

1 Timothy 5:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

Analysis

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour (Οἱ καλῶς προεστῶτες πρεσβύτεροι διπλῆς τιμῆς ἀξιούσθωσαν, Hoi kalōs proestōtes presbyteroi diplēs timēs axiousthōsan)—'elders who lead well are worthy of double honor.' Proistēmi means to lead, manage, care for. Diplēs timēs means 'double honor'—likely both respect and financial support (as in 5:3 regarding widows).

Especially they who labour in the word and doctrine (μάλιστα οἱ κοπιῶντες ἐν λόγῳ καὶ διδασκαλίᾳ, malista hoi kopiōntes en logō kai didaskalia)—'especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.' Kopiaō means to labor to exhaustion, toil strenuously. This distinguishes teaching elders (pastors) from ruling elders (administrators).

Elders who govern well deserve honor and support; those who additionally labor in word and doctrine deserve even greater honor. Teaching God's Word is exhausting work deserving financial compensation. The principle: those who serve the church faithfully, especially in preaching/teaching ministry, should be supported materially by the congregation.

Historical Context

Unlike pagan priests who lived off temple revenues, early Christian elders often supported themselves through trades (Paul made tents). But as churches grew, full-time pastoral ministry became necessary. Paul insists churches financially

support elders, especially those devoted to preaching/teaching—freeing them for ministry without requiring secular employment. This principle protects both pastors and churches.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What does 'double honor' mean—both respect and financial support, or something else?
2. Why does Paul especially emphasize support for those who labor in teaching and preaching?
3. How should churches determine appropriate compensation for pastoral ministry?

Interlinear Text

Οἱ καλῶς προεστῶτες πρεσβύτεροι διπλῆς τιμῆς
G3588 **well** **that rule** **the elders** **of double** **honour**
G2573 G4291 G4245 G1362 G5092

ἀξιούσθωσαν μάλιστα οἱ κοπιῶντες ἐν λόγῳ καὶ
Let **especially** G3588 **they who labour** **in** **the word** **and**
G515 G3122 G2872 G1722 G3056 G2532

διδασκαλία
doctrine
G1319

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 13:17 (Parallel theme): Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

Galatians 6:6 (Word): Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

Luke 10:7 (Parallel theme): And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

Hebrews 13:7 (Word): Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.

2 Timothy 2:6 (Parallel theme): The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.

Philippians 2:29 (Parallel theme): Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation:

Romans 12:8 (Parallel theme): Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

Acts 28:10 (Parallel theme): Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary.

Romans 15:27 (Parallel theme): It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

Romans 16:12 (Parallel theme): Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.