



From Where I Sit . . .

“Tribute To A Good Friend and Faithful Elder”

The making of a good elder is not a painless or easy process. Most men who desire this office take very seriously the responsibility of the souls of an entire congregation over which they will serve as shepherds. To be a good elder there has to be a passion for people. Good elders aren't sitting on every pew in most churches. The loss of a good one is felt heavily in a church. The Broad Street congregation has suffered such a loss this week. We feel it very heavily.

Early Monday morning our brother Bob Bridges suffered an apparent massive and fatal heart attack after working out at the local recreation center. His death came as a total surprise to all of us as he was so conscious of maintaining good health habits. Today we are all still feeling the emptiness and sense of bewilderment at what has happened.

I've only known a few men who truthfully could say that their life's dream was to become an elder in the Lord's church. Bob Bridges had a life long dream of being just that – a dream which became a reality for him on April 29, 2001. Prior to that he had served as a deacon for this congregation from January 2, 1976 to around the end of 1982. He and Renate moved away for a few years, and upon their return he was installed as an elder.

Bob nearly always had a smile on his face, and knew the way to help hurting people feel better. He was of great intelligence and proved so in his field as an engineer. He was gifted in learning foreign languages quickly, and loved to teach and preach from the Bible. It can truly be said that he loved his family dearly and maintained a close relationship with his children as they grew into adulthood. They in turn had a tremendous love for their father. He was devoted to Renate and together they were among the very most hospitable of the families in this church.

Bob loved to volunteer for special projects at elders meetings, and too often was willing to overload himself in trying to be a “servant” to fellow elders and to the congregation. His departure from this life will create a void difficult to fill, in the home, in our hearts, and in our work.

Just over a year ago I listened as Bob charged our deacons on a Sunday afternoon that this was a church in rapid transition and that current leadership would take on a totally different appearance in a foreseeably brief period of time. These deacons were challenged to be preparing themselves to accept the responsibility of leadership and be ready to accept the mantle when it is passed. This week, Bob Bridges passed his mantle.

I've served under 31 men as elders, in my 40 years of ministry. Thirteen of these are now deceased. My heart is heavy as I think about these losses to local churches. My heart is heavy as I think about our loss of Bro. Bob. I will personally miss the Tuesday morning meetings I've shared with him these past six years, and the many cups of coffee we've enjoyed on cold winter days.

Someone will arise and take the mantle. Until the Lord intervenes, the church will go on. But we will never be quite the same because Bro. Bob has touched our hearts. He wasn't a perfect man, but he was so willing to apologize when he felt he had failed someone. Our love and best wishes are extended today to Renate, Brent and Tina, along with their spouses and the grandchildren. May the God of comforts bless them all.

. . . . Terry Broome