

ELDERS

(originally published by Pastor Rick Howerton*)

- A. **Each church should have multiple elders** (Acts 14:23, Acts 20:17, Titus 1:5)
- B. **The responsibilities of an elder**
1. An example to the church (1 Peter 5:1-5)
 2. Believe God for healing of people and act upon that belief (James 5:14)
 3. Shepherd the church (1 Peter 5:1-2, Acts 20:28)
 4. “able to teach” (1 Timothy 3:2) Notice... *able to*, not responsible for always teaching, on an ongoing basis.
 5. Govern the church (1 Tim. 5:17-18; Hebrews 13:7,17)
 6. Encourage people by explaining and exposing sound doctrine (Titus 1:9)
 7. Refute those who oppose sound doctrine (Titus 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:14-26)
- C. **The attitude of elders** (1 Peter 5:1-5)
1. willingly serve
 2. do not serve for shameful gain (to build yourself up)
 3. serve eagerly
 4. never act as a domineering leader (not to rule harshly or oppressively)
 5. called by God to serve... **not** serving because no one else will
- D. **Qualifications for Elders** (1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9; 2 Tim. 2:14-26)
1. above reproach
 2. husband of one wife (i.e. male gender of the human species)
 3. temperate
 4. sensible
 5. hospitable
 6. apt teacher
 7. no drunkard
 8. not violent but gentle
 9. not quarrelsome
 10. no lover of money
 11. must manage their own household well
 12. mustn't be a recent convert
 13. must be well thought of by outsiders
 14. blameless
 15. *“having 'faithful' children who are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient”*
 16. not arrogant
 17. not quick tempered
 18. not greedy for gain
 19. a lover of goodness
 20. master of himself
 21. upright
 22. holy
 23. self-controlled
 24. *“must hold firm to the sure word as taught”*
 25. The Word of God must be known and held to above all other ideologies and/or philosophies (Titus 1:9; Colossians 2:8)
 26. Must be doctrinally sound (Titus 1: 9)
 27. Must be willing to rebuke, convict, and convince those who oppose the truths of the Bible in a gentle, humble and loving way. (Titus 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:14-26; 3:16-4:4)

- E. **How elders are to be regarded and treated by the church family:**
1. Elders are to be obeyed (Hebrews 13:7,17)
 2. Elders are to be submitted to (Hebrews 13:7,17)
 3. Those that rule well are deserving of “double honor” (1 Tim. 5:17-18)
 4. Younger persons are to “be subject to the elders” (1 Peter 5:5)
 5. “*Preaching / Teaching elders*” deserve “double honor” (1 Tim. 5:17-18)
- F. **Elders are to be chosen after a time of fasting and prayer. God makes the decision, not man.** (Acts 14:23)
- G. **There is to be a ceremonial experience to bless those chosen by God to be elders** (Acts 14:23)
- H. **Elders will answer to God for their oversight of the church** (Hebrews 13:7,17)
- I. **The reward... An effective elder will receive “an unfading crown of glory”**
(1 Peter 5:4)
- J. **The kind of person our church family needs to “elder”, “shepherd” or “oversee” them**
1. someone with a calling not a title (& not just filling in because no-one else will do it)
 2. someone who has been completely honest in the interview process
 3. someone who will make great sacrifice to prepare the Bride of Christ for His return
 4. someone willing to spend hours daily, for years to come, learning and growing in understanding of God’s Word
 5. someone who will fast and pray to hear from God on behalf of the church
 6. someone who is willing to live in true, unbridled, redemptive **community** with all of the other elders
 7. someone **willing to do what’s right** instead of what’s easy **no matter** what **personal loss** is demanded
 8. someone who understands and accepts the **lines of authority** as God has blessed and who will honor the roles God has outlined (i.e. staff, leadership team, pastor-teacher)
 9. someone willing to keep every elder conversation confidential, including spouses, best friends, and counselors
 10. someone willing to set aside business practices for **biblical practices**
 11. someone willing to deal with their own baggage to become all God intended them to be so others can see the redemptive process in practice
 12. someone willing to live out **all of the expectations** of membership of our church family
 13. someone willing to share a verbal witness with others on an ongoing basis
 14. someone willing to exercise church discipline in protection of individuals and our local church family (see Matt. 18:15-17; Luke 17:3-4)
 15. someone fully accepting the fact that God is pouring out “new wine” and we (*our church family*) are the “new wineskins”. The elder body cannot be a group of people subconsciously or consciously wanting to relive, retrieve, or realign our church family to be a church they once attended.

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