

- Look over the lesson he has completed, or have him talk about it.
- Practice together new skills that the apprentice overseer needs to learn.
- Pray for the apprentice overseer and for the people in his church.
- Do not spend much time with problems. Always deal with new activities or ministries that will help to develop in the new church.

Very soon after an apprentice overseer has started his training and is overseeing a church or cell, he can begin training another apprentice overseer. The trainer will provide the overseer with advice and materials with which to train the apprentice. In this way, each apprentice overseer can train another apprentice overseer and start many new churches and cells. A useful program with materials that can help you to do that is called “Train & Multiply™”. Write to [pwr@trainandmultiply.com](mailto:pwr@trainandmultiply.com) to ask about this program in your language.

After an overseer has been trained for about a year, his church or the mother church can lay hands on him and call him an overseer, pastor or elder. This commissioning is sometimes called ordination. If you call it ordination be very sure that you require only what the New Testament requires for it. To add human requirements stifles new churches’ progress and keeps them from obeying Christ.

Most men should start a church, oversee it and help it start another church, before they go away to a Bible school.

If a church grows big enough to afford to pay an overseer, then the members can collect tithes and offerings from themselves and pay the overseer a salary. An overseer who receives a salary must work full-time as an overseer and not be involved in business ventures or have another job.

## Dangers to Overseers

Sometimes, an overseer in a Christian fellowship may do something wrong. Overseers must often ask the Lord to help them to overcome temptation. Some common sins of overseers are these:

1. Overseers may take away disciples after themselves.  
*Acts 20:29-30.*
  2. Overseers may be caught sinning.  
*1 Timothy 5:19-22.*
  3. Overseers may become greedy for money.  
*1 Peter 5:2.*
  4. Overseers may take too much authority.  
*1 Peter 5:3.*
  5. Overseers may try to be too important.  
*3 John 1:9-10.*
- What are some things you would try not to do as an overseer?
  - What should you do if an overseer does not behave properly?

## Practical work

- Make a list of all the personal qualities of an overseer and ask the Lord to help you.
- Make plans for all the tasks and activities that God requires that the congregation do, that you will oversee.
- Teach your church or cell about overseers, using the Bible passages in this booklet.
- Choose some men in your church whom you would like to train to become overseers.

## Conclusion

The Lord Jesus will give a reward to everyone who oversees his churches and cells, if they do so with love and wisdom. The Holy Spirit of God gives special ability to those whom he calls to be overseers.

# Feed My Sheep

## Overseers in Christian Churches and Cells



**Paul & Timothy Training**

**[www.Paul-Timothy.net](http://www.Paul-Timothy.net)**



## Overseers in Ancient Israel

A long time ago, when the Eternal God helped the Israelite people to escape from Egypt, **Moses** was their only leader. Every day, from morning till evening, he answered people's questions and resolved their disputes. He grew very tired and people complained, because he could not help all of them. When Moses father-in-law came to visit him, he saw how busy Moses was and gave to him some advice. Read *Exodus 18:19-24*. Answer these questions:

- Why is it important to have overseers?
- What kind of men can become overseers?
- What different group sizes need an overseer?

## Overseers in the Gospels

**Jesus** knows that his followers need people who will love them, teach them, and lead them. He taught that he himself is the good Shepherd of his flock. Read what he said in *John 21:15-17*.

Read what his follower, **Peter**, later wrote in a letter to Jesus' followers in *1 Peter 5:1-4*. Answer these questions:

- How is the work of an overseer like that of a shepherd?
- What are some attitudes of overseers?
- What reward does God offer to those who serve as overseers?

## Overseers in the Jerusalem Church

The **apostles** themselves served as overseers in the Jerusalem church. Read Acts 4:33-35 and 5:41-42. The twelve apostles later appointed **helpers** whom they put in charge of special tasks. *Acts 6:2-5*. The apostles and elders in Jerusalem heard and decided hard questions. *Acts 15:2-4*. Answer this questions:

- What are some of the tasks that overseers perform?

## Overseers in the Gentile Churches

The **prophets** and **teachers** who ministered in the church at Antioch sent out apostles to start new churches. *Acts 13:1-3*. Paul appointed **elders** for every church where they made new followers. *Act 14:21-23*. Elders are to watch over themselves and the flock and protect them from wolves deceivers. *Acts 20:17-18, 28-30*.

- What warning did Paul give to the overseers?
- What are some more tasks that overseers perform?

## Overseers in the Letters to the Churches

God's Spirit gives gifts to some people to be overseers of churches and cells. *Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11*. There are two kinds of workers in a local Christian fellowship. *Philippians 1:1-2*. They serve the Christian community and others respect them in return. *Romans 16:1-2; 1 Corinthians 16:15-16; Col 1:7*.

- How do overseers become competent to do their work?
- How can followers recognize believers who would be good overseers?

## Overseers in the Letters to Pastors

Overseers devote themselves to teaching the Word of God, equipping all believers for ministries and training new overseers. *2 Timothy 2:1-2*. Elders are to be appointed in every town. *Tit 1:5*. Overseers and their helpers, the deacons, must meet certain requirements. *1 Timothy 3:1-10; Titus 1:5-9*.

A Christian fellowship should pay an overseer who works hard, when they can. *1Tim. 5:17-18*. Overseers who sin are to be rebuked publicly. *1 Timothy 5:19-20*

- How are new overseers trained for their work?
- What are some requirements for becoming a full-time overseer?

## Overseers in the Letters to Christians

Not all followers should become overseers who teach other, for overseers must serve as examples to the followers of Jesus. *James 3:1-2*. Overseers pray for the sick. *James 5:14-16*. Overseers must serve willingly, not greedily, as an example to the flock. *1 Peter 5:1-3*.

- What are some duties of overseers?
- What is the proper motive for doing the work of an overseer?

## Practical Advice

In most cases, a new overseer should be an adult man who already has a home and a family that he leads. Overseeing a church or cell is much like leading one's own family. Unmarried young men usually are not respected and do not know how to care for others.

In a new church or cell of new believers, often the best overseer will be one of the new believers, because he will understand them and they will respect him. However, a new believer should not be given the title of overseer. Rather, a new believer can be called a "provisional elder" or "apprentice overseer" until he has proven himself and the believers have come to trust him.

Every temporary overseer should have a trainer who will mentor him. A trainer is another overseer who has more experience. The trainer should meet with the apprentice overseer regularly, and do these things:

- Listen to him report what his church or cell needs now.
- Help him plan how he will help his church or cell,
- Teach him from the Bible,
- Assign to him a lesson that will help him to meet the current needs of his church or cell,