THE QUESTION

Did elders lead churches as a group, and were they different from bishops?

Asked by a THF member on October 29, 2026 · published November 9, 2026 · 12 numbered quotations · the 34 early Christian passages and 130 Bible verses we kept are listed at the back, each with a link.

Read it online: thehistoricfaith.com/early-church-questions/did-elders-lead-churches-as-a-group-and-were-they-different-from-bishops

The short answer *Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words*

Yes, the early writers show elders acting together as a body, judging cases and meeting in council. The earliest letters speak of bishops and presbyters closely, almost as one group. Ignatius and the church orders then set one bishop over a council of presbyters, with deacons serving both.

LIBRARY ONLY	This study was written only from The Historic Faith's library of early-Christian writings and the Bible, never from the web. Every passage we kept from what the library gave is listed at the back, with a link to read it.
HOW IT WAS MADE	Compiled by machine learning from The Historic Faith's library of early-Christian writings and the Bible only. Every quotation was matched word for word against our stored text. Not yet reviewed by The Historic Faith.
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POINT 1 OF 7

Elders acted together as one body

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Hippolytus tells how a false teacher was handled. It was the presbyters together who called him before the church, questioned him twice, and finally put him out. Tertullian likewise says tested elders preside over the Christian assembly.

1 “When the blessed presbyters heard this, they called him before the Church and questioned him.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Hippolytus,** *Against the Heresy of Noetus* 1 (c. 200–236 AD) **Source 18, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

2 “Proven men of our elders preside over us. They gain that honor not by purchase, but by established character.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Tertullian,** *Apology* 39 (c. 196–220 AD) **Source 16, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 2 OF 7

Leaders met in council for hard cases

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

A letter kept among Cyprian's writings says the elders and leading clergy met every year. They settled serious matters by shared counsel, including how to help fallen believers repent.

3 “Because of this, it necessarily happens among us that, year by year, we elders and prelates assemble together to arrange the matters committed to our care, so that if any matters are more serious, they may be directed by common counsel.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Cyprian,** *Epistles* (c. 248–258 AD) **Source 26, page 7** Read it in the library ›
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POINT 3 OF 7

Clement names only bishops and deacons

Our note · compiled by machine learning · Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words

Clement of Rome says the apostles appointed bishops and deacons in the churches they founded. When he defends leaders wrongly removed, he speaks of the episcopate and then of presbyters in the same breath, which suggests the two words overlapped for him.

4 "Thus, preaching through countries and cities, they appointed the first-fruits of their labors, having first proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of those who would later believe."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Rome,** *First Epistle to the Corinthians* **Source 33, page 8** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

5 "Our sin will not be small if we dismiss from the episcopate those who have fulfilled its duties blamelessly and holily. Blessed are those presbyters who, having completed their journey before now, have achieved a fruitful and perfect departure from this world; for they have no fear of being deprived of the place now appointed to them."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Rome,** *First Epistle to the Corinthians* **Source 34, page 8** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

POINT 4 OF 7

Irenaeus links presbyters with the bishops' succession

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Irenaeus tells believers to obey the presbyters who received their place in a line from the apostles. He ties that line to the succession of the episcopate, again holding the two titles close together.

6 "Therefore, it is necessary to obey the presbyters in the Church—those who, as I have shown, possess the succession from the apostles; those who, along with the succession of the episcopate, have received the certain gift of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Irenaeus,** *Against Heresies: Book IV* (c. 175–202 AD) **Source 11, page 6** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

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POINT 5 OF 7

Ignatius: one bishop with a council of presbyters

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Ignatius clearly separates the roles. Each church has one bishop. The presbyters form a body around him as his council and advisers, and the deacons serve with them.

7 “And what is the presbytery but a sacred assembly, the counselors and advisers of the bishop?”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Ignatius of Antioch,** *Epistle to the Trallians* (c. 98–117 AD) **Source 3, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

8 “For there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup to show the unity of His blood; one altar; as there is one bishop, along with the presbytery and deacons, my fellow-servants: so that, whatever you do, you may do it according to the will of God.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Ignatius of Antioch,** *Epistle to the Philadelphians* (c. 98–117 AD) **Source 7, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 6 OF 7

Church orders give bishops the power to ordain

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

The Apostolic Constitutions spell out the difference. Bishops are ordained by other bishops and alone ordain clergy. A presbyter teaches, offers, baptizes and blesses, and may lay on hands, but he does not ordain.

9 “We command that a bishop be ordained by three bishops, or at least by two.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Apostolic Constitutions** (c. 250–380 AD) **Source 31, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

10 “He lays on hands, but does not ordain.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Apostolic Constitutions** (c. 250–380 AD) **Source 29, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

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POINT 7 OF 7

Deacons serve the bishop and presbyters

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Deacons stand below both. The Apostolic Constitutions say they assist the bishop and presbyters but do not take their offices. Cyprian adds that the apostles appointed deacons as helpers in their oversight of the church.

11 "And the deacon is to minister to the bishop and to the presbyters, that is, to carry out the service of a ministering deacon, but not to take part in the other offices."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Apostolic Constitutions** (c. 250–380 AD) *THF's updated English* **Source 31, page 7** Read it in the library ›

12 "But deacons ought to remember that the Lord chose apostles, that is, bishops and overseers, while the apostles, after the Lord's ascension into heaven, appointed deacons for themselves as servants of their episcopacy and of the Church."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Cyprian,** *Epistles* (c. 248–258 AD) *THF's updated English* **Source 23, page 7** Read it in the library ›

THE LIMITS

What these passages don't tell us

- These passages do not say when or how one bishop over a group of elders became the pattern in every church.
- Clement's mixing of the two titles is a hint, not a plain statement that they were one office.
- A word-for-word match shows that a quotation really is in our text. It does not show that our reading of it is right, or who wrote each work.

WHERE EVERY QUOTE CAME FROM

The Sources

The 34 early Christian passages and 130 Bible verses we kept for this question (repeats and weak or off-topic search hits were left out): early Christian passages first (sources 1–34, grouped by writer, earliest first), then Bible verses in The Faith Once Delivered Bible (sources 35–99, in Bible order), then 65 more verses THF links to these passages, by reference. **Quote 1, page 2** beside a source shows where the study quotes it. Passages are

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in THF's updated English unless marked "1885 English" (the Roberts–Donaldson translation, public domain). "… [continues online]" marks a passage the library gave only in part. **On paper?** At **thehistoricfaith.com**, Bible verses are in the **Audio Bible** and early Christian writings in the **Library** (search for the title).

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS *34 passages from 12 writers*

Clement of Rome, *c. 88–99 AD · source 1*

1 *Second Epistle* 17 (on point 1) And let us not only seem to believe and pay attention now, when we are being admonished by the elders. But when we go home, let us also remember the… [continues online] **read ›**

Hermas, *c. 90–150 AD · source 2*

2 *Shepherd* (on point 1) "you will read the words in this city, along with the presbyters who preside over the Church… [continues online] **read ›**

Ignatius of Antioch, *c. 98–117 AD · sources 3–8*

3 *Epistle to the Trallians* **Quote 7, page 4** "what are the deacons but imitators of the angelic powers, fulfilling a pure and blameless ministry unto him, as the holy Stephen did to the blessed James, Timothy and Linus… [continues online] **read ›**

4 *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans* (on point 5) "deacons to the presbyters; the presbyters to the bishop… [continues online] **read ›**

5 *Epistles of Ignatius* (1885 English; on point 1) presbyters, "feed the flock which is among you," till God shall show who is to hold the rule over you… [continues online] **read ›**

6 *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans* (on point 5) that you all follow the bishop, just as Christ Jesus does the Father, and the presbytery as you would the apostles. Also, show reverence to the deacons, as those who… [continues online] **read ›**

7 *Epistle to the Philadelphians* **Quote 8, page 4** "altar; as there is one bishop, along with the presbytery and deacons… [continues online] **read ›**

8 *Epistle to the Magnesians* (on point 5) is important for you not to treat your bishop too casually because of his youth, but to show him full respect, honoring the authority of God the Father, as I… [continues online] **read ›**

Polycarp, *c. 100–155 AD · source 9*

9 *Epistle to the Philippians* (1885 English; on point 1) "let the presbyters be compassionate and merciful to all, bringing back those that wander, visiting all the sick, and not neglecting the widow, the orphan, or the poor, but always… [continues online] **read ›**

Irenaeus, *c. 175–202 AD · sources 10–13*

10 *Against Heresies: Book IV* (1885 English; on point 4) "Such presbyters does the Church nourish, of whom also the prophet says: "I will give thy rulers in peace, and thy bishops in righteousness." Of whom also did the Lord… [continues online] **read ›**

11 *Against Heresies: Book IV* (1885 English) **Quote 6, page 3** "Wherefore it is incumbent to obey the presbyters who are in the Church,—those who, as I have shown, possess the succession from the apostles… [continues online] **read ›**

12 *Fragments from the Lost Writings of Irenæus* (on point 3) the fast fosters the harmony of our shared faith. The presbyters before Soter who led the Church you now govern—namely, Anicetus, Pius, Hyginus, Telesphorus, and Sixtus—neither observed it… [continues online] **read ›**

13 *Against Heresies: Book III* (1885 English; on point 4) "But, again, when we refer them to that tradition which originates from the apostles, [and] which is preserved by means of the succession of presbyters in the Churches, they object… [continues online] **read ›**

Clement of Alexandria, *c. 190–215 AD · sources 14–15*

14 *Stromata* 6.13 (1885 English) an one is in reality a presbyter of the Church, and a true minister (deacon) of the will of God, if he do and teach what is the Lord's… [continues online] **read ›**

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15 *Stromata* 7.1 (1885 English; on point 7) “also, in the Church, the elders attend to the department which has improvement for its object… [continues online] **read ›**

Tertullian, *c. 196–220 AD · sources 16–17*

16 *Apology* 39 (1885 English) **Quote 2, page 2** “tried men of our elders preside over us, obtaining that honour not by purchase, but by established character… [continues online] **read ›**

17 *On Exhortation to Chastity* 7 (1885 English) “truly is this the case, that unless the laics as well observe the rules which are to guide the choice of presbyters, how will there be presbyters at all, who… [continues online] **read ›**

Hippolytus, *c. 200–236 AD · source 18*

18 *Against the Heresy of Noetus* 1 **Quote 1, page 2** “that Aaron was his brother. When the blessed presbyters heard this, they called him before the Church and questioned him. But at first he denied that he held such views… [continues online] **read ›**

Origen, *c. 215–254 AD · source 19*

19 *Against Celsus* 30 (on point 1) “example, the Church of God at Athens is a gentle and steady body, because it desires to please God, who is over all things. But the assembly of the Athenians… [continues online] **read ›**

Cyprian, *c. 248–258 AD · sources 20–26*

20 *Epistles* (on point 2) of the persecution, we wrote letters about this matter, but no one listened to us. Then a full council was held, and we decreed, not only with our agreement but… [continues online] **read ›**

21 *Epistles* (1885 English; on point 2) “that an assembly for counsel being gathered together, with bishops, presbyters, deacons, and confessors, as well as with the laity who stand fast, we should deal with the case of… [continues online] **read ›**

22 *Epistles* (on point 2) their brother, greetings. We thought it necessary, dearest brother, to gather together and hold a council in order to arrange certain matters and examine them in a common council. At… [continues online] **read ›**

23 *Epistles* **Quote 12, page 5** “But deacons ought to remember that the Lord chose apostles, that is, bishops and overseers… [continues online] **read ›**

24 *Epistles* (on point 6) to you to be a bishop who, after a bishop had been appointed in the Church by sixteen fellow bishops, strives through bribery to be made a corrupt and outsider… [continues online] **read ›**

25 *Epistles* (1885 English; on point 2) “that an assembly for counsel being gathered together, with bishop, presbyters, deacons, and confessors, as well as with the laity who stand fast, we should deal with the case of… [continues online] **read ›**

26 *Epistles* (1885 English) **Quote 3, page 2** “which reason it happens of necessity among us, that year by year we, the elders and prelates, assemble together to arrange those matters which are committed to our care, so… [continues online] **read ›**

Apostolic Constitutions, *c. 250–380 AD · sources 27–32*

27 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 6) “difference in their names shows the difference in their duties. For not everyone who wants to be ordained is ordained, as was the case in that spurious and counterfeit priesthood… [continues online] **read ›**

28 *Apostolic Constitutions* (1885 English; on point 6) “let the principal of the bishops ask the presbytery and people whether this be the person whom they desire for their ruler… [continues online] **read ›**

29 *Apostolic Constitutions* **Quote 10, page 4** the canons, I also make this constitution. A bishop gives the blessing, but does not receive the blessing. He lays on hands, ordains, offers, and receives the blessing from bishops… [continues online] **read ›**

30 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 1) with James the Lord's brother, what should be done. And it seemed good to him and to the elders to speak words of teaching to the people. For some… [continues online] **read ›**

31 *Apostolic Constitutions* **Quotes 9, 11, pages 4, 5** “command that a bishop be ordained by three bishops, or at least by two. But it is not lawful for him to be placed over you by one bishop alone… [continues online] **read ›**

32 *Apostolic Constitutions* (1885 English; on point 6) “A presbyter by one bishop, as also a deacon, and the rest of the clergy” **read ›**

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Clement of Rome · *sources 33–34*

33 *First Epistle to the Corinthians* **Quote 4, page 3** they appointed the first-fruits of their labors, having first proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of those who would later believe. Nor was this a… [continues online] **read ›**

34 *First Epistle to the Corinthians* (1885 English) **Quote 5, page 3** "are of opinion, therefore, that those appointed by them, or afterwards by other eminent men, with the consent of the whole Church, and who have blamelessly served the flock of… [continues online] **read ›**

THE BIBLE *65 verses, The Faith Once Delivered Bible (Old Testament from the Septuagint), in Bible order*

35 **Exodus 4:29** Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered the elders of the children of Israel. **read ›**

36 **Exodus 24:9** Then Moses went up, and Aaron, and Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. **read ›**

37 **Exodus 24:14** And they said to the elders, "Stay quietly here until we return to you. And behold, Aaron and Hur are with you; if anyone has a case to be judged, let him go to them." **read ›**

38 **Leviticus 4:15** The elders of the congregation shall lay their hands on the head of the calf before the Lord, and they shall slaughter the calf before the Lord. **read ›**

39 **Leviticus 10:10** to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean, **read ›**

40 **Leviticus 16:32** The priest whom they anoint, and whose hands they consecrate to serve as priest after his father, shall make atonement; he shall put on the linen garment, the holy garment. **read ›**

41 **Leviticus 21:10** And the high priest among his brothers, on whose head the anointing oil has been poured, and who has been consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor tear his garments; **read ›**

42 **Numbers 11:16** Then the Lord said to Moses, "Gather to me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you yourself know to be elders of the people and their scribes; and bring them to the tabernacle of witness, and they shall stand there with you. **read ›**

43 **Numbers 11:24** So Moses went out and spoke the words of the Lord to the people; and he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and set them all around the tabernacle. **read ›**

44 **Numbers 27:16** "Let the Lord God of the spirits and of all flesh select a man over this congregation, **read ›**

45 **Numbers 27:17** who shall go out before them and who shall come in before them, who shall lead them out and who shall bring them in, so that the congregation of the Lord may not be like sheep that have no shepherd." **read ›**

46 **1 Chronicles 9:13** and their brothers, heads of the houses of their families, one thousand seven hundred and sixty, mighty men of valor for the work of the service of the house of God. **read ›**

47 **1 Chronicles 11:21** Of the three he was more honored than the two, and he was their ruler; but he did not attain to the three. **read ›**

48 **2 Chronicles 34:13** And they were over the burden-bearers and over all who did the work in every kind of service; and of the Levites there were scribes, judges, and gatekeepers. **read ›**

49 **Ezra 1:2** "Thus says Cyrus king of the Persians: The Lord God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he himself has charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judea. **read ›**

50 **Ezra 7:2** the son of Shallum, the son of Zadok, the son of Ahitub, **read ›**

51 **Ezra 8:11** of the sons of Bebai, Zechariah the son of Bebai, and with him twenty-eight males; **read ›**

52 **Ezra 9:4** Then everyone who followed the word of the God of Israel gathered to me because of the faithlessness of the exiles; and I sat still in silence until the evening sacrifice. **read ›**

53 **Ezra 9:12** Now therefore do not give your daughters to their sons, and do not take their daughters for your sons; and you shall never seek their peace or their good, so that you may be strong and eat the good things of the land and leave it as an inheritance to your sons forever.' **read ›**

54 **Nehemiah 10:14** The rulers of the people: Parosh, Pahath-moab, Elam, Zattu; (Septuagint 2 Esdras 20:15 (Nehemiah 10:14 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

55 **Proverbs 8:15** By me kings reign, and rulers write decrees of righteousness. **read ›**

56 **Proverbs 14:19** The evil will fall before the good, and the ungodly will wait at the doors of the righteous. **read ›**

57 **Ecclesiastes 3:4** a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance; **read ›**

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58 **Ecclesiastes 3:15** What has been already is, and what is to be has already been; and God will seek the one who is pursued. **read ›**

59 **Isaiah 15:3** Wrap yourselves in sackcloth in her squares, and lament on her rooftops and in her lanes; all of you, wail with weeping. **read ›**

60 **1 Esdras 1:2** having set the priests in their robes by their daily courses in the temple of the Lord. **read ›**

61 **1 Esdras 5:40** And Nehemiah and Attharias told them not to share in the holy things until a high priest should arise clothed with the Manifestation and the Truth. **read ›**

62 **1 Esdras 7:2** supervised the holy works very carefully, working together with the elders of the Jews and the temple officials. **read ›**

63 **1 Esdras 8:11** So all who are of such a mind, let them set out with you, as it has seemed good to me and to my seven friends, the counselors, **read ›**

64 **1 Esdras 8:46** commanding them to speak to Loddaeus and his brothers and the treasurers at that place, to send us men to serve as priests in the house of our Lord. **read ›**

65 **1 Esdras 9:4** and that whoever did not come within two or three days, according to the judgment of the ruling elders, should have his cattle given over to the temple, and he himself should be cut off from the multitude of the captivity. **read ›**

66 **1 Esdras 9:12** Let the leaders of the multitude stay, and let all those of our settlements who have foreign wives come at an appointed time, **read ›**

67 **Wisdom of Sirach 7:14** Do not babble in a multitude of elders, and do not repeat a word in your prayer. **read ›**

68 **Wisdom of Sirach 10:20** Among brothers their leader is honored, and those who fear the Lord in his eyes. **read ›**

69 **Wisdom of Sirach 44:4** leaders of the people by their counsels, and by understanding of the people’s learning; wise words were in their instruction; **read ›**

70 **Susanna 1:5** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

71 **Susanna 1:34** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

72 **Susanna 1:50** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

73 **1 Maccabees 1:51** In accordance with all these words he wrote to his whole kingdom, and he appointed overseers over all the people, and he commanded the cities of Judah to sacrifice, city by city. **read ›**

74 **1 Maccabees 4:42** He chose unblemished priests, devoted to the law; **read ›**

75 **1 Maccabees 8:15** And they have made a senate house for themselves, and every day three hundred and twenty counselors deliberate continually about the people, to keep them in good order; **read ›**

76 **1 Maccabees 14:19** And these were read before the assembly in Jerusalem. **read ›**

77 **1 Maccabees 14:38** And King Demetrius confirmed him in the high priesthood accordingly, **read ›**

78 **1 Maccabees 14:41** and that the Jews and the priests were well pleased that Simon should be their leader and high priest forever, until a faithful prophet should arise; **read ›**

79 **1 Maccabees 14:42** and that he should be general over them, and that he should take charge of the sanctuary, to appoint men over its works and over the country and over the weapons and over the strongholds; **read ›**

80 **1 Maccabees 14:47** Simon accepted, and agreed to be high priest, and to be general and ethnarch of the Jews and of the priests, and to preside over them all. **read ›**

81 **2 Maccabees 3:4** But a certain Simon, of the tribe of Benjamin, who had been appointed captain of the temple, fell out with the high priest about the lawlessness in the city; **read ›**

82 **2 Maccabees 3:15** The priests, throwing themselves down before the altar in their priestly robes, called toward heaven upon him who had given the law about deposits, that he would keep them safe for those who had deposited them. **read ›**

83 **4 Maccabees 15:3** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

84 **1 Enoch 90:22** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

85 **Acts 3:2** A man lame from his mother’s womb was being carried. They laid him daily at the temple gate called Beautiful to ask alms from those entering the temple. **read ›**

86 **Acts 9:14** Here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.” **read ›**

87 **Acts 14:23** They appointed elders for them in every church and, after prayer with fasting, commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. **read ›**

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88 **Acts 15:22** Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas: Judas called Barsabbas and Silas, leading men among the brothers. **read ›**

89 **Acts 20:17** From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and summoned the elders of the church. **read ›**

90 **Colossians 1:5** because of the hope which is laid up for you in the heavens, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel **read ›**

91 **1 Timothy 3:1** The saying is trustworthy: if anyone aspires to the office of bishop, he desires a good work. **read ›**

92 **1 Timothy 3:2** The bishop therefore must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, self-controlled, orderly, hospitable, able to teach; **read ›**

93 **1 Timothy 5:17** Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and in teaching. **read ›**

94 **1 Timothy 5:19** Do not receive an accusation against an elder except at the word of two or three witnesses. **read ›**

95 **Titus 1:5** I left you in Crete for this reason, that you would set in order the things that were lacking and appoint elders in every city, as I directed you— **read ›**

96 **Titus 1:7** For a bishop must be blameless as God’s steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for dishonest gain, **read ›**

97 **1 Peter 5:1** I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ’s sufferings, and a partaker of the glory to be revealed: **read ›**

98 **1 Peter 5:2** shepherd the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion, but voluntarily; not for dishonest gain, but willingly; **read ›**

99 **1 Peter 5:3** not as lording it over those entrusted to you, but making yourselves examples to the flock. **read ›**

ALSO LINKED BY THF TO THESE PASSAGES *65 verses, by reference*

Partly machine-linked: related to the passages, not always quoted in them. Each reference links to the verse in our audio Bible.

Proverbs 8:27

Isaiah 60:17 · 63:3

Matthew 4:10 · 5:6 · 5:17 · 6:12 · 7:12 · 9:13 · 10:5 · 24:11

Mark 7:9 · 12:39

Luke 10:16 · 11:23 · 12:47 · 12:50 · 20:46

John 20:22

Acts 1:8 · 1:20 · 4:32 · 9:5 · 10:13 · 10:34 · 11:15 · 15:1 · 15:7 · 15:9 · 15:13 · 15:23

Romans 1:17 · 1:32 · 2:13 · 3:23 · 12:17 · 14:10 · 14:12

1 Corinthians 6:7 · 6:10 · 9:25 · 10:20 · 14:33

2 Corinthians 5:10 · 8:21

Galatians 3:11 · 3:27

Ephesians 4:2 · 4:5 · 6:9

Philippians 1:18

Colossians 3:25

2 Thessalonians 2:10

2 Timothy 2:24 · 3:5 · 4:6

Titus 1:6

Hebrews 10:38

James 2:13 · 5:14

1 Peter 1:17

1 John 2:27

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Revelation 1:6 · 4:4 · 11:16

Searched: Ante-Nicene Fathers volumes 1–9 and the Bible, including the Septuagint.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

A THF member asked “Did elders lead churches as a group, and were they different from bishops?” on October 29, 2026. The Historic Faith answered it as a public study on November 9, 2026.

Library only. This study was written only from The Historic Faith’s library of early-Christian writings and the Bible, never from the web. Every passage we kept from what the library gave is listed above, with a link to read it.

How it was made. Compiled by machine learning from The Historic Faith’s library of early-Christian writings and the Bible only. Every quotation was matched word for word against our stored text. Not yet reviewed by The Historic Faith.

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