

Elder Qualification Process

<< Draft, v2.0, 2/27/19 >>

▼ Elders in the CHURCH Constitution

In the process of nominating elders, we want to be sure that we nominate men who meet the biblical qualifications for elders. Therefore, this document outlines the process for nominating elders.

In this process, we will recognize that leadership requires the right Character, Competence (gifting), and Context (not every church is the same so not all leadership styles are equally suitable in every circumstance).

▼ Background: The Biblical Qualifications for Elders

(from <https://www.acts29.com/biblical-qualifications-of-a-pastor/>)

The Bible specifically speaks about the qualifications for those who will lead a congregation of people. These qualifications have been the same for almost 2,000 years. Jesus is the perfect fulfillment of these qualifications as the “senior pastor” of the Church.

Above Reproach ([Titus 1:6](#), [7](#); [1 Tim 3:2](#)) This is the overarching, summarizing characteristic. You will find similar (but not identical) lists in First Timothy and Titus. Living a life above reproach is the first requirement in both lists and Titus repeats it. The other items on the list explain what “above reproach” means. If we peruse the two lists, as well as First Peter, we find 17 qualifications of an elder who is above reproach.

1. A elder must be devoted to his wife; one-woman man ([Titus 1:6](#); [1 Tim 3:2](#)). The elder’s marriage illustrates Christ’s love for His church—His bride ([Eph. 5:22](#) ff.). A elder must love his wife exclusively with his mind, will, emotions, and body.
2. A elder’s children must be in submission, though not perfect ([Titus 1:6](#); [1 Tim 3:4-5](#)). If a man does not know how to manage his own family, he will not know how to take care of God’s church. The first flock for a elder is his own family. A Elder’s qualification for the church starts in his home management as he leads them up in the discipline and admonition of the Lord ([Eph. 6:4](#)).
3. A elder is a faithful steward ([Titus 1:7](#)). Here the term used is overseer (Greek *episkopos*). It is not another office, but a functional title of the elder. It is what he does. He is a steward, a manager of God’s resources and Jesus’ flock. He takes responsibility, but not ownership.
4. A elder must be humble — not arrogant ([Titus 1:7](#)). A elder must constantly demonstrate the gospel by admitting when he is wrong and assuming responsibility and restoring relationships.
5. A elder must be gentle — not quick-tempered ([Titus 1:7](#); [1 Tim 3:3](#)). No man will be of any use in the kingdom that is quick-tempered. Godly anger is motivated solely by the abuse of God’s grace or others, not by pride.
6. A elder must be sober — not a drunkard ([Titus 1:7](#); [1 Tim 3:3](#)). This is not just overindulgence in alcohol but is idiomatic for any behavior that fuels addictive responses.
7. A elder must be peaceful — not violent ([Titus 1:7](#); [1 Tim 3:3](#)). A elder is prone to inflict violence through his words. He is to be a peacemaker and not a peacekeeper.
8. A elder must have financial integrity — not greedy for gain ([Titus 1:7](#); [1 Tim 3:3](#); [1 Peter 5:3](#)). A elder is to be upright in his financial dealings and not accused of pursuing money over the kingdom of God.
9. A elder must be hospitable ([Titus 1:8](#); [1 Tim 3:2](#)). The Greek word for hospitable is *philozenos*. It literally means “to love strangers.” Therefore, a elder must be friendly and extend grace to those both inside and outside the church family.
10. A elder must be a lover of good ([Titus 1:8](#)). A elder genuinely loves what is good simply because it is good.
11. A elder must be self-controlled ([Titus 1:8](#); [1 Tim 3:2](#)). Self-control is a characterization of every area of a elder’s life: diet, time, mouth, exercise, relationships, sex, and money.
12. A elder must be upright ([Titus 1:8](#)). He has integrity in his relationships and treats others with equity and fairness.
13. A elder must be holy ([Titus 1:8](#)). His life is devoted wholeheartedly to Jesus externally and internally.
14. A elder must be able to teach ([Titus 1:9](#); [1 Tim 3:2](#)). All the other qualifications are character qualities. This is the only ability-based requirement. He understands doctrine sufficiently to be able to teach it to others. The emphasis in the Scriptures is not on the style of teaching or delivery, but on the knowledge of the teacher. He must be adequately versed in the Word and theology to instruct others in the truth.
15. A elder must be spiritually mature ([1 Tim 3:6](#)). Positions of authority without spiritual maturity lead to the trap of pride. When pride grows in a man, sin abounds.
16. A elder must be respectable ([1 Tim 3:7](#)). That does not mean that everyone must like him or even appreciate him. It means that there is no credible witness to an ongoing sinful behavior.
17. A elder must be an example to the flock ([1 Peter 5:3](#)). Elders are examples of biblical expressions of godly sexually, time management, marriage, parenting, worship, relationships, and any other area of life.

▼ Process Overview

The general process will look like this:

1. Potential elders may be proposed by anyone in the congregation (including members of the current Elder Board or Nominating Committee).
 - Nominations are to be completed by March 6th. (Nominations can be submitted in the drop-box, by calling the office, or by emailing the office.)
2. **GATE 1 – Sub-Group Preliminary Assessment.** An “elder-evaluation **sub-group**” of the Nominating Committee and will complete an initial evaluation of each suggested elder, by using questions 1-17 below.

Notes:

 - These questions were derived from the “Biblical Qualifications” shown on page 1, and divided into 3 sections, based on who might best be able to determine if a candidate meets a qualification.
 - It is understood that no candidate will be perfect. If the general feeling of the sub-group is that a candidate should NOT be taken to the next step, it will stop there.
3. **GATE 2 – NC or DB Objection.** The sub-group will provide names that pass Gate 1 to the full NC and to the Elder Board. If any of the names are objected to, they will NOT move to the next step. It will be emphasized that no candidate will be perfect, but there should at least be no “show-stopper” concerns. In this step, we encourage any concerns to be brought up promptly. A “speak now” approach will help expedite this process.
4. **GATE 3 – Candidate Refusal.** Following the script below, the sub-group will contact each suggested candidate to ask if they would be interesting in serving as an elder. They will explain that the process will include a short interview with his wife first and then one with him.
5. **GATE 4 – Candidate & Wife Interviews.** For those candidates who wish to proceed:
 - a. The sub-group will set up a time to meet briefly with the candidate’s wife.
 - In the interview with the wife, questions 18-22 will be used.
 - b. The sub-group will set up a time to meet briefly with the candidate.
 - In the interview with the candidate, questions 23-30 will be used.
 - c. After these interviews, if the general feeling of the sub-group is that a candidate should NOT be taken to the next step, it will stop there.
6. **GATE 5 – Elder Board Fit.** The sub-group will consider all remaining candidates as a group, and considering those elders who will continue serving on the DB, which candidates are the best fit with the needs of the DB. We may eliminate good candidates who have the right Character and Competence, but do not fit the Context for the coming year.
7. The sub-group will present to the full NC the results of their assessments. The full NC will validate the final list of names proposed to the congregation.

▼ Questions to Ponder about a Elder Candidate

- Check **"VETO"** only if you think the answer to the question disqualifies the candidate for further consideration. In later discussion with the Committee, be prepared to defend any of your vetoes.
- Check **"0"** if you don't know enough about the candidate to fairly rate him (**IDK** = I Don't Know).
- Check **"1"** if the candidate meets the attribute adequately but not superbly.
- Check **"2"** if the candidate fully meets the attribute.

Positive questions:

QUESTION	VETO (✓)	0 (IDK)	1 (Low)	2 (High)
1. He shows evidence of creating a sense of belonging?				
2. Has he been disciplined and disciplined others?				
3. Is he a person with a reputation for solving problems?				
4. Does he handle feedback and criticism well?				
5. Does he address personnel issues promptly, directly, courteously, and effectively?				
6. Is he a high-capacity person, able to effectively manage multiple priorities in an organized manner?				
7. Is he a servant-leader?				
8. Does he model biblical values and behaviors in his daily life? Is this demonstrated in his outward relationship with God?				
9. Does he demonstrate leadership ability?				
10. Is he committed to the purpose & philosophy of ministry of the church?				
11. Does he keep confidences & is trustworthy?				
12. Is he financially committed to the church & a model of biblical stewardship?				
13. Is he a team player who can work with others to accomplish a common purpose?				
14. Does he follow through on commitments made?				
15. Is he able to see the big picture, be vision-oriented & think strategically?				

Negative questions:

QUESTION	VETO (✓=Strong yes)	-1 (Tolerable)	0 (No issues observed)
16. Does he value his personal agenda over the best interests of the church?			
17. Does he think only in black and white terms and/or demonstrate an unrelenting resistance to change?			

▼ **Personal interview of candidate's wife**

QUESTION	VETO (✓)	0 (None)	1 (Low)	2 (High)
18. How does he lead your family spiritually?				
19. Does he admit his faults and apologize when needed? Give us an example.				
20. What does he spend his free time on?				
21. In what ways are you most proud of him?				
22. How does he handle challenging situations or conflict in your family? Please give us an example.				

▼ **Personal interview of candidate**

QUESTION	VETO (✓)	0 (IDK)	1 (Low)	2 (High)
23. What are the three things you want to have achieved at the end of your life?				
24. Describe your prayer and devotional life.				
25. What has been your greatest regret or failure in the past 5 years?				
26. Are you currently gainfully employed? How and when did you leave your last job? Briefly describe your career history. How would your employment history apply to this position? Give us an example of when you delegated several items successfully to a group of people.				
27. What experiences have been especially important in the development of your faith?				
28. If you became an elder, how would you handle this scenario: In a Sunday school class, a teacher presents an unbiblical idea.				
29. If you became an elder, how would you handle this scenario: You become aware that two CHURCH members dealing with a major conflict.				
30. What do you do to keep yourself learning and growing as an individual?				

▼ Responsibilities of a Elder at CHURCH, based on the Constitution

- Candidate for membership will then be examined by the Elders personally ... the Elders shall inquire into the Candidate's conversion, view of doctrinal truth, Christian experience, and ethical and moral practice.
- Separation or re-instatement of a member from CHURCH under certain circumstances.
- Subjecting members to church discipline when needed.
- Resolving conflicts with the church or its leaders.
- Dealing with doctrinal issues.
- Participation in Congregational Business Meetings.
- Serving on a Nominating Committee or Pastoral Search Team as needed.

▼ Other expectations of a Elder at CHURCH

- Consent to serve for a period of 3 years.
- Attend monthly Elder Board meetings.
- Perform miscellaneous tasks as assigned.
- Assist in the interview process of candidates for hire, as needed.
- Possibly, serve as a liaison to other CHURCH Boards.
- Possibly, serve as a Elder Board Chairman, Vice Chairman, or recorder of meeting minutes.

▼ Benefits of being a Elder at CHURCH

- 1 Peter 5:1-4 says that faithful leaders of Christ's church will receive a crown of glory.
- As part of the Elder Board you will share the camaraderie of a likeminded group of men.
- You will grow in your faith and in your leadership ability.
- As a representative of CHURCH in the community, you will be strengthened to walk worthy of Christ.

▼ Nominating Committee Script

Elder Board

As a member of the Nominating Committee, I want to discuss the possibility with you of becoming a Elder here at CHURCH. We have exciting new plans for the Elder Board to operate in more effective and efficient ways.

The expectations we believe are critical for this role are:

- *Meeting the Biblical qualifications*
- *The Elder will grow in grace, pray and fast. Studying scripture, discuss theology and church governance.*
- *Another important aspect will be living the vision and modeling the Christian life along with being in a discipleship relationship.*
- *There are many positive impacts that will impact your life*
 - *Sharing camaraderie with a likeminded group of men*
 - *Growth in your faith and leadership abilities*
 - *Using your unique talents to serve CHURCH; enabling you to live in the way you were designed by God.*
- *Basic requirements:*
 - *You and your wife to participate in an interview process*
 - *Consent to serve for a period of 3 years*
 - *Attend monthly Elder Board meetings*
 - *Possibly serve as the Elder Board Chairman, Vice Chairman, or recorder of meeting notes*
 - *Promptly speak with the Elder Board Chairman immediately if unable or unqualified to continue to serve*
- *It is our intent to have the DB operate in a more efficient way than ever before, so that all elders don't have to do everything. We hope to match each elder to a specific area that fits with their passion and gifting. They will have freedom to run that area as they see fit.*

Trustee Board

- I'm calling on behalf of the church's NC
- Our job to fit people into just the right opportunities for them
 - Where they use their skills in their areas of passion
 - Where they can make a difference in serving others
- The Pastoral Staff and the Nom Committee has been in prayer and discussion about this
- Your name has come up, and we think we have an opportunity that might be perfect for you
- As you may know:
 - We have a nice facility here that supports many ministries
 - The responsibility of keeping this facility nice and supporting the ministries is that of the Trustee Board
 - This includes building and grounds maintenance and upgrades; security?; ...
- If you became a Trustee, you could work out your specific responsibilities within the Board
 - The first few meetings may occur monthly, but once responsibilities and reporting relationships are established, fewer meetings should be needed
 - This coming year, a number of new people will be on this Board; we'll need a new chairperson and vice-chair
 - We will be looking for people who bring in fresh ideas, can suggest better ideas, and may even provide leadership to the team
- We think you are one who could really help the Trustees move forward and provide better service
- Will you think and pray about this? I'd like to get back to you in a week. Is that OK?

Board of World Missions

- I'm calling on behalf of the church's NC
- Our job to fit people into just the right opportunities for them
 - Where they use their skills in their areas of passion
 - Where they can make a difference in serving others
- The Pastoral Staff and the Nom Committee has been in prayer and discussion about this
- Your name has come up, and we think we have an opportunity that might be perfect for you
- As you may know:
 - We have a history of supporting missionaries around the world
 - The BWM has the responsibility of managing who bring on, how we support them, and when we remove some
 - This includes hosting an annual missions conference, supporting short-term missions trip by our people; ...
- If you joined this Board, you could work out your specific responsibilities within the Board
 - The first few meetings may occur monthly, but once responsibilities and reporting relationships are established, fewer meetings should be needed
 - This coming year, a number of new people will be on this Board; we'll need a new chairperson and vice-chair
 - We will be looking for people who bring in fresh ideas, can suggest better ideas, and may even provide leadership to the team
- We think you are one who could really help this Board move forward and provide new direction
- Will you think and pray about this? I'd like to get back to you in a week. Is that OK?