



Church Governance - Biblical Eldership

Qualifications, Culture and Communication

"The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task."

(1Timothy 3:1)

Elder Team Qualifications

- 1. Eldership is a personal commitment and daily devotion to Jesus as Savior and Lord.**
(Mark 3:13-15; 1 Tim 6:11-12)
- 2. Eldership requires commitment to Jesus the Head of the Church.**
(Eph. 1:22-23)
- 3. Definition of biblical eldership: "A true biblical eldership is not a businesslike committee. It's a biblically qualified council of men that jointly pastors the local church."**
(*Biblical Eldership*, Alexander Strauch, pg.31)
- 4. "The best elders...are those who love people, love to be with them, and are fervently involved with them."**
(*Biblical Eldership*, p.30)
- 5. "Skillful Shepherds, 'a subtle blend of authority and care...as much toughness as tenderness, as much courage as comfort.'"**
(*Biblical Eldership*, p.16)
- 6. Eldership is the highest leadership calling in the church and therefore comes**

with special qualifications and responsibility.

(Ezek. 34; Acts 14:23, 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:1-7, 14-15; 2 Tim. 2:15; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 13:17; James 5:12-18; 1 Peter 5:1-5)

- 7. Eldership should be focused on overseeing the 4 D's of *Doctrine, Direction, Discipleship, and Discipline*. They are responsible for the biblical theology and teaching of the church. They are responsible for hearing the voice of God for the guidance of the church. And they are responsible for the overall discipleship and discipline of the church.**

(Matt 9:35-10:1, 28:18-20; Acts 6:1-4; Romans 12:11; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 11:17-34; 12-14; 2 Cor. 8-9; Eph. 4:1-16; 1 Tim. 3:1-7, 14-15; 2 Tim. 2:1-7, 15, 4:1-5; Titus 1:5-9, Heb. 13:17; James 5:13-18; 1 Pt. 5:1-11)
- 8. Eldership is to lead and immerse the Church Body into intimate relationship with the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This requires that each elder is growing in their knowledge and experience with each Person of the Trinity.**

(Matt. 28:18-20; John 14-17; 2 Cor. 13:14)
- 9. Eldership is primarily responsible for regular prayer and intercession for the church body and the teaching of the Word.**

(Acts 6:4, James 5:13-18)
- 10. Eldership must not only believe the Church's statement of faith and guiding documents, but must be actively pursuing to live it and equip others to live it.**

(Eph. 4:1-16; 2 Tim. 2:1-7, 15)
- 11. Eldership is to nurture each other's gifts and equip the Church Body in the 5-fold gifts and other spiritual gifts. They are to model, teach and impart to the Body spiritual gifts so each person can effectively do the work of the ministry not by natural talent alone, but by Spirit empowerment.**

(Matt. 9:35-10:1; Acts 1:8; Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12-14; Eph. 4:1-16; 1 Tim. 4:14-16)
- 12. Eldership should nurture a missional mindset where people learn to share their faith, are equipped with the gospel of the kingdom and are sent out into the marketplace and among the nations to plant Christ-centered churches.**

(Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8)
- 13. Eldership needs a "first among equals" but it is critical that each elder speaks his mind and that no decisions are made without time for process and unity before anything is implemented. Eldership must honor and recognize the individual gifting of each member of the team.**

(Peter's role among the disciples, 1 Tim. 5:17)
- 14. Eldership is to maintain a healthy balance between overseeing the Body while also watching over each other's personal lives. The Elder team should be a tight knit group that pursues each other personally for accountability,**

encouragement and friendship and locks arms in overseeing the overall church body together.

(Acts 20:28, 1 Thess. 2:8)

- 15. Eldership should maintain unity of the team at all costs. What happens on the elder team flows down to the Body. Unity among leadership also helps protect the Body from spiritual attack. Confidentiality is critical and what is discussed among elders needs to stay among elders unless it is agreed that it is shared with the church body. Church wide communication needs to be agreed upon among elders before it goes out to the Body.**

(Psalm 133; Matt. 18:15-20)
- 16. Eldership should make themselves available to the Body and regularly be overseeing smaller groups of people to encourage them, equip them and just be with them doing life in Christian community.**

(Mark 3:13-15; Acts 2:42-47; 1 Thess. 2:8)
- 17. Eldership should be present at each Sunday service and all main events when the Body is gathered to be available to minister to the Body and to get to know the Body.**

(Acts 20:28)
- 18. Eldership should meet weekly as a team and regularly with the staff, and other leadership to hear from them and pray and encourage each other.**

(Acts 6:1-3; 20:28)
- 19. Eldership needs to model cohesive ministry with their spouses both privately and publicly before the Body, and model healthy biblical complementarian marriage for a culture that is challenging God's beautiful created design.**

(Acts 18:18-28, 2 Tim.2:1-7; Titus 2:1-8)
- 20. Eldership should go on retreat together twice a year to pray and plan and fellowship. At least one of these retreats should include spouses.**

(Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:21-33; 1 Tim. 3:4-5)
- 21. Eldership should maintain a culture of grace so that elders have the freedom to take a sabbatical for many different reasons. Each elder and the team should be sensitive to when an elder should take a sabbatical. The purpose and duration of the sabbatical should be clearly agreed upon. It is critical that the team journeys with the elder during their sabbatical.**

(Act 20:28)
- 22. Eldership should regularly be praying and identifying new leaders and potential elders. Once potential elders are identified they are asked to join the team as an elder-in-training for at least one year. During this year they serve alongside the elders and go through theological and pastoral training. They are**

to be put before the Body at the beginning of this period for examination in light of the biblical requirements for eldership. Once the team believes a trainee is ready and the trainee feels called to step in officially, they go through a commissioning and ordination process. All active elders are to be seen as “pastors” of the local church whether they are staff elders or marketplace elders.

(1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9)

23. Eldership should model for the Church Body “doing life together” in community by gathering with spouses regularly for friendship, fellowship and fun.

(Acts 2:46-47)

24. Eldership is a major commitment and will require 15-20 hours of ministry each week.

(1 Tim. 3:1; Rom. 12:11)

Elder Team Culture

- 1. The office of elder is not something that someone gains and then works toward, it is someone who is recognized for doing the work of an elder, earning the respect of the church Body and then being recognized for it.**
- 2. The elder team needs to model within the group Grace, Growth and Greater Things if it hopes to see it within the whole church.**
- 3. The beginning of each gathering should include prayer, worship and time in God’s presence listening to the Holy Spirit.**
- 4. There will be times to discuss Doctrine, Direction, and Discipline issues, but the primary time will be spent by each elder sharing about their specific area and heartbeat of oversight and care of the Body.**
- 5. The five fold gifts of Ephesians 4 and other gifts will be pursued and developed within the team so as to have a well-rounded team that affirms and honors each person’s diversity.**
- 6. Unity and diversity within the team will be valued so that individual elders are free to oversee and minister in different areas of focus rather than a boardroom feel where every decision and ministry is overseen by the whole team.**
- 7. The team will foster pushing one another on toward being men full of the Holy Spirit, wisdom and faith.**

8. Each elder will be personally involved in some aspects of overseeing community groups, discipleship groups and MicroChurch so as to practically carry out their shepherding responsibility.

9. The team will nurture a culture of sacrifice and giving. Each elder should be at least tithing to the local church. We have to lead the Body by example. It's pretty simple, our money goes where our commitment goes. Jesus said where your treasure is your heart is.

10. The team will foster fun together and time with spouses for fellowship and retreat.

Elder Team Communication

1. Each elder should strive to be completely humble and gentle and should be patient, bearing with one another in love, and to make every effort to keep "the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." (Eph. 4:2-3)

2. The elder team is to keep unity by not breaking the confidentiality of the group.

3. If an elder has a problem with another elder they are to discuss with no one else but first go to them to find understanding and unity.

4. If two elders cannot find understanding, then the discussion comes to the elder team to discuss and find unity, it does not go outside the team.

5. If someone outside the elder team comes to an elder with an issue with another elder they are to encourage that person to go straight to that elder and offer to join them if they want.

6. Elders should pursue transparency and honesty with one another, speaking the truth in love when necessary.

7. If an issue is brought from outside the team against one of the elders and the team cannot resolve it then a majority of the other active elders can agree to do outside investigation if necessary. We do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. (1 Tim. 5:20)

8. Elders must model humility and listen well to what fellow elders have to say and consider it and honor it.

9. If elders disagree with one another's perspective they can state so, but must respond with respect.

10. Elders should work at working things through before bringing it to the meeting, we must keep moving toward each other.

11. Diversity has to be honored within unity as does disagreement within the unity of the team.

12. Elders must have grace and honor for the diversity of gifts and practice on the team.

13. The focus needs to be on pursuing the Lord and knowing Him first and everything flows from that.