

# Knowing Doctrine

As office-bearers we enter the homes of members with the Word of God. We ourselves must be equipped with the Scriptures and with Reformed doctrine in order to equip others. It is important that we continue to grow in knowledge through our personal devotions and study of God's Word. Paul writes to Titus that those who serve as elders *"must hold firm to the sure word as taught, so that they may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it"* (Titus 1:9). These are the men the congregational members should see entering their homes -- not men who are full of themselves or who have their own personal agenda - but leaders who are thoroughly grounded in Scripture, who hold firm to the doctrines of the Word of God.

An elder must be a student in the Word of God and in the teachings which flow forth from it, being willing to learn and to communicate his learning. Thus he must also be prepared to refute those who oppose it. Article 27 of the Church Order applies Paul's instruction to Titus to the offices of elder and minister. It states, *"To ward off false doctrines and error which could enter the congregation and constitute a danger to the purity of its doctrine or conduct, the ministers and elders shall use the means of instruction, of refutation, of warning, and of admonition, in the ministry of the Word as well as in Christian teaching and family visiting."* Both from the pulpit and via home visits the congregation must be taught to refute false teaching. The most effective way to refute false teaching is not by knocking down what others believe but by being thoroughly saturated with the truth. We can know all the false doctrines in the world but still be missing the point. We must know and live sound doctrine.