

Submission to Spiritual Leaders

TEXT: Ezekiel 33:1-11; Jeremiah 3:15

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Ephesians 4:11-17; 1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Peter 5:1-5

KEY VERSE: And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. — 1 Thessalonians 5:12,13

The Word of God teaches us in many places that the ministers are instructed by God to feed us His Word, and they will be held accountable as to whether they have done this. We are taught to obey those who have the spiritual responsibility for the welfare of our souls.

1. How did God provide for the spiritual leadership of His people in Old Testament times? See John 1:17 and 2 Peter 1:21.

2. Under the Law, it was vitally important for the people to obey what “Thus saith the Lord” as it was revealed to them through His priests and prophets. Punishment, many times death, was inflicted on those who disobeyed (Hebrews 10:28). There are many places in the Scriptures where we are shown the importance of being obedient to those God has put in a position of authority over us. Why should His commands be obeyed and the instructions from His ministers and pastors be heeded in our day?

3. What provisions did God make for the spiritual leadership of His people in the New Testament church? See Ephesians 4:11,12.

4. The leader of a church congregation is usually called a pastor. Webster defines *pastor* as one who is a “shepherd of the flock,” or one who feeds the people spiritually. Note some of the responsibilities of a shepherd in Bible times, and parallel these duties to the duties of a pastor.

5. Why is it important that a pastor, or one with similar responsibilities, seeks God’s guidance and wisdom in all the decisions he makes for the welfare of the congregation, and that he be faithful to the soul of each one?

6. Many times, students in school are taught to think things out for themselves, to question authority and, indirectly, not to submit to their elders. How does Hebrews 13:17 refute these humanistic teachings?

7. At what age should children be taught to honor and obey their elders and ministers? See Isaiah 28:9.

8. What kind of life does God’s Word command His ministers to live? (Titus 2:7,8) What effect will this type of example have on a minister’s congregation and on others who meet him?

9. Why is it not necessary for us to fully understand the reason for each decision made by the ministry in order to heed it?