

The Appointment Of Elders



Foundations (Day 266)
by Derek Prince

For an account of the appointment of elders we may turn to Acts.

> "And when they [Paul and Barnabas] had preached the gospel to that city [Derbe] and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, 'We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.' So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed." (Acts 14:21-23)

Various features of this account are significant. First, the appointment of elders, like the sending forth of apostles, was accompanied by corporate prayer and fasting. Clearly the New Testament church understood that this was the scriptural way to obtain the direction of God in making all important decisions.

Second, the people to whom Paul and Barnabas returned at this point are first called merely disciples. After the appointment of elders, however, they are described corporately as a church. It is the appointment of elders that marks the transition from a group of individual disciples to the corporate entity of a church.

Third, the appointment of elders was the responsibility of the apostles, as representatives of God's authority. In this, however, they did not rely on their own judgement but were the instruments of the Holy Spirit. Speaking to the elders of the church at Ephesus, Paul says:

> "Therefore take heed... to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers." (Acts 20:28)

According to the divine pattern, all appointments in the church should proceed from the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 14:21-23 no specific mention is made of laying on of hands. However, Scripture provides two strong reasons for

Copyright © Derek Prince Ministries

believing that Paul and Barnabas did, in fact, lay hands on those whom they appointed as elders.

First, this appointment exactly answered to the two main purposes for which laying on of hands is used throughout Scripture. By it, the apostles endorsed and set apart the chosen leaders of the local congregation. At the same time they imparted to them the wisdom and authority they would need for their task.

Second, in 1 Timothy 5:17-22 Paul is giving Timothy a series of instructions on how to relate to the local elders. He concludes by saying: “Do not lay hands on anyone hastily.” Although this warning is appropriate for any of the various uses of laying on of hands, it seems probable that Paul is here referring to this ordinance primarily as a way of ordaining elders.

Devotional

Transcript: WD-B052-266-ENG
Last Updated: 04 Feb 2025
Website: derekprince.com

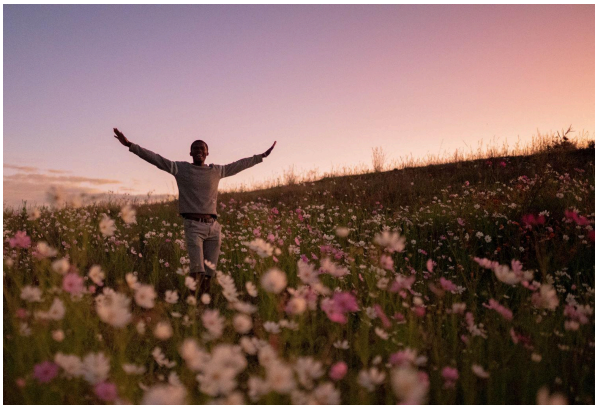


Bible Teaching Resources



Books

Illuminate and expand your understanding of the Bible with the Derek Prince collection of Christian books.



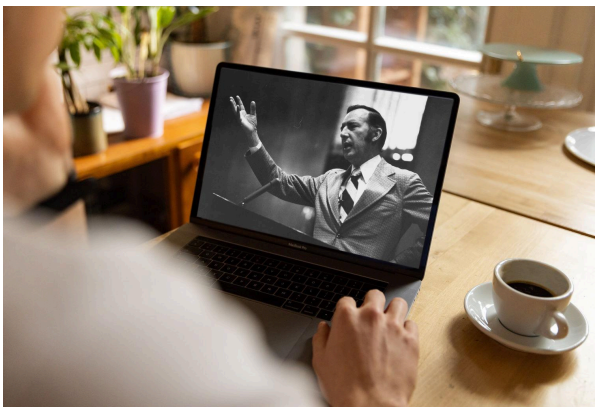
Daily Devotionals

Browse free biblically inspired daily devotionals by Derek Prince for practical teachings to uplift your Christian faith.



Legacy Radio

Listen to inspiring 10-minute messages and connect faith to life with the Derek Prince Legacy Radio podcast.



Sermons

Watch original and digitally remastered sermons by Derek Prince. Includes full message transcripts (free download).



Official App

Available free, download the official Derek Prince Ministries app and equip your faith, anywhere, anytime.



Proclamations

Declare life and experience the transformative power of God's Word with our Bible-based Proclamations.

Copyright © Derek Prince Ministries