



# **Nominating Committee Guidelines**

**for Affirming, Considering, Placing and/or Removing Elders for the Church Board**

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Thank you for serving on the Nominating Committee. We pray that the LORD will bless you for your time spent serving His bride, the church.

## **WHAT IS YOUR IS MISSION?**

As a Nominating Committee you have been called to serve the church by re-examining our current leaders on the church board and by examining potential new leaders for the church board. That is your job and your only job. Do not stray from your assigned mission. Please keep focused on the task assigned to you with passionate determination, because it is an incredibly important thing you are doing for our church. Again, to make sure this is clear, your task is to examine your leaders and potential new leaders to the church board. This paper is designed to give you all of the necessary tools you will need for this task.

## **WHAT IS THE CHURCH BOARD?**

If you look up the phrase "church board" in the New Testament you will not find it. While we understand that all believers are called to ministry, the church board members are our highest leadership positions of ministry in the church. In the New Testament, the highest positions of leadership in the church were known as the elders (aka pastors). Thus, our "church board" is merely our church's way of collectively speaking of the biblical word elders or pastors.

## **WHY DO WE EXAMINE THE ELDERS?**

Pastors are not bullet proof. They can fall into sin and ruin churches. Your committee exists to help prevent our church from ruin. Each of the elders' positions opens every two years for examination and re-approval, and - if necessary - removal and replacement.

Your job as a committee is to prayerfully consider if the current elders are being faithful to their biblical qualifications and duties. We want to assure that our elders on the church board are "above reproach" and your eyes will serve the church in this regard. What do you see? Are these men "above reproach" as pastors? If not, on what biblical grounds? Following this, then who is biblically qualified - who will fill their shoes? This is not a personality profile or a matter of style / preference, rather, it is a biblical thing - are these guys doing what the Bible says? If not, we must deal with their sin seriously.

In the books of Timothy and Titus, the Apostle Paul gives us a list of the biblical qualifications for an elder and his responsibilities. These passages and others make it clear that the position of elder is one limited for men (sorry ladies) and only men who are mature in their faith with a calling to pastor. This paper outlines the biblical qualifications for men who are called to be elders and it considers the broad categories of their responsibilities. Make sure that you study this list as a foundation for your committee work and definitely spend time in prayer as a group. Follow the general guide in this paper and be prayerful as you go!

## HOW DO WE FINISH OUR MISSION?

1. Go over this paper and get some guidance from the lead pastor (he works with these guys after all).
  - a. Study this paper and read your Bible.
  - b. See what suggestions the lead pastor may have for the committee.
2. Consider the positions on the board that are open.
3. Consider the men who are currently holding those positions. Who are they?
  - a. Are these men still qualified biblically to be in this position? What do you see?
  - b. Are these men still willing to serve in their positions (sometimes guys want a break)? Ask them.
4. If the men in the open positions are still biblically qualified and still willing to serve your committee work should be done.
  - a. We want to keep leaders in their position if they are biblically qualified.
  - b. Removing leaders for unbiblical reasons (e.g. someone could do it faster, "my friend could do it better", "that guy is too old," etc.) is unwise and just simply bad.
  - c. Being an elder is not a popularity contest, we don't want to create unnecessary and unbiblical jockeying for positions. This creates power-plays and division in the church.
5. Inform the lead pastor that you find the current leadership to be biblically satisfying and that **your committee is done**.
6. If there are positions to fill because of biblical reasons, take the matter to the pastor so we can begin to immediately and wisely address the sin.
  - a. The Bible tells us not to receive an accusation against an elder when he is not present. Thus, if you discover unrepentant sin, this must be addressed in a biblical manner.
  - b. Contact the lead pastor and he will arrange a meeting to biblically confront the findings of the committee. For example, if someone on the committee happens to know that an elder gets drunk periodically, then this news will be shared with the elder to lovingly confront his sin and to remove him from his position. If sin goes unaddressed it will only bring harm to the church, so please share what you know or even suspect if there is warrant.
7. If sin is unfounded upon investigation and confrontation, your committee should finish at step 5 above.
8. If sin is founded upon investigation and confrontation, your committee must proceed to fill the position(s) of the elder removed for sin (proceed to 9a).
  9. If there are positions to fill because a guy(s) wants a break from the board, then consult a current members list.
    - a. Consider what role the elder (of the opening position) plays.
    - b. Interview the elder (or lead pastor) to see what things to look for in a replacement (a good elder will usually groom a replacement and not leave the church hanging).
    - c. Look at the list of current church members and see what men fit the elder qualifications and can handle the elder responsibilities. In such a case, the lead pastor will most likely have recommendations for the committee to consider against the scripture.
    - d. Select one man to fill each open position. Do not present two candidates for one position. We do not want to create an atmosphere of voting for people to fill slots, as though it were a popularity thing.
10. Submit your selected elder(s) for each open position to the lead pastor and church board in writing, signed by your committee.
11. Once your submission is completed, **your committee is done. Thanks for your work.**

If there is a problem with an elder or elders whose position(s) is open, then proceed to step 6 or step 9.



**TIPS:** Open your meetings with prayer. Make sure everyone has studied this paper before your work begins. Go over the paper on your first meeting. Don't make this process harder than it needs to be. Ideally, you love your leaders and your leaders love serving in their positions. This means that your committee may only need to meet once or twice, because your leaders are biblical and they want to keep serving. If things get messy ask the lead pastor for help. By confronting the sin you are protecting your church from harm.

## Qualifications of an Elder

The following is a list of the biblical qualifications that an elder must possess. No elder will be a perfect man, but if he is clearly and persistently lacking in any of these qualities, he cannot serve in the church as an elder. An elder must be:

1. **above reproach** (lit. "blameless") 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7.  
This qualification is the summation of all of the rest. It means that there is nothing in his life that would justify a legitimate accusation of misconduct or call his character into question.
2. **the husband of one wife** (lit. "a one-woman man") 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6.  
Whether a man is single or married, he must be living a sexually pure life. For a married elder, it also means that he must be faithfully devoted to loving his wife (Ephesians 5:25; 1 Peter 3:7).
3. **temperate** (moderate, not given to excess) 1 Timothy 3:2.  
In all areas of life, an elder must be calm, well-balanced, careful, and sane—one who at all times is capable of clear thinking and sound judgment.
4. **sober-minded** (a sensible, serious person) 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8.  
This does not mean that an elder may not laugh or joke or play. It means he leads a disciplined life, not allowing frivolous activities to distract him from more serious and important concerns.
5. **of good behavior** (respectable, orderly) 1 Timothy 3:2.  
The opposite of the Greek in this case is chaos (utter confusion). An elder's outward behavior must demonstrate decency, orderliness, and self-control.
6. **hospitable** (lit. "one who loves strangers") 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8.  
An elder must be one who shows genuine kindness and hospitality, not only to the members of his church, but also to people he does not know well.
7. **a lover of what is good** (lit. "one who is inclined to do good") Titus 1:8.  
Closely related to hospitality, an elder must be one who not only loves the concept of goodness, but also is prone to doing good to others.
8. **able to teach** (lit. "skilled in teaching") 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9.  
There is no biblical requirement that an elder have a formal education, but he must be an able teacher and defender of the truth (cf. 2 Timothy 2:2, 24; 2:15; Titus 2:7-8).
9. **not given to wine** (lit. "not a drinker" or "not addicted to wine") 1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7.  
Though not an absolute prohibition, this is a serious warning that an elder cannot be preoccupied with alcohol or known as a drinker. Due to abuse, however, it may be advisable for elders to abstain from alcohol altogether in order to avoid offense or damaging influence (cf. Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 8).
10. **not violent** (lit. not "a giver of blows," or "a striker") 1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7.  
An elder must be a man who solves problems and settles disputes peacefully, using persuasive words and calm demeanor, not his fists or other weapons.
11. **gentle** (patient, gracious, forgiving) 1 Timothy 3:3; 2 Timothy 2:24.  
An elder must not be a man who holds a grudge or is slow to forgive. He must be one who will patiently bear with those who are needy, difficult, reluctant to change, or slow to learn.
12. **not quick-tempered** (he must be slow to anger) Titus 1:7; James 1:19-20  
Anger in itself is not always a sin. There is a righteous sort of anger. An elder, though, must be a man who recognizes and controls his own propensity to become angry.
13. **not quarrelsome** (not argumentative) 1 Timothy 3:3; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; James 3:13-18  
He must be a man who will defend the truth strongly and is willing to fight evil, but in a biblical manner. He must not be one who allows himself to become embroiled in hostile disputes or petty arguments.
14. **just** (righteous or upright) Titus 1:8.  
He is a man who is known for doing what is right. He lives a life of practical righteousness, trying to reflect God's view in every decision he makes.
15. **holy** (lit. "devout" or "set apart to God") Titus 1:8.  
An elder must be firmly committed to God and His Word. He must be faithful to the ministry and to biblical doctrine, not one who gives in to social, political, or religious pressure to compromise.
16. **self-controlled** (or self-disciplined) Titus 1:8.  
He must be a man who is disciplined in terms of his response to physical desires for food, pleasure, comfort, money, sleep, sex, or anything else which could cause him to stumble.
17. **not covetous** (not a lover of money) 1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 5:2.  
An elder cannot be motivated in the ministry by financial gain or greedy in his lifestyle. He is a man who will trust the Lord, be content with what is provided, and be thankful.

18. **one who rules his own house well** (a good manager and leader) 1 Timothy 3:4; Titus 1:6.  
An elder must have proven himself a good manager of his children (if he has children), his personal finances, and his household in general.
19. **having his children in submission with all reverence** (having obedient, respectful, faithful children) 1 Timothy 3:4-5; Titus 1:6.  
The children of an elder must not have a reputation for uncontrolled behavior or insubordination. Additionally, an elder must not be a harsh or brutal man, but must maintain order in his family through loving leadership, consistent biblical training, and proper discipline.
20. **not a novice** (not a new or immature believer) 1 Timothy 3:6.  
An elder must be a mature believer, especially in relation to others in his particular church. If even a capable man is elevated to the position too rapidly, he will battle with pride.
21. **He must have a good testimony among those who are outside** (well respected even by unbelievers in the community) 1 Timothy 3:7.  
An elder must have a consistently good testimony in all places and with all people (aside from those who would persecute him or accuse him falsely), even outside the church. He must be just, honest, peaceable, and loving.  
**He must serve, not by compulsion, but willingly . . . eagerly** (he must desire to serve) 1 Peter 5:2; 1 Timothy 3:1.  
Elders must not be pressured into service if it is not their personal desire to serve in this capacity. An elder's desire to serve must be God-given and his motives pure.
22. **not self-willed** (not anxious to control others or to have his own way) Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 5:3.  
An elder must not be a man who is anxious to dominate or control others. He must be a team-player, realizing that while he is a shepherd, he is also one of the sheep.
23. **an example to the flock:** 1 Peter 5:3; Titus 2:7.  
An elder will not be perfect, but he must be a man who will lead the church, by instruction and example, according to God's Word.

## Duties of an Elder<sup>1</sup>

In the Bible, the distinction is made between a shepherd and a hired hand (John 10:11-15). A shepherd (elder) has in his heart a God-given love for the sheep and a desire to care for those entrusted to him. The hired hand is unwilling to become as emotionally involved—unwilling to confront the dangers that threaten the sheep—unwilling to truly love the people under his care. As you consider a man for the position of elder, evaluate him in light of these six essential duties which characterize a good shepherd:

1. **Pastoral preaching**  
An elder must provide personal biblical instruction for increasing knowledge, character, skills, knowledge, faith, love, and enthusiasm. The elder should know his doctrine really good and preach it faithfully, accurately handling the scriptures (Acts 20:20, 27; 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 4:1-2 Titus 3:1-2, 8)
2. **Pastoral guidance**  
An elder must offer objective biblical direction through conflicts, reversals of life, distortions in thinking, and difficult decisions for those under his care. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
3. **Pastoral consolation**  
An elder must give spiritual comfort during trials. (2 Corinthians 1:3-7; Thessalonians 5:14)
4. **Pastoral guardianship**  
An elder must watch out for the enemy's assaults on the weakness of the sheep. He must warn the sheep of danger and discipline them when they become rebellious. He must call out heretics and whack-o's who divide the church (Acts 20:28-31; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 1 Timothy 6:20; 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Hebrews 13:17)
5. **Pastoral intercession**  
An elder must pray with and for those entrusted to him. (1 Samuel 12:23; Romans 1:9; Ephesians 1:15-21; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-12)

<sup>1</sup> A more complete treatment of these six duties can be found in Restoring Pastoral Ministry, in the chapter entitled "The Cure of Souls," by Jim Elliff (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2001) p. 147ff.

## COMITTEE NOTES:

### Basic questions to answer:

What positions are open? What do these positions involve / require besides the biblical stuff?

Who is currently filling the open positions and are they: (1) still biblically qualified and (2) still willing to serve?

If so, what prayers can we offer for these men as we affirm them serving on the board?

If not, what sin(s) does the person(s) have that disqualifies them and how do we deal with it?

If so, what men among our current membership list can we recommend to fill their positions?

Who will write the letter to the board with our recommendation?

### Other questions:

### Miscellaneous: