THE QUESTION

What did the early church teach about elders, bishops and submitting to them?

Asked by a THF member on July 2, 2026 · published November 9, 2026 · 13 numbered quotations · the 36 early Christian passages and 162 Bible verses we kept are listed at the back, each with a link.

Read it online: thehistoricfaith.com/early-church-questions/what-did-the-early-church-teach-about-elders-bishops-and-submitting-to-them

The short answer *From the text: says what the passages say*

The early writers taught that the church is an ordered body, and that believers should honor and obey their bishop, elders and deacons. Leaders, in turn, must watch over souls, teach the truth, live blamelessly and rule themselves first. Their rule aims to heal and prevent sin, not to control or merely punish.

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.
SHARING WITH AN AI?	Every quotation here comes from The Historic Faith's library. If you paste this study into an AI, anything it adds beyond these pages comes from that AI, not from us.

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POINT 1 OF 8

The church is an ordered body

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

Clement of Rome compares the church to an army and a human body. Not everyone holds the same rank, but each serves in his own place, and every part needs the others for the good of the whole.

1

"Not all are prefects, nor commanders of a thousand, nor of a hundred, nor of fifty, nor the like, but each one in his own rank performs the things commanded by the king and the generals."

later in the same passage

"The head is nothing without the feet, and the feet are nothing without the head; indeed, the very smallest members of our body are necessary and useful to the whole body."

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

POINT 2 OF 8

Believers should honor and obey their elders

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

Clement praises the Corinthians for once obeying their leaders and honoring their elders, and he urges them to do so again. He writes against a rebellion in which a few people had pushed their leaders aside.

2

"For you did all things without favoritism, and walked in the commandments of God, being obedient to those who led you, and giving all appropriate honor to the elders among you."

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

3

"Let us honor the Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood was given for us; let us respect those who lead us; let us honor the elders among us; let us train the young men in the fear of God; let us guide our wives to what is good."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Rome,** *First Epistle to the Corinthians* **Source 35, page 8** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

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POINT 3 OF 8

Follow the bishop, presbyters and deacons together

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

Ignatius tells churches to follow the bishop, respect the presbyters (elders) and honor the deacons. He wants nothing done in the church apart from that ordered leadership, and he ties this to the unity of the body.

4 “See that you all follow the bishop, just as Christ Jesus does the Father, and the presbytery as you would the apostles.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Ignatius of Antioch,** *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans* (c. 98–117 AD) **Source 5, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

5 “Be subject to the bishop, and to one another, as Jesus Christ is to the Father, according to the flesh, and the apostles are to Christ, and to the Father, and to the Spirit; so that there may be a union both fleshly and spiritual.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Ignatius of Antioch,** *Epistle to the Magnesians* (c. 98–117 AD) **Source 8, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 4 OF 8

Elders counsel the bishop and labor in teaching

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

Ignatius calls the presbyters a sacred council that advises the bishop. The Apostolic Constitutions say elders deserve double honor because they work constantly in the word and teaching.

6 “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 1, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

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7 “Let a double portion also be set apart for the presbyters, since they labor continually in the word and teaching, because of the apostles of our Lord, whose place they hold, as the bishop's counselors and the crown of the Church.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Source 21, page 8** Read it in the library ›
Apostolic Constitutions (c. 250–380 AD)
THF's updated English

POINT 5 OF 8

Leaders answer to God for every soul

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

John Chrysostom explains Hebrews 13:17. A leader carries a heavy charge, since he must give account for each person in his care. Chrysostom says obeying such a leader is for the members' own good.

8 “For tell me, if he is under such a dangerous responsibility, are you not willing to obey him, and that too for your own benefit?”

later in the same passage

“For you have not yet devoted your soul for him, but he lays down his life for you.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **John Chrysostom,** **Source 28, page 8** Read it in the library ›
Homilies on Second Timothy (c. 386–407 AD)
THF's updated English

POINT 6 OF 8

Church rule aims to heal, not punish

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

Chrysostom says rule in the church is higher than political rule. It seeks to keep sins from happening and to blot them out, not to cut people off. He adds that no one can lead others well without first ruling himself.

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9 “For, in the first place, it considers mainly not how it may punish sins that have been committed, but how they may never be committed at all.”

later in the same passage

“But neither the one who pursues political rule nor the one who pursues spiritual rule will be able to administer it well unless they have first ruled themselves as they ought, and have kept with all strictness the proper laws of their own form of government.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **John Chrysostom,** *Homilies on Second Corinthians* 15 (c. 386–407 AD) **Source 30, page 8** Read it in the library ›

THF's updated English

POINT 7 OF 8

Elders must guard true teaching and live blamelessly

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

Irenaeus says believers should learn the truth from elders in the line handed down from the apostles, whose life and speech are sound. Ignatius gives elders the plain charge to feed the flock.

10 “Therefore, where the gifts of the Lord have been placed, we must learn the truth from those who possess the succession of the Church from the apostles, and among whom is found conduct that is sound and blameless, as well as speech that is unadulterated and incorrupt.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Irenaeus,** *Against Heresies: Book IV* (c. 175–202 AD) **Source 11, page 7** Read it in the library ›

THF's updated English

11 “You presbyters, "feed the flock which is among you," until God reveals who is to lead you.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Ignatius of Antioch,** *Epistles of Ignatius* (c. 98–117 AD) **Source 6, page 7** Read it in the library ›

THF's updated English

POINT 8 OF 8

Leaders and people share the work

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

Cyprian says both overseers and people must keep God's commands and care for one another's lives. He also praises a church where the bishop led the way in courage and the brothers followed in one mind.

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12 “First of all, therefore, dearest brother, both overseers and people must seek after nothing more eagerly than this: that we who fear God should keep the divine precepts with every observance of discipline, and should not allow our brothers to stray and to live according to their own fancy and lust.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Cyprian,** *Epistles* (c. 248–258 AD)
THF's updated English
Source 15, page 7 Read it in the library ›

13 “Among you, the courage of the bishop going before has been publicly proven, and the unity of the brotherhood following has been shown.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Cyprian,** *Epistles* (c. 248–258 AD)
THF's updated English
Source 16, page 7 Read it in the library ›

THE LIMITS

What these passages don’t tell us

- Most of these writers describe one bishop leading with presbyters and deacons, so they do not directly describe a church led by a group of elders alone.
- They do not spell out when, if ever, a member may refuse a leader who teaches or acts wrongly.
- 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 36 early Christian passages and 162 Bible verses we kept for this question (repeats and weak or off-topic search hits were left out): early Christian passages first (sources 1–36, grouped by writer, earliest first), then Bible verses in The Faith Once Delivered Bible (sources 37–150, in Bible order), then 48 more verses THF links to these passages, by reference. **Quote 1, page 2** beside a source shows where the study quotes it. Passages are 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 *36 passages from 7 writers*

Ignatius of Antioch, *c. 98–117 AD · sources 1–8*

1 *Epistle to the Trallians* (1885 English) **Quote 6, page 3** “what is the presbytery but a sacred assembly, the counsellors and assessors of the bishop… [continues online] **read ›**

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2 *Epistle to the Philadelphians* (1885 English; on point 3) “presbyters, and deacons, and the rest of the clergy, together with all the people, and the soldiers, and the governors, and Cæsar [himself], to the bishop… [continues online] **read ›**

3 *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans* (on point 3) “deacons to the presbyters; the presbyters to the bishop… [continues online] **read ›**

4 *Epistles of Ignatius* (on point 3) May I have joy in you in the Lord! Be sober. Lay aside, each of you, all malice and beast-like fury, evil-speaking, slander, filthy speaking, lewdness, gossip, arrogance, drunkenness, lust, … [continues online] **read ›**

5 *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans* **Quote 4, page 3** 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 ›**

6 *Epistles of Ignatius* (1885 English) **Quote 11, page 5** presbyters, “feed the flock which is among you,” till God shall show who is to hold the rule over you… [continues online] **read ›**

7 *Epistles of Ignatius* (1885 English; on point 3) “ye subject to the bishop, to the presbyters, and to the deacons… [continues online] **read ›**

8 *Epistle to the Magnesians* (1885 English) **Quote 5, page 3** “ye subject to the bishop, and to one another, as Jesus Christ to the Father, according to the flesh, and the apostles to Christ, and to the Father, and to… [continues online] **read ›**

Polycarp, *c. 100–155 AD · sources 9–10*

9 *Epistle to the Philippians* (1885 English; on point 2) “it is needful to abstain from all these things, being subject to the presbyters and deacons, as unto God and Christ… [continues online] **read ›**

10 *Epistle to the Philippians* (1885 English; on point 6) be ye then moderate in regard to this matter, and “do not count such as enemies… [continues online] **read ›**

Irenaeus, *c. 175–202 AD · sources 11–12*

11 *Against Heresies: Book IV* (1885 English) **Quote 10, page 5** “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 ›**

12 *Against Heresies: Book III* (1885 English; on point 7) “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 ›**

Cyprian, *c. 248–258 AD · sources 13–19*

13 *Epistles* (on point 3) name of the Church that although a rebellious and arrogant crowd of those who refuse to hear and obey may depart, the Church does not depart from Christ. And they… [continues online] **read ›**

14 *Epistles* of God is one, and there can be no salvation for anyone except in the Church. But the divine Scripture testifies that the undisciplined perish because they do not listen… [continues online] **read ›**

15 *Epistles* (1885 English) **Quote 12, page 6** “In the first place, therefore, dearest brother, both by overseers and people nothing is to be more eagerly sought after, than that we who fear God should keep the divine… [continues online] **read ›**

16 *Epistles* (1885 English) **Quote 13, page 6** “what brotherhood would not rejoice in the joy of its brethren… [continues online] **read ›**

17 *Epistles* (on point 3) commands and warnings we ought to keep, describes the honor of a bishop and the order of His Church in the Gospel. He says to Peter: “I say to you… [continues online] **read ›**

18 *Epistles* (1885 English; on point 4) “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 ›**

19 *Epistles* (1885 English) “obey their chief with an obedience full of humility… [continues online] **read ›**

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Apostolic Constitutions, *c. 250–380 AD · sources 20–26*

20 *Apostolic Constitutions* “Concerning the ordination of presbyters, I who am loved by the Lord… [continues online] **read ›**

21 *Apostolic Constitutions* **Quote 7, page 4** “anyone decides to invite elderly women to a love feast, or a banquet, as our Savior calls it in Luke 14:13, let them most often invite one whom the… [continues online] **read ›**

22 *Apostolic Constitutions* (1885 English; on point 7) “Do you first ordain bishops worthy of the Lord, and presbyters and deacons, pious men, righteous, meek, free from the love of money, lovers of truth, approved, holy, not accepters… [continues online] **read ›**

23 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 4) 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 ›**

24 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 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 ›**

25 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 3) now the deacon is to you what Aaron was, and the bishop what Moses was. If, therefore, Moses was called a god by the Lord, let the bishop be honored… [continues online] **read ›**

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

John Chrysostom, *c. 386–407 AD · sources 27–32*

27 *Homilies on Acts* (on point 6) Moreover, one man is suited for one thing, another for another. Do you not see how much the holy Scripture has said on this matter? But let me say why… [continues online] **read ›**

28 *Homilies on Second Timothy* **Quote 8, page 4** “they. And it is fitting for their children to be kindly affectionate toward them. For he says, “Obey those who rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch over… [continues online] **read ›**

29 *Homilies on John* 86 (1885 English; on point 5) “also Paul says, Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves… [continues online] **read ›**

30 *Homilies on Second Corinthians* 15 **Quote 9, page 5** than political rule. And what is this? The rule in the Church. Paul also mentions this, saying, "Obey those who have the rule over you, and submit to them; for… [continues online] **read ›**

31 *Homilies on Hebrews* 34 (1885 English; on point 5) “them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves… [continues online] **read ›**

32 *Homilies on Hebrews* 34 (1885 English; on point 5) “he then said, Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves… [continues online] **read ›**

Clement of Rome · *sources 33–36*

33 *First Epistle to the Corinthians* **Quote 1, page 2** “us consider those who serve under our generals, with what order, obedience, and submissiveness they perform the… [continues online] **read ›**

34 *First Epistle to the Corinthians* (1885 English) **Quote 2, page 2** “ye did all things without respect of persons, and walked in the commandments of God, being obedient to those who had the rule over you, and giving all fitting honour… [continues online] **read ›**

35 *First Epistle to the Corinthians* (1885 English) **Quote 3, page 2** “us esteem those who have the rule over us… [continues online] **read ›**

36 *First Epistle to the Corinthians* (on point 2) Our apostles also knew, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that there would be conflict regarding the office of the episcopate. For this reason, considering that they had obtained perfect foreknowledge… [continues online] **read ›**

THE BIBLE *114 verses, The Faith Once Delivered Bible (Old Testament from the Septuagint), in Bible order*

37 **Genesis 3:16** To the woman he said, “I will greatly multiply your sorrows and your groaning; in sorrows you shall bear children. Your turning shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you.” **read ›**

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

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39 **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 ›**

40 **Leviticus 19:32** You shall rise up before the gray-haired and honor the face of the elder, and you shall fear your God. I am the Lord your God. **read ›**

41 **Numbers 10:13** They set out first by the voice of the Lord, by the hand of Moses. **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 **Ezra 7:2** the son of Shallum, the son of Zadok, the son of Ahitub, **read ›**

46 **Proverbs 12:9** Better is a man in dishonor who serves himself than one who puts honor on himself and lacks bread. **read ›**

47 **Proverbs 12:10** The righteous has compassion on the lives of his cattle, but the inward parts of the ungodly are unmerciful. **read ›**

48 **Proverbs 12:17** The righteous declares a faithfulness that is shown openly, but the witness of the unrighteous is deceitful. **read ›**

49 **Proverbs 13:3** He who guards his own mouth keeps his own soul, but he who is rash with his lips will bring terror on himself. **read ›**

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

51 **Proverbs 16:24** Good words are honeycombs, and their sweetness is healing for the soul. **read ›**

52 **Ecclesiastes 1:1** The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king of Israel in Jerusalem. **read ›**

53 **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 ›**

54 **Isaiah 3:20** and the set of glorious ornaments, and the armlets, and the bracelets, and the braided work, and the rings, and the right-hand bracelets, **read ›**

55 **Isaiah 7:1** Now it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin king of Aram and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came up against Jerusalem to make war on it, but they could not besiege it. **read ›**

56 **Isaiah 7:5** And as for the son of Aram and the son of Remaliah, because they have counseled an evil counsel, **read ›**

57 **Isaiah 13:12** And those who are left will be more precious than unrefined gold, and a man will be more precious than the stone that is in Souphir. **read ›**

58 **Isaiah 13:17** Behold, I am stirring up the Medes against you, who do not regard silver, nor have need of gold. **read ›**

59 **Isaiah 14:3** And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord will give you rest from your anguish and your anger, and from your hard slavery, in which you served them. **read ›**

60 **Daniel 1:8** And Daniel resolved in his heart that he would not defile himself at all with the king’s table or with the wine he drank; and he asked the chief eunuch that he might not defile himself at all. **read ›**

61 **Hosea 12:11** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

62 **Obadiah 1:1** The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord God to Idumea: I have heard a report from the Lord, and he has sent out a summons to siege among the nations: “Arise, and let us rise up against her to war.” **read ›**

63 **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 ›**

64 **1 Esdras 7:2** supervised the holy works very carefully, working together with the elders of the Jews and the temple officials. **read ›**

65 **1 Esdras 8:94** as has been decided by you and by all who obey the law of the Lord. **read ›**

66 **Judith 8:24** And now, brothers, let us show our brothers that their life hangs on us, and that the sanctuary and the house and the altar rest upon us. **read ›**

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67 **Wisdom of Solomon 10:10** When a righteous man fled from his brother's anger, she guided him in straight paths; she showed him the kingdom of God, and gave him knowledge of holy things; she prospered him in his toils, and multiplied his labors. **read ›**

68 **Wisdom of Solomon 18:9** For the holy children of good men offered sacrifice in secret, and in full agreement they established the divine law, that the holy ones would share alike in the same good things and dangers, the fathers already leading the songs of praise. **read ›**

69 **Wisdom of Sirach 1:1** Since many great things have been given to us through the Law and the Prophets and the others who followed after them, for which Israel ought to be praised for its instruction and wisdom; and since not only must those who read become knowledgeable themselves, but lovers of learning must also be able to be of use to those outside, both by speaking and by writing: my grandfather Jesus, having given himself more and more to the reading of the Law and the Prophets and the other books of our fathers, and having gained considerable skill in them, was himself also led to write something pertaining to instruction and wisdom, so that lovers of learning, having become devoted to these things as well, might make still greater progress by living according to the law. You are urged, therefore, to read with goodwill and attention, and to be forgiving wherever, despite our diligent labor in translating, we may seem to fall short in some of the expressions; for what is said in Hebrew does not have the same force when it is brought over into another language. And not only these things, but the Law itself and the prophecies and the rest of the books differ not a little when they are spoken in their own language. For in the thirty-eighth year, in the reign of King Euergetes, having come into Egypt and stayed there some time, I found a copy of no small instruction; and I myself thought it most necessary to apply some diligence and labor to the translation of this book, bringing much watchfulness and skill to it in that space of time, in order to complete the book and publish it also for those living abroad who wish to love learning, preparing their character beforehand to live according to the law. All wisdom is from the Lord, and is with him forever. **read ›**

70 **Wisdom of Sirach 3:1** O children, listen to me, your father, and act accordingly, that you may be saved. **read ›**

71 **Wisdom of Sirach 3:2** For the Lord has glorified the father over the children, and has established the judgment of the mother over the sons. **read ›**

72 **Wisdom of Sirach 3:6** He who glorifies his father will live long, and he who listens to the Lord will give rest to his mother, **read ›**

73 **Wisdom of Sirach 3:7** and he will serve his parents as masters. **read ›**

74 **Wisdom of Sirach 3:8** Honor your father in deed and word, that a blessing may come upon you from him. **read ›**

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

76 **Wisdom of Sirach 8:9** Do not miss the talk of the elders, for they themselves learned from their fathers; because from them you will learn understanding, and how to give an answer in time of need. **read ›**

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

78 **Wisdom of Sirach 25:1** In three things I was made beautiful, and I stood up in beauty before the Lord and men: harmony among brothers, and friendship among neighbors, and a wife and husband who suit each other. **read ›**

79 **Wisdom of Sirach 36:20** A crooked heart will give sorrow, but a man of much experience will repay him. (Septuagint Wisdom of Sirach 36:25 (Wisdom of Sirach 36:20 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

80 **Wisdom of Sirach 50:27** Jesus the son of Sirach of Jerusalem has engraved in this book instruction in understanding and knowledge, he who poured forth wisdom from his heart. **read ›**

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

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

83 **1 Maccabees 2:65** And behold, Simeon your brother—I know that he is a man of counsel; listen to him always; he shall be a father to you. **read ›**

84 **1 Maccabees 12:9** So we too, though we have no need of these things, since we have as our encouragement the holy books that are in our hands, **read ›**

85 **1 Maccabees 12:10** have tried to send word to renew our brotherhood and friendship with you, so that we may not become strangers to you; for much time has passed since you sent word to us. **read ›**

86 **1 Maccabees 12:17** We have commanded them to go to you also and to greet you and to deliver to you our letter about the renewal of our brotherhood. **read ›**

87 **1 Maccabees 13:3** and encouraged them and said to them, "You yourselves know what I and my brothers and my father's house have done for the laws and the sanctuary, and the wars and the hardships we have seen. **read ›**

88 **1 Maccabees 14:19** And these were read before the assembly in Jerusalem. **read ›**

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89 **1 Maccabees 14:38** And King Demetrius confirmed him in the high priesthood accordingly, **read ›**

90 **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 ›**

91 **1 Maccabees 15:34** Now that we have the opportunity, we are holding firmly to the inheritance of our fathers. **read ›**

92 **1 Maccabees 16:24** behold, these are written in the book of the days of his high priesthood, from the time he became high priest after his father. **read ›**

93 **2 Maccabees 1:1** To their brothers, the Jews throughout Egypt, greeting. Their brothers, the Jews in Jerusalem and those in the land of Judea, wish you good peace. **read ›**

94 **2 Maccabees 11:23** Now that our father has passed on to the gods, we wish the subjects of the kingdom to be free from disturbance and to attend to their own affairs. **read ›**

95 **4 Maccabees 3:20** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

96 **4 Maccabees 7:1** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

97 **4 Maccabees 7:5** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

98 **4 Maccabees 9:23** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

99 **4 Maccabees 13:12** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

100 **4 Maccabees 13:17** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

101 **4 Maccabees 13:23** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

102 **4 Maccabees 14:3** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

103 **4 Maccabees 17:19** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

104 **1 Enoch 92:1** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

105 **Luke 1:6** They were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. **read ›**

106 **John 1:6** There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. **read ›**

107 **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 ›**

108 **Acts 3:6** But Peter said, "I have no silver or gold, but what I have, that I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk!" **read ›**

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

110 **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 ›**

111 **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 ›**

112 **Acts 15:23** They wrote this letter to be delivered by them: "The apostles, the elders, and the brothers, to the brothers among the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings. **read ›**

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

114 **Romans 9:5** of whom are the fathers, and from whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God, blessed forever. Amen. **read ›**

115 **Romans 15:4** For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that through perseverance and through encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. **read ›**

116 **1 Corinthians 11:2** Now I praise you, brothers, that you remember me in all things, and hold firm the traditions, even as I delivered them to you. **read ›**

117 **1 Corinthians 11:3** But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. **read ›**

118 **1 Corinthians 11:16** But if anyone wishes to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God. **read ›**

119 **1 Corinthians 14:40** Let all things be done decently and in order. **read ›**

120 **Ephesians 2:20** built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone, **read ›**

121 **Ephesians 5:21** subjecting yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ. **read ›**

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122 **Ephesians 5:22** Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. **read ›**

123 **Ephesians 5:24** But as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their own husbands in everything. **read ›**

124 **1 Thessalonians 5:12** Now we ask you, brothers, to recognize those who labor among you and lead you in the Lord and admonish you, **read ›**

125 **2 Thessalonians 2:15** So then, brothers, stand firm and hold the traditions which you were taught by us, whether by word or by letter. **read ›**

126 **2 Thessalonians 3:6** Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to withdraw from every brother who walks in a disorderly way and not according to the tradition which they received from us. **read ›**

127 **2 Thessalonians 3:15** Do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. **read ›**

128 **1 Timothy 3:1** The saying is trustworthy: if anyone aspires to the office of bishop, he desires a good work. **read ›**

129 **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 ›**

130 **1 Timothy 3:4** one who rules his own house well, having children in subjection with all reverence; **read ›**

131 **1 Timothy 3:15** but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct oneself in God's house, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth. **read ›**

132 **1 Timothy 4:13** Until I come, pay attention to reading, to exhortation, and to teaching. **read ›**

133 **1 Timothy 5:1** Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father; the younger men as brothers; **read ›**

134 **1 Timothy 5:2** the older women as mothers, the younger women as sisters, in all purity. **read ›**

135 **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 ›**

136 **1 Timothy 5:19** Do not receive an accusation against an elder except at the word of two or three witnesses. **read ›**

137 **2 Timothy 3:15** and that from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faithfulness in Christ Jesus. **read ›**

138 **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 ›**

139 **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 ›**

140 **Hebrews 12:9** Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh to discipline us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? **read ›**

141 **Hebrews 13:7** Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Considering the outcome of their way of life, imitate their faithfulness. **read ›**

142 **Hebrews 13:17** Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they watch on behalf of your souls, as those who will give account, that they may do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be unprofitable for you. **read ›**

143 **Hebrews 13:22** But I exhort you, brothers, endure the word of exhortation, for I have written to you in few words. **read ›**

144 **1 Peter 2:13** Therefore subject yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether to the king, as supreme, **read ›**

145 **1 Peter 2:18** Household slaves, be in subjection to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the wicked. **read ›**

146 **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 ›**

147 **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 ›**

148 **1 Peter 5:3** not as lording it over those entrusted to you, but making yourselves examples to the flock. **read ›**

149 **1 Peter 5:5** Likewise, you younger ones, be subject to the elders. And all of you, submitting to one another, clothe yourselves with humility, for God resists the proud, but he gives grace to the humble. **read ›**

150 **2 Peter 3:2** so that you remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, **read ›**

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ALSO LINKED BY THF TO THESE PASSAGES *48 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.

Exodus 32:32

1 Samuel 4:11

Isaiah 66:2

Ezekiel 17:16 · 18:20

Daniel 7:22

Matthew 10:19 · 13:27 · 20:28 · 22:39 · 24:5

Mark 8:38 · 10:43 · 13:35

Luke 12:35 · 14:13 · 16:15 · 21:14

John 7:37 · 15:1 · 15:12 · 21:17

Acts 20:29

Romans 13:14

1 Corinthians 6:2 · 6:9 · 8:12 · 10:33 · 12:3 · 12:12 · 12:26

Galatians 1:10 · 5:16 · 6:7

Ephesians 4:27 · 5:5

Philippians 1:5 · 1:27 · 4:8

1 Thessalonians 5:22

1 Timothy 2:4 · 3:8 · 5:21

2 Timothy 2:12 · 2:15 · 4:6

1 Peter 2:11

Revelation 2:5

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

ABOUT THIS STUDY

A THF member asked “What did the early church teach about elders, bishops and submitting to them?” on July 2, 2026. The Historic Faith answered it as a public study on November 9, 2026.

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THE END OF THIS STUDY