From Part 1:

- The New Testament prescribes two offices that serve the church: elders and deacons.
- The New Testament teaches a plurality of elders (synonymous with overseer/bishop and pastor/shepherd)

Note the following texts (where either elder or bishop is used):

- Acts 11:30 elders at the church of Antioch
- Acts 14:23 Paul and Barnabas appoint "elders in every church"
- Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4 elders at the church in Jerusalem
- Acts 20:17, 28 elders/bishops at the church of Ephesus (v. 17 - "elders of the church")
- Acts 21:18 elders at the church in Jerusalem
- Philippians 1:1 the church at Philippi had bishops and deacons
- 1 Timothy 5:17 elders at the church of Ephesus
- Titus 1:5 Titus is to appoint elders in every town
- James 5:14 "the elders of the church"
- 1 Peter 5:1-2 "the elders among you"

Part 2:

**The Role of Deacons**

1. **The office of Deacon was created for the purpose of handling the benevolence ministry.**

   *Acts 6:1-3 (ESV)*

   Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution.

   And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.

2. **The office of Deacon was established to free the Apostles (who functioned as the first pastors) to pray and to prepare to minister the Word.**

   *Acts 6:2-4 (ESV)*

   And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”

   P. E. Burroughs wrote, “The deacons are to share with the pastor the burdens of church ministry; they are to shield the pastor and relieve him of burdens so that he may devote himself to a spiritual ministry.”

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   1 P. E. Burroughs, Honoring the Deaconship, Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention,1929, Revised 1936.
   
   2 P. E. Burroughs, Honoring the Deaconship, Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention,1929, Revised 1936. Page 56.
3. The early Deacons were selected for their spiritual qualifications.

   “Men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom” Acts 6:3
   “And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit” Acts 6:5

4. Deacons are to be capable of serving the Lord in spiritual ways. See Acts 6:8 and Acts 8:5-7

5. The word, Deacon, means “servant.”

   “The word deacon comes from the Greek word diakonos which can be translated deacon or minister. (The pastor is the ministering leader in a New Testament Church, the deacons the ministering servants.) The etymology or root meaning (diakonis) of the word is ‘To raise dust in a hurry or by hastening.’ This does not mean to stir up confusion, but on the other hand, means to "Be busy, to serve or do service"—for God and the church. Thus, to be the pastor’s assistants in ministry.”

6. The office of Deacon requires a Godly life. See 1 Timothy 3:8-13

7. The office of Deacon requires a firm grasp of sound doctrine. See Acts 6:9

8. The presence of Deacons should advance the unity of a church.

9. The presence of Deacons should advance the cause of evangelism.

The Role of Elders

1. Doctrine- The qualification distinguishing Elders from Deacons is the Elders’ aptness to teach, and ability to engage others doctrinally, even those in disagreement (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9). Elders guard the flock against false teachers (Acts 20:28-30). But Elders are not just guards; they are teachers of truth as well. Shepherding the flock requires feeding the church upon the rich truths of God’s Word (1 Peter 5:2).

2. Discipline- This word conveys the idea of training, admonishing, encouraging, correcting and, at times, removing someone from church membership. This falls under the role of shepherding as well as keeping watch over the souls of the congregation (Heb. 13:17).

3. Direction- This involves decision making, planning, administrating, delegating, and even governing the details of church life. This is where the work of shepherding includes not only feeding but also giving direction to the flock (1 Peter 5:2).

4. Distinction- The most daunting responsibility for Elders involves the distinction of modeling the Christian life. Elders are to be examples to the flock.