation or issue that comes up. The work of the church comes to a screeching halt when members take sides or make assumptions.

- Giving double honor to an elder means regarding him with even more respect than you would anybody else.
- Take them at their word.
- Trust them.
- Give them the benefit of the doubt in all things. This becomes especially important when a church becomes infested with grumblers and complainers who can only find fault.
- Does this open us up for disappointed? Perhaps. But if we have been thorough in our investigation of potential elders, then there will never be a need to doubt them when an accusation arises.

“BE SUBJECT TO YOUR ELDERS”

- *“You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders” (1 Peter 5:5).*
- *“Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees, which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe. So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily” (Acts 16:4-5).*

“ESTEEM THEM HIGHLY”

“But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another”

1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-13

OBSERVATIONS

- We should expect the best from our elders, but that does not mean they are super-human. Unreasonable expectations lead to unexpected disappointments. They will fail, like we all do, but they have been appointed for a reason – give them their due!
- *“Have charge over you”* – Literally, this means “those who stand in front of you” or “who are placed before you”.
- *“Esteem them very highly in love”* – Have a special place in your heart for the elders. They are not the cold voices of authority, but the tender shepherds of a flock of heaven-seeking souls.