

CONCERNING CHURCH LEADERS USAGE OF GREEK WORDS

Acts 20:17

From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders (4245) of the church.

Acts 20:28

Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, (1985) to shepherd (verb 4165) the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

Ephesians 4:11–12

11. And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors (4166) and teachers,
12. for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

Titus 1:5-7

5. For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders (4245) in every city as I directed you,
6. namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion.
7. For the overseer (1985) must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain,

1 Peter 5:1-4

1. Therefore, I exhort the elders (4245) among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed,
2. shepherd (verb 4165) the flock of God among you, exercising oversight (verb 1983) not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;
3. nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.
4. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

The Greek Words:

1. ELDERS

4245 πρεσβύτερος - *presbuteros*

= among the Christians, those who presided over the assemblies (or churches)
The NT uses the term bishop, elders, and presbyters interchangeably

2. OVERSEER (also translated "bishop")

1985 ἐπίσκοπος - *episkopos*

= a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly, any curator, guardian or superintendent.
= the superintendent, elder, or overseer of a Christian church
= a guardian or keeper

3. PASTORS (also translated "shepherds")

4166 ποιμήν - *poimen*

= used of the overseers of the Christian assemblies

Additional Information:

The tasks of a Near Eastern shepherd were:

- 1) to watch for enemies trying to attack the sheep;
- 2) to defend the sheep from attackers;
- 3) to heal the wounded and sick sheep;
- 4) to find and save lost or trapped sheep;
- 5) to love them, sharing their lives and so earning their trust.

During World War II, a shepherd was a pilot who guided another pilot whose plane was partially disabled back to the base or carrier by flying alongside him to maintain visual contact.¹

¹ Strong, J. (1995). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Woodside Bible Fellowship.