

elders of the church. In only four of these places is the term

ἡγεμόν in the singular used. In those places, the references involve either an individual referring to himself as an "elder" (John in 2 John 1, 3 John 1; also Peter uses *συνἡγεμόν* to refer to himself in 1 Peter 5:1), or instruction as to how to treat individual elders (1 Tim. 5:1,19). Following the pattern of the synagogue, each church had a bench of elders.

1 Tim. 5:17 makes clear that, in the early church, there was a division of responsibility among the elders. "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching." This clearly implies that some did not spend their time primarily in preaching and teaching. These are often referred to as "ruling elders"⁸ and the other as "teaching elders."

It is also clear that "double honor" refers to some form of material compensation (see vs. 18). While there is some doubt concerning the number of paid staff members there were in the early church, there is scriptural basis here for the practice of paying ministers.

The important fact is that this, and many other passages, speak of a number of men in the leadership of the church rather than a single presiding officer. In Acts 13:1 there is reference made to a number of prophets and teachers in the Church of Antioch.

⁸For a full description of the office of ruling elder, see The Ruling Elder by Samuel Miller, (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publishers, 1832).