

# The Church's Responsibility to the Pastors

Jesse Barrington | [illbehonest.com](http://illbehonest.com)

If you'll open in your Bibles to 1 Timothy 3. 1 Timothy 3. I'm going to pray again just asking God for His help. Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, Lord, just that - help us. Help me. God, You've ordained all things and You've ordained the means of all things. Help us to look to You and then walk in obedience to those means. God, as our brother said, every blessing in Christ is ours, but You've ordained that they come to us through the means of things like prayer and obedience. So help us to walk in these manners, to obey You, to honor You, to look to You. So come now and meet with us. Be with us. God accomplish something - not just here in this sermon, but in this conference. God, that You would get the credit alone; that it could not be given to the power of man; it could not be something that we've done, but something that You've done where You would get glory, You would get credit, God, in each of us. Thank You for Christ our Savior. In His name we pray, amen.

1 Timothy 3 - a text we looked at yesterday. I'm going to read again to begin us here. Starting in v. 14. "I hope to come to you soon, but I'm writing these things to you so that if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of truth." We looked at that text yesterday and we recognized this, that Scripture does give us direction pointedly on how we are to behave in the church - what our roles are, what our responsibilities are, and how we are to relate to one another.

If you were with us last night, we looked at the role and responsibility of pastors, of elders. We noted first that for the church to be functioning in order, it's necessary that they have pastors and elders. And so we should be praying and working towards that. We noted yesterday too that the elder, the overseer, the pastor is describing the same office. It is elder, overseer, pastor in the same office there. It is describing one person which there are to be a plurality of. We saw also yesterday that elders are to be biblically qualified men, and they are to remain qualified. It's not just that they're qualified as they enter into or are considered for that role, but they are to remain qualified by having careful watch over themselves. We noted yesterday too that elders are made overseers by the Holy Spirit. They oversee the affairs of the church. We saw also that they are called to collectively in the plurality of elders to shepherd or pastor the flock of God that is before them. And we saw that they pastor by knowing the sheep - knowing who these people are that God has entrusted to them. We also saw that they are to lead the sheep. They are to lead by example. They are to be an example to the sheep in conduct, love, faith, and purity. We saw too that they are to feed the sheep. They feed them the whole counsel of God's Word. And we saw that they are to protect the sheep. And we noted yesterday, yes, to protect the sheep from the outside influence of the world coming in, but to protect the sheep from wolves that have crept in unnoticed among us. We noted something about those wolves yesterday - that they seek to draw away disciples after themselves. They have contagious personalities, a contagious zeal, but they begin to speak twisted things to draw disciples away from the flock unto themselves.

Well, today we're going to look at what Scripture has to say regarding the responsibility of the congregation to their pastors. We'll be in a few different portions of Scripture, but I'm going to have you turn over one page to 1 Timothy 5. 1 Timothy 5. In chapter 5, Paul is giving instruction to the church. Again, how we ought to behave in regards to our relationships to one another. At the beginning of the chapter, he speaks about how young men are to relate to older men in the church; how they're to relate to other young men in the church; how they are to relate to the sisters in the church; how they are to relate to older women in the church. In v. 3-16, he instructs us how we are to relate to widows in the church. And then in v. 17, Paul gives instruction for Timothy regarding elders, pastors, overseers. Beloved, this will not be an exhaustive look at the congregation's responsibility to the elders. So, there will be more that can be said, but hopefully it will give us some direction in regards to these things and maybe quite possibly some correction in regards to these things.

Let's look at v. 17. Paul writes to Timothy, "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, 'you shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain;' and 'the laborer deserves his wages.' Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all so the rest may stand in fear."

### **Plurality of Elders**

First, notice again here that Paul uses the plural. Let the "elders..." We mentioned this yesterday. That God's design for the church is to have a plurality of elders - more than one. And again, I know we live in the providence of God here. But we should be working towards the raising up of more men that there would be more than one elder in the churches. And he continues here: "Let the elders who rule well..." I want to stop there for a moment. Pay attention to these words. What is it that the elders are to do? They are to rule. They are to lead. They are set over and preside over the church, and again, the affairs of the church. Saints, this is what Scripture teaches. There is authority given here. There is order. Without authority, without order there's chaos. I know in all of us at some level, whether it's at home - maybe wives with husbands - maybe it's in your workplace with a boss; maybe it's in a church that you've had an experience where you've experienced an abuse or a misuse of authority. And that can be very difficult to come in and then hear that God has given authority in the church to men. But here's something important. We cannot allow our bad experience of abuse or misuse of authority, or even the potential danger of misuse of authority to remove or soften what Scripture teaches regarding the role of pastors and elders. Beloved, this is why we have to be careful who is an elder. This is why there are qualifications given when we're considering who should become an elder because there is authority given here.

As I thought about this struggle of the reality that God has given authority to elders and pastors in the church and it's a struggle for us - I just began to think through what are the struggles that we have with authority? I thought of a couple things. One I mentioned - some of us have experienced an misuse or abuse of authority. It makes us skeptical to authority; to the idea of having someone over us. Second maybe, I know that we who are in the church are new creations in Christ - we're no longer slaves to sin, but we live in this suit of flesh. And there are

desires in the flesh. And the desire of the flesh is one of autonomy. It's one of self-rule. It's one of pride. So the temptation of self-governing and pride can lead us to believe at times: I don't need anyone over me. I think being an American does not help in this area. The notion of America is one of self-governing. And as it pertains in relation to the government in our lives, there is some good about the concept of "we the people" - self-governing. But you can't take the notion of American thought and way and culture in regards to government and then allow that to have you be resistant within the church to those who God has given to be over you.

In addition to that, you remember maybe 20 some odd years ago, there was a major shift when some men who hold the title of elder or pastor decided that they needed to think of new and innovative ways how to grow the church. So what they did is they went to secular marketing business gurus. And they said how can we grow the number of people? And they got secular marketing plans. And they brought them into their churches. And they came up with the notion what many have referred to as the seeker-friendly movement. An attempt through carnal means to put people in the seats and get the machine rolling. And I know us sitting here - I imagine, most of you if not all of you, we looked at that and we stand in resistance to that. We know that's not God's means of growing the church. He grows the church supernaturally through the proclamation of the Gospel, regenerating people and drawing them into the church. And that's how God grows the church, but we have to be honest as well that this notion - maybe many of you were in some of these churches. A lot of the people in our church in Dallas came out of those churches and there's residue that's left on them from coming out of those churches that has to be undone. What happened during that time is we had what's called maybe a consumer mentality to the local church, where the church was marketed to people; where people went out and asked people: Hey, what is it that you are looking for? And they asked unbelievers, what is it that you would like to see in the church? And then they began to create those things and draw people in through those carnal means and then they realized, we have to continue in those carnal means in order to keep these unregenerate people here so we can keep the machine running.

But what happened in all of that and bled maybe into some of our churches unknowingly is this consumer mentality of the church where the church is here for me. It's to meet my needs. And the moment that the church doesn't meet my needs or do it the way I want, well, I'll just go to the next church down the street. And so people, you can hear even how they talk when they come into the churches sometimes and you begin to talk with them, and they talk about using shopping terms when they're looking for the church. And that's what people do today. They shop for churches. Well, who's going to best meet my needs? And we need to be honest, if we've come out of that environment, some of that has stayed with us. And it can make us resistant, because if I come to you and say I'm going to market this to you, and then I don't do things the way you want, you just say fine, we'll leave and go somewhere else. And I see that as bled into many of our churches. And it's impacting our understanding of how we're to relate to one another because maybe for some of you for so long, the "pastors" that you sat under just marketed to you to meet your needs. And then when you come under a biblical eldership, who's mindful of the people, but they're looking to the Word, and they strive to be faithful and govern according to the Word, and you may disagree, but they don't change their mind just to meet

your needs or your preferences. And if you have a consumer mentality regarding the church, I'll just go to the next one then.

Another reason that this could be hard for us. We just need to be honest here. Pastors are imperfect people. They make bad decisions sometimes. And we're going to get into this a little bit more in depth and try to flesh this out as we go through this. Because if they are called to rule, govern the church, there will be times when you disagree with your pastors and the decisions that they've made. And I want to ask Scripture, what are we to do about that? What are we supposed to do when they don't do things the way I think they should be done? So hopefully we can find how the Scriptures speak to us.

Let's continue in v. 17. "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, 'you shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain;' and, 'the laborer deserves his wages.'" What does Paul mean when he says here: "be considered worthy of double honor"? I think he has at least two things in mind. One is the valuing, the esteeming of elders. Holding them in high regard. And the second is dealing with financially supporting them.

### **The Honoring of Elders**

Let's talk about this first one. The honoring of elders by holding them in high regard. Paul says something very similar to the church in Thessalonica. Let me read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, and you see if you hear a parallel to this call to honoring. He writes, "We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work." Did you notice the reason that you are to honor your pastors? Did you notice the reason you are to respect them? To esteem them? And look at the words: "very highly in love." Is it because you agree with them at every step and turn they make? No. Why does Paul tell you here to show honor, to respect, to esteem your pastors? Because of their work. That's why. Paul holds the work, the role, and the responsibility that pastors have as a high regard; as a very vital and essential aspect to the church. And because of that work, he says I want you to honor them and esteem them. Not because you agree at every turn they make. Just because of the work that they do. Let me tell you what Paul's not saying. Paul is not saying that you as the individual church member get to decide how well you think your pastors are doing in their ruling, in their being over you, and then if you don't agree with them, you don't have to show them honor. That's not what he's calling you to. He's stating a fact that they are called to rule, to oversee. And he says I want you to honor them and I want you to respect them because of the work that they do. Paul is telling Timothy and the churches to recognize that God has put these men over you in the Lord. And notice I didn't say "in between" you and the Lord. This is not a mediator. This is not the Catholic church notion. Okay? God in His love and His kindness has put men over the church - under-shepherds. Not in between you and the Lord. You don't go through your pastor to get to God - none of that. But over you in the church. There is one Mediator in the church. It's the Lord Jesus Christ.

So what do we do when these men are imperfect? They have faults. They have weaknesses. And we don't always agree with their decisions or their rule. Typically I hear the argument in this area of this: Are you asking us to just blindly follow these men then? Are you

asking us just to blindly follow these men? And Paul would say to you: No. And I am in no way telling you to blindly follow men. But we do need to see the role that they have of ruling; of being over you in the affairs of the church. I'll tell you this, you may be looking at me right now and saying, we'll, you're a pastor. Maybe it sounds like I'm making a power grab. But I can say this for one time, thankfully none of you are in the church that I pastor. Not one person here is in the church that I pastor. So in regards to you, I have no personal gain in sharing these things with you. I don't get anything. If you say, okay, we're going to honor our pastors - personally it doesn't impact me in the church that I pastor in Dallas. But I want you to know this, as a pastor and of the pastors here, you need to put these things before your people in your church. Because who else is going to teach them these things? Not many people will get up and teach these things. Preaching these things in your own church does sound self-motivated, but I will not apologize for what it is, because we're looking at God's Word. We're looking at multiple places in Scripture - not an obscure passage. Multiple places in Scripture that speak to the role, the authority, and the rule of elders within the church. I'm sharing these things with you because this is God's Word and because as you obey these things and submit to these truths, it goes well for you in your church. I'm speaking these things to you for your edification and for the health of your local church, and ultimately then for the glory of God.

So we'll speak more about what do we do when we disagree here in just a few moments. Pastors, let me share this with you though. If you have any fear about getting up in front of your church and sharing these truths with them, I want you to know this. They will gladly receive them because they see that you love them. It's through our serving the saints that they may be tempted in a moment to think this is self-serving; this is a power grab of our pastor, but when you are sitting there laboring with them, praying with them, sitting across tables with them, demonstrating your love with them, they'll humble themselves in these moments and they won't perceive it as a power grab as you teach them God's Word.

Well, Paul goes on in regards to honor. And he said not only should this mean respect for the role that they have, the job that they do, but he is speaking also of financial support. And you notice here that he says: "especially those who labor in the preaching and teaching of the Word." Paul's argument for financially supporting the pastors is tied to Old Testament texts. It's tied to Deuteronomy 25 and Leviticus 19. "You shall not muzzle the ox when it treads out the grain." And "the laborer deserves his wages." Paul fleshes this out if you want to study it more in 1 Corinthians 9. But Paul so values the role of pastors and particularly within the eldership or the plurality, those who are given to the preaching and teaching of the Word that he says whenever it's possible, working towards this end, that you should set that person apart for the ministry of the Word and prayer. Beloved, let me ask you this: Do you think about that when you're giving? This is of value for you. I know that sometimes that's not a possibility in the moment. And I think most of us here who are pastoring probably were bi-vocational. I worked bi-vocationally for 8 years. And I want you to know it was so hard on me and my family. But it also wasn't good for the church. And again, we live in the providence of God, but to the degree that we're able, we should be giving so we can set these men apart - especially those who labor in the preaching and teaching of the Word. Set them apart so they can be fully devoted to these things for the building up of the church. What you'll see very often when he differentiates here among the plurality, that you will see within the plurality, all of them need to be able to teach, but

you'll see very often where there will be one or two of those elders just set apart for the preaching and teaching of the Word. And when you recognize that, strive to set those people apart by supporting them financially so they can fulfill this call. Even the ones who are set apart, remember this, within the plurality though it's a co-equal shepherding. Just because one is given to the preaching and teaching of the Word, it does not mean that he's a senior pastor. There are pastors. There's no levels here. They're co-equals. They shepherd collectively together. And some of them within the co-equal are given to the preaching and teaching of the Word.

So far we've seen that elders are called to rule; to preside over the church. The congregation is to see that and to honor that. They're to respect the elders and to esteem them highly in love because of their role. They're to provide for the elders in the church material as they feed you spiritual. Especially those who are given to the preaching and teaching of the Word. Beloved, any true pastor is not in this for greedy gain. Peter warns about that in 1 Peter 5. Let me share this too though. I've heard this notion - again, you aren't in the church I pastor, so remember, I don't have a motive for you here personally. Keeping your pastor poor is not holy. There's this notion: if we pay our pastor this much money, he'll be in it for the money. If he's in it for the money, he's disqualified. No one's going into this calling for material gain, but don't go into it with a monastic mentality. Just keep them poor. It will keep them holy. I'm not advocating to make him rich either. But don't ask this man what's the least amount of money you could possibly humanly survive on? And then give him that amount. You don't treat anyone else like that and you don't treat yourself like that. Be mindful of your pastor. Give him enough money that he can be an example in his own giving. That's a good rule. He needs to lead in all ways. He should be an example to the church in his own giving to the church and to missions. But if you've said, well, this is the least amount you can live by. We'll give him \$10 over that. How is he to lead then in the example of giving? Be mindful of your pastor in these ways.

### **The Protecting of Elders**

Let's look at v. 19. This might be one of the most important parts about your relationship to your pastors. Paul tells Timothy in v. 19, "Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses." The NASB renders it, "Do not receive an accusation..." The NIV says, "Do not even entertain an accusation except on the account of two or three witnesses." Paul seems to understand something. As people struggle with this idea of elders being over the church and the resistance to that that is often within the church, Paul recognizes that one of the ways some people might try to deal with an elder's decision they don't like is by lobbing an accusation against them. And Paul's telling Timothy here - remember Timothy is acting as an elder in this church right now. And he's telling Timothy, hey, when you're in there and you have these elders with you, don't receive; don't even entertain an accusation against the elders unless it's on the account of two or three witnesses. Paul's trying to protect the elders. Not because elders don't need accountability. They do. There again's another reason for the plurality. And not because they're not capable of sin. They are. In fact, we'll see in the next verse how he deals with elders who are in sin. But Paul seems to recognize that there will be many accusations made against elders or an elder in the church. And he's telling Timothy how to handle this. How to handle it when people don't agree with the elders and then begin to make accusations against them. Paul is not saying that if you have an accusation - you become aware

of sin against an elder, that you shouldn't do anything. He's not saying that. Remember again, Paul's functioning as an elder. So if someone in the church there saw or heard of something in regards to an elder being in sin, they're to go to Paul and bring that accusation to the other elder. But what Paul is telling Timothy here is but do not entertain it; don't consider it until there's two or three witnesses.

Let me tell you what that does not mean. That does not mean that if someone has an accusation against an elder, that they are to go out then and find other church members and share with them their understanding of the issue they have with the elder so they can get two or three witnesses and then they can go in and present their case against the elder. That's not what it means. What he means here is that when sin becomes public to someone, they go to an elder in the church, and that elder hears it. He listens. He begins to pray. And then when somebody else - not because they've come together in some plan - but when someone else, God brings that sin to the surface, they become aware of it, they go to the elder as well. And now we have two people coming as witnesses in regards to an accusation. And Paul says in the next verse, you deal with that swiftly and you deal with that publicly then.

And there's a principle here for all of us. If Timothy is not to entertain or admit a charge against an elder, except on the evidence of two or three witnesses, do you think there's a principle for us in there? Let me tell you the principle I think is in there for us. When someone begins to disagree with an elder or decisions that the elders have made, they may not run around and claim sin against the elder upright. But very often, what we see happening is that they do begin to go to other members in the church and subtly begin to make accusations against the elder or the elders because they disagree. Now if Paul tells Timothy, do not entertain an accusation against the elders except on the evidence of two or three witnesses, what should that look like for you? When someone in the church comes to you and inevitably they present this to you as great concern they have for the church - I've got great concern for the church right now and I want to come to you regarding this elder and this decisions or the elders and the decision, and the elders are what they're saying. Are you not in that moment entertaining an accusation against the elders? Think of what that means: to entertain. To consider the accusations. We disagree with the elders in this area and here's why. Is that a church member's responsibility to other church members? No. That's not a church member's responsibility to other church members. It's not to go and present your disagreements with the elders to other church members to gather a coup. That's not your role. And I would guess many of you are not doing that - hopefully none of you are, but one thing I want to warn you to be careful of: are you on the receiving end of that though? Are you on the entertaining end of that? Where someone in the church has a disagreement with the elders and they come to you and they say, "Well, I don't know if I agree with the elders in this area then." And you sit down and you begin to entertain these things? Can I tell you what's happening when you do that? You're allowing an undermining - a seed to be planted in you regarding the elders - and it will create a lens for you through which you will begin to look at everything your elders do in light of that. It creates division in the church. Entertaining accusations against the elders.

Now, when you begin to talk like this, people get concerned because they say what if the pastors are asking us to clearly go against Scripture? Are we just supposed to sit quietly by and do nothing? No. But I want to be honest with us. In these scenarios, for the most part, the issues

that are brought up are not when a pastor or pastors are asking you to disregard Scripture. They're most likely not telling you there are other paths to forgiveness of sins and eternal life. They're usually not dealing with the person or the nature of Jesus Christ. Usually when these things arise we're dealing in other matters. Usually it's in areas where we may disagree with the ways that pastors have made a decision. Or it's another what we might call a secondary issue. A non-salvific issue. Where you hold to a different understanding. Or even more likely - a preference. How we do things in the church that we disagree with. And saints, I want you to have healthy churches. And it's usually in these areas that I find people going around and saying: You know, I really need to share with you where I disagree with the elders in this area, and why I think they're doing this wrong, and why I think they're wrong. And we sit very often and begin to entertain these things. If you have an issue where you believe your pastor is leading you or your pastors are leading you contrary to the Word of God, you need to go to your pastors. You need to do it in a spirit of humility because they are over you in the Lord. And you need to share with them why you disagree with them. But again, most of what I see happening out there is not in regards to a pastor telling you to disregard Scripture, or to forsake something God's told you to do. Most of the time it's in regards to: I just disagree with the elders here.

Are the elders not accountable then? What do we do if an elder does persist in sin? Look at v. 20. "As those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all so that the rest may stand in fear." Listen, when elders and pastors are in sin they are dealt with very quickly and they're dealt with publicly. When elders are in sin and presiding and continuing in sin, it goes before the church. God uses it redemptively to bring fear into the church of how serious sin is in regards to these things. Elders are under accountability. They're accountable to God. They're accountable to the Scriptures. And in that sense, they are accountable to the congregation. They're accountable to the other elders there. God's not allowing pastors to not be under accountability here. He deals with sin in pastors very quickly.

### **Submission to Elders**

I want to turn to one other portion of Scripture. That's in the book of Hebrews. We looked at this verse yesterday. Hebrews 13:17. If you'll turn there with me. One more verse. The writer says here, "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for (here's the reason) they're keeping watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you." Obey your elders. Obey your leaders and submit to them. That's clear. Obey them and submit to them. Why? They're keeping watch over your soul and they're going to give an account. The author is not calling you to blind obedience. If an elder calls you to disregard Scripture, you should obey God rather than man. But again, when we're dealing with differences of preference; when we're dealing with a different understanding of maybe a portion of Scripture, what are you to do? What do I do when the elders make a decision I disagree with? When, if I'm being honest, they're not asking me to disregard Scripture, but I just see it a different way. How we should live this out. What does he call us to? Submission. It doesn't mean you fully agree with what the elders have decided. It means you recognize the place that God has given them in their local church. And as they're striving to pastor in accordance with Scripture, you may disagree with something. What do I do when I disagree? You submit.



Let me share something that is kind of hard for us. Submission is not demonstrated when you agree. Submission is most demonstrated when you disagree. When God calls you to submit to Him, Paul seems to think one of the ways that you demonstrate your submission to God is by demonstrating your submission to the authority that He's put in your life. In the book of Ephesians, he seems to say something like this: Are you submitted to God? Well, yes, I am. Well, then, wives, show that submission as you submit to your husband who I've put over you. What if I don't agree with my husband? You submit. Yes, if your husband asks you to forsake the Bible, you obey God rather than man. We've dealt with that. This isn't blind submission. But let's be honest, most of our struggles with submission is not because our parents, our husbands, our governing authorities are telling us to turn away and forsake Scripture. It's because we've come to a place of disagreement. And what does that mean? That when there's a place of disagreement, we recognize the order, the structure that God has put into place. God, I'm submitted to You, I just can't submit to my husband. What does 1 Peter 3 say? Even when some don't obey the Word. God, I'm submitted to You, but my parents... I just disagree with them. I won't submit. Children, you demonstrate your submission to God in your submission to your parents.

One brother working through this idea of submission in regards to your pastors gave an illustration I found very helpful. He said something to this effect: In your struggle to submit to imperfect elders because you don't always agree, if I was your pastor, let me ask you a question. What do you want me to tell your rebellious teenager when they come sit down with me? And they say to me: Pastor, I don't agree with my parents. Do I have to submit to them? What do you want your pastor telling your teenager when they don't agree with you? Should they submit? I think a good pastor would say to that teenager this: If your parents ask you to disregard clear Scripture, you obey God rather than man. But if you come to a place of disagreement, you submit and demonstrate your submission to God as you submit to your parents. You don't want a pastor telling your teenager: hey, only submit to your parents when you agree with them. Otherwise, you're free to do whatever you want to do. That's not the idea of an order. And that's the notion given here in Hebrews. Submit to them. Submit to them.

The writer then says this at the end: "Let those who watch over you do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you." Do you see how he reasons with us? Don't you realize that when you disagree with someone that God has placed in authority over you and you refuse to obey and submit to them, that you're actually making it harder on yourself? When pastors are having to deal with people who refuse to submit to them, they're often taken away from the ministry of the Word and prayer that could be of benefit to that very person who refuses to acknowledge the order that God has given. It distracts from the church. It takes away from the church. It takes away from the joy of pastoring. And we as pastors, this is something we have to go through. We understand that. And so we lay our lives down for these things. But the writer here wants to reason with you. When you don't acknowledge God's order, it goes worse for you. You're not going to agree with everything your pastors do. So in summary, if they're asking you to disobey and disregard clear teachings in Scripture, you obey God rather than man. But when they make decisions, arrive at different conclusions than you do in Scripture, it is not your job to go around the church and try to persuade others why your pastors are wrong and why you're right. And you're not to be on the receiving end of those

conversations in the principle we learned of entertaining those things. Saints, there's an order that God has given us in our churches. It's for our good. Pray for your pastors as they make these decisions. When you disagree, it's okay to go talk with them. But it's not okay to say, well, I'm not going to submit. That's not your role. Your role is one of submission. And I want what's best for you. So I won't apologize for the clear teachings in Scripture in this area. And I'm going to exhort the pastors here again before we close. We need to be putting these things before our people regularly. It's regularly in Scripture. And it's uncomfortable in your own church to preach and teach these things. But let's not be men that apologize for the Word of God.

Let's pray. Father, we come in the name of Jesus Christ. Father, we want to honor Your Word. Father, we want to fulfill our roles and our call. We want to be faithful in how we relate to one another because You've given these things for our good. God, help pastors to be faithful. Help them to be men of the Word. Help them to not be domineering and lording over people. But help them also not to shy away from leading, which involves making hard decisions. Help Your people then, God, to honor the role that You've given them to submit even in some areas of disagreement, God. To honor You as they submit to those You've put over them. Help us to demonstrate our love and honor to You as we demonstrate our submission to those You've put over us. For the good of the church. For the edification of the church. And for the glory of Your name in these places. We ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.