

Appointed by holy spirit

[w20.8 21 ¶5-6] ⁵ When you think of those who have a place in the congregation, your mind may immediately turn to those who take the lead. (1 Thess. 5:12; Heb. 13:17) It is true that through Christ, Jehovah has given “gifts in men” to His congregation. (Eph. 4:8) These “gifts in men” include Governing Body members, appointed helpers to the Governing Body, Branch Committee members, circuit overseers, field instructors, congregation elders, and ministerial servants. All these brothers are appointed by holy spirit to care for Jehovah’s precious sheep and serve the interests of the congregation.—1 Pet. 5:2, 3.

⁶ Brothers are appointed by holy spirit to carry out various responsibilities. Just as various parts of the body, such as the hands and the feet, work to benefit the entire body, brothers who are appointed by holy spirit work hard to benefit the entire congregation. They do not seek personal glory. Instead, they strive to build up and strengthen their brothers and sisters. We thank Jehovah for such unselfish, spiritually qualified men!

[w20.8 27 ¶4] ⁴ All elders in the congregation are appointed by Jehovah’s holy spirit. Yet, each one has different gifts and abilities. (1 Cor. 12:17, 18)

[w19.11 11 ¶14] Jehovah’s spirit is present at meetings. (Rev. 2:29) Why can we say that? Because when we meet for worship with fellow Christians, we pray for holy spirit, we sing Kingdom songs based on God’s Word, and we listen to Bible-based instruction presented by brothers who have been appointed by holy spirit. And that same holy spirit helps sisters prepare and deliver their parts.

What is meant by the statement that the elders (and other brothers) are appointed by holy spirit?

Here is what the November 2013 Study Watchtower says:

[w13.11 22 ¶6] ⁶ When addressing the overseers of the first-century congregation in Ephesus, the apostle Paul pointed out that holy spirit had appointed them overseers “to shepherd the congregation of God.” (Acts 20:28) The same is true of Christian overseers today, since they too are appointed on the basis of Scriptural requirements inspired by the holy spirit. Thus, obeying Christian overseers shows our respect for Jehovah and Jesus, the two greatest Shepherds. (Luke 10:16) Surely this should be the foremost reason why we desire to be submissive to the elders.

The Simplified versions puts it this way:

[ws13.11 22 ¶6] ⁶ Later, Paul wrote to the elders in the congregation of Ephesus and told them: “The holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God.” (Acts 20:28) Elders today have also been appointed by holy spirit. Why can we say that? Because they have been appointed based on requirements written in God’s inspired Word. So when we obey the elders, we show respect for Jehovah and Jesus, the two greatest Shepherds. (Luke 10:16) This is the main reason why we willingly obey the elders.

No, the holy spirit does not personally select anyone. Those men are appointed by other men who have judged the candidate to have met the requirements that are laid out in scripture.

(1 Timothy 3:1-7) This statement is trustworthy: If a man is reaching out to be an overseer, he is desirous of a fine work. ² The overseer should therefore be irreprehensible, a husband of one wife, moderate in habits, sound in mind, orderly, hospitable, qualified to teach, ³ not a drunkard, not violent, but reasonable, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money, ⁴ a man presiding over his own household in a fine manner, having his children in subjection with all seriousness ⁵ (for if any man does not know how to preside over his own household, how will he care for the congregation of God?), ⁶ not a newly converted man, for fear that he might get puffed up with pride and fall into the judgment passed on the Devil. ⁷ Moreover, he should also have a fine testimony from outsiders so that he does not fall into reproach and a snare of the Devil.

Those requirements were not provided so that the holy spirit would know who to appoint. Those requirements were provided for the men who do the selecting of overseers, to help them make good decisions on who they appoint.

So who appoints overseers? That's right: Men.

Do you say: "[But they pray for holy spirit to guide them in their decisions.](#)"

Yes, that is true. But i also prayed before marrying my wife to make sure i made the right decision. Does that mean that i was appointed by holy spirit to be her husband? And that if she were to go against my wishes that it would be the same as going against God's? No. (1Sa 25:25)

Although the marriage arrangement was put in place by God, just as the arrangement for congregation overseers was, that does not mean that i personally was selected by Jehovah's holy spirit to be her husband. It is the arrangement that was set up by holy spirit, not the people in those positions. If the holy spirit was who made the selection, then the holy spirit would be guilty of making grave errors by occasionally selecting bad men to be a husband or an overseer.

No, but the error of a bad choice lies with those who made the choice: Men.

["But isn't our obedience and submission a requirement?"](#)

(Hebrews 13:17) Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over you as those who will render an account, so that they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you.

Yes, Hebrews 13:17 says to "*be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive,*" but that obedience and submission is referring to imitating their faith, not following their orders.

(For more on that obedience, see my article "Share Your Thoughts and Research + advice")

So how do we imitate their faith?

(Hebrews 13:7) Remember those who are taking the lead among you, who have spoken the word of God to you, and as you contemplate how their conduct turns out, imitate their faith.

Paul, and Jesus (Lu 22:26), both refer to those "*taking the lead*", not to those taking control. One takes the lead by setting a good example in both faith and conduct, not by seizing authority. And after scrutiny, if their conduct aligns with God's, only then should we imitate their faith.

A student of the bible becomes "as his teacher". (Mt 10:25) We are not to remain under his tutelage. And those leading by example are our equals, not our governor.

(Matthew 23:8) But you, do not you be called Rabbi, for one is your Teacher, and all of you are brothers.

(2 Corinthians 1:24) Not that we are the masters over your faith, but we are fellow workers for your joy, for it is by your faith that you are standing.

But if we deem that their conduct or "*art of teaching*" is questionable (Titus 1:9), then we should follow the directions in these scriptures:

(Psalm 146:3, 4) Do not put your trust in princes Nor in a son of man, who cannot bring salvation.
⁴ His spirit goes out, he returns to the ground; On that very day his thoughts perish.

(Isaiah 2:22) For your own sakes, quit trusting in mere man, Who is only the breath in his nostrils. Why should he be taken into account?

(Matthew 15:14) Let them be. Blind guides is what they are. If, then, a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit."

It is Jehovah and His Son that we should put our full trust in. All others should be continually inspected, examined, and tested. (Job 7:18; Ps 17:3)

(Acts 17:11) Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thes-sa-lo-ni'ca, for they accepted the word with the greatest eagerness of mind, carefully examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.

(Philippians 1:10) that you may make sure of the more important things, so that you may be flawless and not stumbling others up to the day of Christ;

What do *you* think?

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