

Elders

Elders Acts 20:17, Titus 1:5 Greek-presbuteros- presbyter

Elder is a term of maturity, honor and respect in which the man is to be held, speaks of the position of a leader in the Church

Overseers Acts 20:28, 1 Timothy 1:7 Greek– episkopos

1 Peter 5:1, 2

Overseer speaks of the function of the elder, overseeing and caring for the people of God.

An elder is not so much a position as it is a ministry. 1 Timothy 3:1

Plurality of Elders

Philippians 1:1 overseers and deacons- plurality

The Lord did not call one man to lead the Church, but a group of men under the leadership of the Chief Shepherd. 1 Peter 5:1-4, Thessalonians 5:12, 13

Elders- Acts 14:23, Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 23, Acts 16:4, Acts 20:17, 1 Timothy 5:17, Titus 1:5, James 5:14, 1 Peter 5:1

Overseers- Acts 20:28, Philippians 1:1

Leaders – Hebrews 13:17

What Makes an Elder?

Act 20:28 Elders/Overseers are made by the Holy Spirit and recognized by the local Church.

Qualifications of the Elders

Elders are not just the most popular men, or the men that are behind the pulpit, or the man with the most education, or the man that wears a tie and suit on Sunday morning, or men that are gifted leaders in secular life. These are not standards that we apply to the leaders of the local Church.

We follow Gods standard for leaders of the local Church. Those standards are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9

aspires or desires – desires the work and service to God and others. Not a desire for position or power. 1 Tim 3:1

1Ti 3:2 An overseer, then, **must** be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

must - G1163 *deí* it must be, *déon estí* it is necessary It can also denote ethical or religious obligations (backed sometimes by statute). In the LXX the law must be done as God's will (Lev. 5:17; cf. in the NT Luke 13:14; 22:7; also Christian duties, 1 Th. 4:1; 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:7). Third person singular active present of G1210; also *δεόν* *deon* which is neuter active participle of the same; both used impersonally; *it is (was, etc.) necessary* (as *binding*): - behoved, be meet, must (needs), (be) need (-ful), ought, should.

above reproach-blameless, no charge or serious wrong can be sustained against him. If he has committed some fault he makes it right with God and man.

1 Tim 3:2, Titus 1:7

husband of one wife- not a polygamist, a one woman man, no hint of unfaithfulness, marriage must be of purity 1Tim 3:2, Titus 1:6

temperate – avoidance of extremes in spiritual matters, food and drink 1 Tim 3:2

prudent – sensible - he is serious, discerning and discreet, not frivolous. 1 Tim 3:2, Titus 1:8

respectable – of good behavior, well ordered in his habits. 1 Tim 3:2

hospitable – His home is open to saved and unsaved. 1 Tim 3:2, Titus 1:8

able to teach – not necessarily a gifted teacher nor a man who teaches from the pulpit. A man who is able to feed the flock 1 Peter 5:2 and refute false doctrine Acts 20:29-31

1 Tim 3:2

holding fast the faithful word – sound in doctrine, holding tenaciously to the doctrine taught by the Lord Jesus and the apostles. Titus 1:9

not addicted to wine – not addicted to alcoholic drink 1Tim 3:3 Titus 1:7

not pugnacious – not violent, does not use physical violence on another 1Tim 3:3, Titus 1:7

gentle and peaceable – patient, forbearing 1Tim 3:3

not quick tempered – able to bridle a quick and hot temper Titus 1:7

free from love of money - not fond of sordid gain – a refusal to be distracted from peoples spiritual life by material things 1 Tim 3:3, Titus 1:7

manages own household well – if a man cannot rule in a spiritual sense in a smaller sphere then it clearly disqualifies him in a larger sphere. 1Tim 3:4

children who believe and not accused of rebellion – has children who do not rebel against parental or civil authority Titus 1:8

not a new convert – or one young in the faith, requires men of experience and understanding
1 Tim 3:6

good reputation outside the Church – with unsaved neighbors and co-workers 1 Tim 3:7

not self willed – Not unyielding or impatient of contradiction., not headstrong Titus 1:7

loving what is good – his speech, actions and associates reveal that he is separated from all
that is shady, questionable and wrong Titus 1:8

just – fair Titus 1:8

devout – holy Titus 1:8

self controlled – a man who has every passion and appetite under control Titus 1:8

The qualification speak of a mature, faithful, experienced, wise, spiritual man who desires to
lead the local Church. A man of godly and spiritual character who is mature in the faith.

Qualification Summarized 1 Peter 5:2, 3

An elder or overseer must have all of these qualifications not just most of them. No one is
perfect but that does not prevent us from applying a high standard. The men who the Holy
Spirit raises up as overseers over the local church will have all these qualifications as a part
of their lives.

Function of Elders

Acts 20:28

Overseer – exercises oversight in the Church

Shepherd – to tend, care for, teach, guide the local Church 1 Peter 5:2

1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:9 – feed or teach others

Titus 1:9 – refute false doctrine

1 Timothy 3:4, 5, 5:17- to lead the assembly as a husband or father of his own house.

1 Timothy 3:4, 5, 5:17 – It is a ruling and leadership role. It is a responsibility to lead by
godly character. 1 Peter 5:2, 3

Responsibilities may be divided into two categories. 1 Timothy 5:17

1) rule and guidance of the assembly.

2) Other work hard at the preaching and teaching.

The elders seem to primarily work in one or the other of these areas.

Acts 20:28 – be on guard. Protect the flock in the church.

Titus 1:9, 11, 13 An elder must protect the local church from false doctrine and false practices.

1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13, Hebrews 13:17 it is a believers responsibility to submit to the elders of the local church.

Recognizing Elders

After studying the qualifications of an elder we realize that elders are made by God not men.
Acts 20:28

Overseers are raised up by the Holy Spirit and in the New Testament were appointed by Apostles Acts 14:23 or an apostolic delegate Titus 1:5.
There is no suggestion in the New Testament that they were elected by the congregation.

An elder is recognized by his work of service and by his fulfillment of the Biblical qualifications, not by election to the position.

It is the assembly's responsibility to recognize those whom God has raised up.

The local church recognizes men who the Holy Spirit has raised up who are doing the work and service of an elder and who meet the qualifications.

An overseer is an overseer as long as he desires the ministry, does the work and meets the Biblical qualifications.