

Woodlawn Christian Church Elder Affirmation Process

In the Bible, elders were carefully chosen using a combination of thoughtful outside spiritual leaders (i.e. the Apostle Paul) and wisdom from members of the local body of believers. As a local church became established and developed its own internal leadership, the congregation alone was asked to seek the Holy Spirit's wisdom in choosing worthy men to focus on the vision and mission of the church.

Each year, we at Woodlawn Christian Church ask the question: Who are these men? Our leadership team asks you to prayerfully consider who could or should fill this most vital role in our church.

What is an elder?

Biblically, an elder is an older man (The Greek word is *presbuteros*) who has been set apart by God and by the local congregation to watch carefully (The Greek word is *episkopos*) over God's people in a particular place. These men focus on the ministry of the Word of God and leading His church to achieve God's vision for her. A good physical description of this role, found in both the Old and New Testament, is that of the *shepherd*. A shepherd guides the flock firmly and caringly, because he has the best interest of the sheep in mind.

Does an elder have to be "old?"

The word *presbuteros* means "older man," but no age requirement is given in Scripture. The ideal elder is a man who shows spiritual wisdom and maturity.

What are the qualities of an elder?

We need to use caution when looking at Paul's discussion of elders in I Timothy 3, Titus 1 and I Peter 5. Sometimes we call these lists "qualifications." It would be better to use the word "qualities." If you were to line up any one man against this list, there would be very few (if any) who fit this description with 100% accuracy.

We also do not believe that this list was intended to be complete or exhaustive. For example, there is nothing here about an elder being a man of prayer or even that he be baptized. We would normally consider those factors to be very important, and their absence doesn't make them less important in the process. On the other hand, we could start asking all kinds of questions about the list itself: "What if he is single? What if he and his wife had no children?" Our point is to look at each potential elder in the light of both Scripture and God's grace.

No man is perfect, but obviously the role of elder requires a high standard. The Apostle Paul notes the following qualities in I Timothy 3, Titus 1 and I Peter 5 (from *The Message*):

- well thought-of by people within the church as well as in the community
- committed to his wife
- cool and collected
- accessible
- hospitable
- knows what he is talking about
- not too fond of wine
- not pushy but gentle and humble
- not thin-skinned
- not money-hungry
- handle his own affairs well
- attentive to his own children and has their respect
- children are believers
- not a new believer
- helpful
- wise
- fair
- reverent
- have a good grip on the Word of God
- care for God's flock with the diligence of a shepherd
- serve not because you have to, but because you want to please God

The nomination form is on the other side. If you have someone you would like to nominate, please complete and return this form to the church office by _____. Thank you.

Elder Nomination Form

Please fill out the information below completely. Here are the guidelines for this process.

1. **By nominating someone for elder, you are committing to lifting up all the elders in prayer** as they care for our church and lead us toward God's future. Do not nominate anyone if you are unwilling to take all the elders before the throne of God in prayer.
2. **On the nomination form, there is a place for you to sign AND there is a place for your nominee to sign.** I Peter 5:2 states that an elder should be willing to serve. If you as a nominator believe that a certain individual would make a good elder, it is your responsibility to tell them. Then if they agree with you and if they desire the position, you both sign the nomination form. Both signatures must be on the form for the nomination to be considered.
3. **Elders will be chosen and affirmed only after preparation and prayer.** A nomination alone is not sufficient to appoint an elder.
 - a. A nomination must come from a member of Woodlawn Christian Church. Living out our three core values is very important in the nomination process. We believe that those who nominate elders should provide the best example for all.
 - i. WORSHIP: regular attendance on Sunday morning and faithful stewardship in giving to the work of the church
 - ii. CONNECT: regular involvement in a smaller group
 - iii. COMMIT: faithful involvement in service at WCC
 - b. Each nominee will have a personal interview and time of prayer with the current eldership, who will prayerfully determine the individuals to be brought before the congregation.
 - c. The congregation will then have the opportunity and responsibility to affirm the individuals that are brought before them. This is done by a congregational vote.

After prayerful consideration, I nominate _____ for the role of elder at Woodlawn Christian Church. I understand the Biblical role of elder as a shepherd who listens to the Holy Spirit and guides the flock toward God's vision for His church through prayer and study of the Word. I commit to lifting up all our elders in prayer.

I believe that he will be a good elder because:

Signature of nominator: _____

After prayerful consideration, I accept my nomination for the role of elder at Woodlawn Christian Church. I ask the church to consider my nomination prayerfully. I understand that my nomination must be approved by the current eldership and be affirmed by the congregation.

Signature of elder nominee: _____