



## ELDER MINISTRY

It is my wonderful privilege this month to officially welcome Benjamin Houston as an Elder over us here at Western Avenue. This service will be taking place on the afternoon of March 10<sup>th</sup> and of course, I strongly encourage you all to attend. In my now two and half years of ministry here God has seen fit to double the number of our lay elder body. This is certainly a great blessing to me and to God's church. As the men God has set aside to lead His church grows, so of course also does the ministry we are able to do. Over this time we have tried very hard to teach just what the Bible has to say about the Elder body and I believe this is another great opportunity to remind us all of the responsibility held by this group.

In the way that our Elder body is constructed we serve the church in a multitude of ways. Biblically speaking you never see a church led by a single elder, but always by a plurality of elders who together help to shepherd the flock (1 Peter 5:2), oversee the church (Acts 20:28), govern the church (1 Timothy 5:17), teach (Ephesians 4:11), contend for the faith (Titus 1:9), and generally offer spiritual leadership (1 Timothy 5:17). Elders therefore work together with the pastor (chief elder) to balance weaknesses and

strengths in one another and in the church. They work together to diffuse congregational criticism, grow greater church leadership, and in this plurality of leadership there is greater wisdom, and accountability than if the church were led by any one man. As such,

*“Love God, Love Others,  
Sew the World”.*

these men must be held to a high standard (1 Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:6-9). Ordination therefore, is the time when the local church goes through a process of evaluating leadership candidates, and then “laying hands on them” in a bestowal of blessing and a continuity of leadership. Therefore the purpose of ordination is to recognize men whom God has called, to set them apart for ministry, to safeguard the ministry, and to provide an occasion that will encourage them in years to come. With this in mind, I encourage you all to join us for this upcoming ordination service, but I also encourage you to show your appreciation for our elders (Dennis King, Mickey Grace,

Greg Lunsford, James Dare, Nate Hufferd and now Ben Houston) in the days ahead. Also when you need guidance, have questions, or even if you have problems in your life or in the church these are the men we as a church recommend you go to. God has set them apart, along with me (your pastor), to lead us in the way that God would have us to go as a church. And of course, please pray for us daily for we certainly do not take this calling lightly. *For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you--if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict. - Titus 1:5-9*  
**Jeremiah**