



**CITY CHURCH**

of East Nashville

**ELDER & DEACON  
NOMINATION BOOKLET 2018**

## OFFICER NOMINATIONS

### *City Church of East Nashville*

The leadership of the church by elders and deacons is as important today as it was in the first century. It is God's design to feed, lead, and serve His Body and Bride through the offices of elder and deacon. Since becoming an officer in our domination is a perpetual (life-long) calling, identifying, preparing and electing men for church office must be a genuinely Spirit-led process.

This calling is not solely based on someone's natural abilities, gifts, business skills, or personality type. In addition, no one can unilaterally decide that he is an elder or deacon. Rather, this calling involves the power and wisdom of God at work in an individual's life and requires recognition not only by the individual (internal calling), but also by the church (external calling). Identifying officer nominees involves selecting men in whose lives God is clearly at work, and through whose lives God is working in the lives of others. In other words, we don't **make** someone an elder or deacon. We **identify** someone who, by the grace and calling of God, **is already functioning as an elder or deacon.**

This material is meant to assist the members of City Church in this important nomination process. Every member is urged to carefully read through this information and prayerfully evaluate nominees before submitting the name of any man for nomination.

## NOMINATION

The first step is for members of City Church to nominate men whom they deem biblically qualified to assume the office of elder or deacon. Please read and pray from 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9, and Acts 6:1-6.

1. As a church in the Presbyterian Church in America, we have the responsibility to follow the steps and procedures in the Book of Church Order in accord with Scripture. ***Therefore you are asked to nominate only men who are members of City Church.***
2. Before making a nomination, ***you should speak with the person you'd like to nominate to see if he is willing to consider serving as an officer of the church.*** The CCEN website has information that "nominees" can access for further consideration.
3. We want to make every effort to avoid partisanship in the nomination process. ***Therefore, you are asked not to nominate family members for church office.***

# DESCRIPTION OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND MINISTRIES OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

## Introduction to Elders and Deacons

*The ordinary and perpetual classes of office in the Church are elders and deacons. Within the class of elder are the two orders of teaching elders and ruling elders. The elders jointly have the government and spiritual oversight of the Church, including teaching. Only those elders who are specially gifted, called and trained by God to preach may serve as teaching elders. The office of deacon is not one of rule, but rather of service both to the physical and spiritual needs of the people. In accord with Scripture, these offices are open to men only.*

*Book of Church Order 7-2*

<b>ELDERS: SHEPHERD LEADER</b>	<b>DEACONS: SERVANT LEADER</b>
Ministry of the Word and Prayer	Ministry of Service and Deed
Know, feed, lead and protect the congregation	Encourage and enable the gifts of generosity and mercy among congregation
Primary Focus: Pay attention to and promote healthy teaching and godly living	Primary Focus: Physical needs of God’s people
Under the authority of the presbytery	Under the authority of the session
The elders comprise the session.	The deacons comprise the diaconate.

## Responsibilities and Ministries of Elders

*It belongs to the office of elder, both severally and jointly, to watch diligently over the flock committed to their charge that no corruption of doctrine or of morals enters therein. They must exercise government and discipline, and take oversight not only of the spiritual interests of the particular church, but also the church generally when called thereunto. They should visit the people at their homes, especially the sick. They should instruct the ignorant, comfort the mourner, nourish and guard the children of the church. They should set a worthy example to the*

*flock entrusted to their care by their zeal to evangelize the unconverted and make disciples. All those duties which private Christians are bound to discharge by the law of love are especially incumbent upon them by divine vocation, and are to be discharged as official duties. They should pray with and for the people, being careful and diligent in seeking the fruit of the preached Word among the flock.*

*Book of Church Order 8-3*

An elder at City Church is a “shepherd leader”, and is called to the ministry of the Word and prayer (Acts 6:4). He is known for his compassion and gentleness, and is called to know, feed, lead and protect those individuals and families who call City Church their home. They pay attention to and promote “healthy teaching and godly living.”

These beautiful and weighty responsibilities are performed with a deep sense of joy and calling. An elder knows that shepherding the flock will necessarily require a sacrifice of time; if he is married with a family, they should support him in this.

The elders meet regularly, to pray for the church, check in with each other, and take care of spiritual and practical concerns, all the while attempting to discern “what the will of the Lord is” in many situations. As we add elders to the session, we plan to meet twice a month in the evenings as a session, and continue to enjoy our weekly fellowship lunches for those able to attend. If a man were unable to meet regularly like this (bi-monthly evening session meetings), it would be unwise for him to be nominated at CCEN. Also, if a man is considering a significant career change or a move to another city, it may be unwise to pursue a calling such as this at this time.

The elders at CCEN have also, for the past 14 years, held in high regard the “oneness” of the body of Christ and the deep joy that such oneness brings (Psalm 133). Often the elders have gone to great lengths to promote “being eager to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3). This requires a humble spirit and a willingness to admit the deep need for the forgiveness of Christ; it requires a man who is quick to turn away from self-promoting in order to “submit one to another”.

## *Passages on Elders Qualifications*

### **1 Timothy 3:1-8 ESV**

<sup>1</sup> The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. <sup>2</sup> Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, <sup>3</sup> not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. <sup>4</sup> He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, <sup>5</sup> for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? <sup>6</sup> He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. <sup>7</sup> Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

### **Titus 1:5-9 ESV**

<sup>5</sup> This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you — <sup>6</sup> if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. <sup>7</sup> For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, <sup>8</sup> but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. <sup>9</sup> He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

## *Responsibilities and Ministries of Deacons*

*It is the duty of the deacons to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress. It is their duty also to develop the grace of liberality in the members of the church, to devise effective methods of collecting the gifts of the people, and to distribute these gifts among the objects to which they are contributed. They shall have the care of the property of the congregation, both real and personal, and shall keep in proper repair the church edifice and other buildings belonging to the congregation. In matters of special importance affecting the property of the church, they cannot take final action without the approval of the session and consent of the congregation. In the discharge of their duties the deacons are under the supervision and authority of the session. In a church in which it is impossible for any reason to secure deacons, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the ruling elders.*

A deacon at City Church serves under the supervision and authority of the session, and is called to the ministry of deed. He is a “servant leader,” whose ministry is primarily focused on the physical needs of God’s people. The deacons are called to encourage and enable the gifts of generosity and mercy among the congregation.

Since we have not had ordained and installed deacons up to this point in the history of City Church, we envision the newly formed diaconate meeting twice a month for the foreseeable future to prayerfully develop a mercy ministry, assisted by godly men and women of the congregation, and to grow in unity with one another.

Similar to the elders, a deacon knows that serving the flock will necessarily require a sacrifice of time; if he is married with a family, they should support him in this.

### *Passages on Deacon Qualifications*

#### **1 Timothy 3:8-13 ESV**

<sup>8</sup> Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. <sup>9</sup> They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. <sup>10</sup> And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. <sup>11</sup> Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. <sup>12</sup> Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. <sup>13</sup> For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

#### **Acts 6:1-6 ESV**

<sup>1</sup> Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. <sup>2</sup> And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. <sup>3</sup> Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. <sup>4</sup> But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. <sup>6</sup> These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.

## EXPLANATION OF BIBLICAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR OFFICERS

All the qualities below need to have stood the test of time, making recent converts ineligible for office (1 Tim. 3:6). Please understand that a man called to serve as elder or deacon has not “completed the course;” rather, he is in process, living a life of repentance and faith, growing and maturing in these traits by God’s transforming grace.

**REPUTABLE** He is blameless, i.e. there is no occasion or reason to charge him with any sin or offense. He keeps short accounts with others. (1 Tim. 3:8; Titus 1:6, 10)

- Husband of one wife (1 Tim. 3:2, 11-12; Titus 1:6) – *Reputable in his marriage.* Literally, a one-woman man. Devoted to loving and serving his wife as Christ does the church. Not a flirt nor sexually promiscuous in any way.
- Above reproach (1 Tim. 3:2) – *Reputable in the church.* His living does not generate speculation about his personal moral choices. He “lives well” in front of others.
- Well thought of by outsiders (1 Tim. 3:7) – *Reputable in the community.* He has a reputation of integrity, fairness and service in the community. Is involved enough to be “known and respected” in his neighborhood and broader community.

**GODLY** He loves all things that are good, hating sin and evil. (1 Tim. 3:9; Titus 1:8)

- Humble (Titus 1:7) – Not self-willed or arrogant.
- Gentle (1 Tim 3:3) – Equitable, fair, moderate, not insisting on the letter of the law.
- Hospitable (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8) – Literally, a lover of strangers. His home is often opened to people who are not his closest friends.
- Upright (Titus 1:8) – A righteous and just man. Sensitive to the laws of God and man.
- Holy (Titus 1:8) – Released from slavery to sin, he strives to live in accord with God’s will. Knows he is “set apart” for God himself.
- Dignified (1 Tim. 3:2) – Someone who is decent, modest and well ordered (not in appearance, but in their inner life); this is evident in his behavior and conversation.

**CONTROLLED** *He is a master of himself, keeping under control that which God has made him a steward. (Titus 1:8; 1 Tim. 3:2)*

- His family is under control (1Tim. 1:6, 12; Titus 1:6) – Places a very high value in attending to the care and nurture of his family.
- His emotions are under control (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7) – He is not prone to anger or violence. He is gentle, patient and understanding.
- His tongue is under control (1 Tim. 3:3, 8) – He is not contentious or quarrelsome with others and he does not lie.
- His appetites are under control (1 Tim. 3:3, 8; Titus 1:7) – He does not over-drink and is not addicted to drugs or alcohol.
- His money and possessions are under control (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:8) – He is a man without covetousness, content with what God has provided. He is a responsible steward of money and possessions. And what he possesses, he has acquired honestly.

**ELDER SPECIFIC** *He has a firm grasp and knowledge of the Word of God and is able to minister the Word to others with obvious insight and ability. (Titus 1:9)*

- Skilled to teach (1 Tim. 3:2) – He is able to teach the unblemished truth of God’s Word to the saints.
- Skilled to exhort (Titus 1:9) – He is able to come alongside others to encourage individuals and appeal to them with the unblemished truth of God’s Word.
- Skilled to refute (Titus 1:9) – He is able to use the Word of God to convince or convict someone who contradicts or opposes the unblemished truth of God’s Word.

**DEACON SPECIFIC** *He has a firm grasp and knowledge of the Word of God and has a heart to serve the less fortunate and needy.*

- Clear conscience (1 Tim. 3:9) – Deacons are not teachers, but they hold the mysteries of the faith with a clear conscience. Deacons must know how to make sound ministry decisions, how to explain their work as they do it, and how to articulate the faith.
- Not double-tongued (1 Tim. 3:8) – Deacons are not double-talkers who say one thing and believe another. They do not lie or play the hypocrite.

- Deacons must be generous, not mercenary. They should like to give resources to the needy.

## **DISCERNMENT IN NOMINATING AN ELDER OR A DEACON**

*The following questions are helpful in recognizing and discerning both the gifts and calling of an elder:*

- Is the nominee a shepherd of others and does he minister to people in a spirit of love and humility? How have you seen this demonstrated?
- Have you seen the spiritual gifts of teaching and leadership present in the nominee?
- In what ways have you observed the nominee exhibit *shepherd-leadership* in the church (know, feed, lead and protect)?
- How have you seen the nominee exhibit a love for God’s Word and a good grasp of what the Word teaches?
- How have you seen the nominee exhibit that he is a man of prayer, that he turns to the Lord often with faith and a spirit of expectation?
- Would you go to the nominee for spiritual wisdom or comfort and encourage others to do the same? Why or why not?

*The following questions are helpful in recognizing and discerning both the gifts and calling of a deacon:*

- Is the nominee a servant of others and does he minister to people with a spirit of compassion and generosity? How have you seen this demonstrated?
- In what ways have you observed the nominee exhibit servant-leadership in the church (“to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress”)?
- How have you seen the nominee exhibit a love for God’s Word and a good grasp of what the Word teaches?
- How have you seen the nominee exhibit that he is a man of prayer, that he turns to the Lord often with faith and a spirit of expectation?
- Would you go to the nominee in a time of need and encourage others to do the same? Why or why not?