

Crossway Christian Church Leadership

The head of Crossway Christian Church is Jesus Christ. As an organization, we seek to reflect His priorities in all we do and how we do it. No decision is ever made that would knowingly contradict any teaching or example of Jesus. On a human level, two primary groups of people direct the ministries of CCC. Those bodies are the Elders and the Staff. We believe this provides a collaborative synergy to help us accomplish our mission. A description of the two groups working together is best stated as follows. The Elders, under the authority of Scripture and immersed in prayer, protect the integrity of our doctrine, our community and our mission. The Staff direct the day-to-day ministry efforts of accomplishing the mission. All of this happens under the protective watch care and supervision of the Elders. In short, we desire to be Elder protected and Staff led.

The Elders

Elder's Role

We believe the New Testament teaches that the church is to be led by a plurality of godly leaders known as Elders (used synonymously with Shepherds and Bishops/Overseers). The Elders are members of Crossway who provide general watchcare and oversight. Ultimate responsibility for the local church falls upon the Elders. The Bible indicates that the decision-making authority in the church rests with the Elders. They are charged by God to protect the integrity of our doctrine, our community and our mission. Theirs is a ministry of protection.

The Elders are given ultimate responsibility and authority to see that the church remains on a true course biblically, that its people are appropriately shepherding and being shepherded, that the body is being fed through insightful and accurate biblical teaching and that the life of the church is being well managed with the assistance of other competent godly leaders. They are to care about the well-being of members, regularly praying for the sick. They are to guard the body against harmful influences, confronting those who contradict biblical truth, who cause disharmony in the body, or who continue in a pattern of sinful behavior. In doing so, they close potential entrances for Satan so that the truth of Christ remains credible to both the congregation and the community. (1 Pet. 5:1-4, Acts 20:28-31, Titus 1:9, James 5:14).

In response to the biblical pattern of leadership, members of the body are taught in Scripture to lovingly support their leaders and submit to their leadership. (Heb. 13:17, 1 Thes. 5:12-13).

The Lead Pastor's Role

The Lead Pastor serves as an Elder. In addition to his pastoral role as an Elder, the Lead Pastor is primarily responsible to be a teacher of the Word of God and to

provide strategic leadership and vision to the staff and church as a whole. He is to help people be fully developing followers of Christ through insightful and accurate presentations of biblical truth, equipping them for works of ministry. He must strive to teach and lead by word and example, and he must stress both the understanding and the implementation of God's truth.

Qualities and Characteristics

The New Testament provides two listings of qualities and characteristics of the kind of person who should or could serve the church as an Elder. These two passages are 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:1-9.

We do not feel Paul intended these lists to be exhaustive gauntlet style checklists for the purpose of disqualifying potential candidates. The lists are not quantitative checklists, as many, if not all, of the qualities listed cannot be quantitatively measured, at least humanly speaking. We believe they are intended for positive use, in order to discern who should be an Elder as opposed to who should not be an Elder. Although these lists contain the key qualities and characteristics of a life well lived, they are not meant to be exhaustive. Ultimately, an elder is someone who is living the way Jesus would if He were in his place, whose life and wisdom the congregation respects and longs to follow.

Interpretation

The following is our brief interpretation of the qualities and characteristics included in the two lists. We begin with 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and only add qualities from Titus 1:5-9 that are not mentioned in, or are significantly different from, 1 Timothy 3:1-7. A translation from the original language occurs in italics, followed by comments about the verse.

1 Timothy 3:1-7

1. *If anyone aspires to the office of an overseer, he desires a good work.*

An Elder is someone who serves willingly. There are great time, emotional, physical and spiritual demands placed on Elders, therefore this leadership role should only be embraced by one who is willing. People who serve as Elders should desire, but not need, to serve as an Elder.

2. *It is necessary, therefore, for the overseer to continue being above reproach, faithful to his wife, balanced, self-controlled in thought, respected for orderliness, hospitable, skillful in teaching,*

Above reproach means not merely a person of good reputation but a person who deserves such a reputation. An Elder, if married, should be faithful to his wife, his marriage a solid example to those within and those outside the church. He should love his wife as Christ loves the church. An Elder should be balanced in his life, not on the verge of toppling over in any area. An Elder should be in control of himself, even down to his thoughts which often reveal our true character. That an Elder should be respected for orderliness carries with it the orderly fulfillment of all duties as well as the ordering of the inner life from which these duties spring.

3. *not one who is a slave to drink, not given to blows but gentle, not contentious, not a lover of money,*

Elders should not be a slave to anything except Christ. If an Elder drinks alcoholic beverages, he should do so in an extremely conscientious manner, realizing its enslaving power and that some in the church have been enslaved to alcohol. This wisdom from Paul also has merit with regard to drugs and other addictive substances and behaviors. Nothing but the Spirit of God should control the Elder. An Elder should be considered gentle not violent. An Elder should not ‘stir up the pot’ but be concerned with the restoration that leads to harmony. An Elder should not be a greedy person, caught up in money and possessions: rather he should be an example of generosity to God’s people.

- 4-5. *a good manager of one’s own house, having children in submission out of respect, for if someone does not have the know how to manage their own house, how can they care for the church of God.*

An Elder, if he has children, should be an example of a godly father. This does not mean an Elder must be a perfect father, but one who sets a pattern of obedience due to love and respect, not fear and intimidation.

6. *Not a new Christian in order that they not be puffed up by pride and fall into the judgment of the devil.*

Not a new Christian is a translation of a word that was frequently used of newly planted trees not yet strong enough to face the winds of the world. Paul does not give a set amount of time that one must be a Christian before he can serve as an Elder because people mature at different rates. Paul’s emphasis is on being cautious not to put new believers in a tempting place of authority. Pride is a very subtle and often accepted sin that is cancerous for the Christian leader.

7. *And it is also necessary to have an honorable witness before the ones outside in order to not fall into disgrace and a trap made by the devil.*

Those outside are most certainly non-Christians. How is this particular person viewed by the people in his neighborhood, place of employment, place of recreation, etc.? Would the people in his life be surprised to learn that he is a leader in his church? By *honorable witness* the idea is not just that there should be an absence of negative behavior in front of these people, but further, that there should be an abundance of positive, Christ-honoring behavior.

Titus 1:5-9

6. *having children who are faithful*

The above phrase is often translated as *having children who are believers*. Although the phrase can be translated in this way, a closer study indicates that the focus is more on the children’s faithfulness to their father’s authority as in children who are *in submission out of respect* (1 Tim. 3:4). The phrase that follows, *not accused of dissipation or rebellion*, expresses the opposite behavior to *children who are faithful*. This does not mean that a child’s faith development should be ignored. Truly, an Elder’s first priority of faith development should be to his own children and he should be an example to the church in this regard. But this does not mean that a man is automatically disqualified if a child has not made a public profession of faith in Christ.

8. *a lover of goodness*

More than simply being a good person, an Elder should be a lover of goodness. He should strive for goodness in himself and in the church. Sometimes that means a kind word or action but may also mean confronting behavior that does not honor God and promote goodness. *just*

Sometimes translated, *upright*, an Elder is someone who lives in accordance with God's law. The focus is on righteous living or living in a way that is right according to Scripture.

devout

Sometimes translated, *holy*, the picture is of someone whose life is pleasing to God.

9. *He must have a firm grasp on the trustworthy message as it has been taught so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict it.*

The Elders in Paul's day did not yet have the completed Bible and relied on oral teaching from the Apostles. For our application it is clear that an Elder must not be a stranger to what the Bible teaches: to its proper interpretation, application, and implementation. He must be able to properly use scripture to formulate sound doctrine both to encourage others and, when necessary, to correct false doctrine.

Selection Process

The Bible does not provide us with a step-by-step process for determining who should serve as an Elder. The only pattern seen in scripture is that existing church leaders selected Elders. Current church leaders, however, should not make this decision in isolation. This decision should be made after spending time listening to the Holy Spirit in an attempt to discern who God would have serve as Elders at Crossway. We know the Holy Spirit will speak to us through prayer, the Bible, and faithful Christians who make up the body of Christ here at Crossway. We also believe he will speak to our existing Elders as they dialogue with the candidate and his wife. Therefore, our process will involve prayer, the Bible, the members of Crossway, and plenty of discussion with the candidate. We feel the Bible gives us the freedom to establish and adjust a wise process keeping these things in mind. Our current process is listed below with a suggested timeline (not mandatory) in parentheses. This process will occur every two years. The hiring process for the Lead Pastor will also serve as his selection process for Eldership.

1. The congregation will be provided with Crossway's Church Leadership document containing teaching on the Biblical qualities and characteristics for Elders and their scriptural role. (Week 1)
2. With Biblical qualities and characteristics in mind, members of Crossway (18 years of age and older) will be given 30 days to prayerfully submit the names of members for consideration as Elders. Prior to this, the submitter should approach the potential candidate and inform him of their desire to submit his name for consideration. If, after prayerful consideration, the potential candidate is in agreement, the person approaching him may submit his name to the nominating team. A person may withdraw his name at any point if he does not aspire to the position of Elder or if he does not believe his life adequately reflects the qualities and characteristics. (Weeks 1-4)

3. Each man whose name is submitted will be emailed Crossway's Elder Questionnaire. The questionnaire will be sent as a Word document enabling candidates to type their answers directly into the electronic document. Candidates should prayerfully and thoughtfully respond to the questions. Upon completing the questionnaire it should be sent back to the Lead Pastor. (Weeks 1-4)
4. The existing Elders will review the written questionnaires. If the Elders determine a candidate should not move forward in the process, two of the Elders will meet with the candidate to share why the Elders do not feel he should serve as an Elder at this time. Those candidates who move forward in the process will be notified and scheduled for an in-person interview. Any questions, concerns or issues that arise from the questionnaire, may be followed up on by the Elders or specific follow-up questions passed along to the interview team. (Weeks 2-6)
5. The Elders will appoint an interview team consisting of at least three, but no more than five members, including two Elders. This team will meet to pray, review the qualities and characteristics for Elders and finalize questions to ask the potential candidates. (Weeks 2-6)
6. The interview team will conduct thorough interviews with each candidate. The team will prayerfully consider and discuss each candidate and make recommendations to the full Elder team. Those candidates who are not recommended to continue in the process will be informed as to the reason by at least two Elders. (Weeks 5-10)
7. The Elder team will meet with the candidates for a period of 6-8 weeks for discussion, training and spiritual growth. (Weeks 10-18)
8. The Elder team will conduct the final interview with the candidates and spouses. (Weeks 18-19)
9. The names of prospective Elders will be brought before the members of the church, who will be given 30 days to show just cause if they believe one of the prospective Elders is not qualified to serve. Members must be willing to discuss his or her concern either privately with the candidate or with the candidate and two existing Elders. If the concern is not resolved, then the concern will be brought to the entire Elder team. (Weeks 20-23)
10. At the end of the 30-day period, if no just cause has been shown as to why the prospective Elders should not serve, they will be presented to the church and affirmed as Elders. (Week 24)

Review Process

The review process is designed to give Elders an opportunity to confirm God's call to be an Elder and the congregation's affirmation of them as an Elder. The following process will be used for such a review.

1. The Lead Pastor shall form a review team of 3-5 ministry leaders from the church congregation. This team meets with each sitting Elder (except the Lead Pastor) to review the quality of their character and life.
2. After prayerfully considering each person, the review team will make recommendations to the full Elder team as to whether or not this person should continue serving as an Elder.
3. If an Elder is not recommended for continued service, the concerns will be brought before the Elders for review and appropriate action.
4. Those Elders who are recommended for continued service to the church will be presented to the congregation for affirmation.
5. The members of the church will be given 30 days to show just cause as to why any of these Elders would not be qualified to serve. Members must be willing to discuss his or her concern either privately with the candidate or with the candidate and two existing Elders. If the concern is not resolved, then the concern will be brought to the entire Elder team.
6. At the end of the 30 day period, if no just cause has been shown as to why the Elders should not continue serving, they will be presented to the church and affirmed to continue as Elders.
7. This process will occur every two years, in the opposite year of the new Elder Selection Process.
8. The Lead Pastor's Review – An annual review of the Lead Pastor will be conducted by the non-staff Elders. This review will consider input from staff and lay people in the church who work closely with the Lead Pastor.

Other Information

Duration – There is no set duration for the service of an Elder. Elders serve as they are called by God and recognized by the congregation.

Number of Elders – The New Testament does not mention a recommended number of Elders. For the purposes of community, wisdom and accountability, there will always be more than one Elder. The maximum number of Elders will be assessed based on the size of the church and the corresponding level of responsibilities.

Decision-making – In an atmosphere of prayer, the Elders will make decisions by consensus, striving to hear God speak through one unified voice. The Elders will not vote.

Gender – From reading the New Testament, we believe that the pattern of the early church was for men to serve as Elders. In our effort to be a New Testament church, we will follow that pattern and select men to serve as Elders. For those who have a question regarding what roles are acceptable for women at Crossway, we have included here our statement *On Women and the Church*.

On Women and the Church

Women at Crossway are free to use their spiritual gifts and serve in the church in any ministry capacity except for the role of an Elder. We believe the New Testament pattern is that men served as Elders in the early church. Although there are a few passages which seem to prohibit women from doing certain things in the church, there are examples in Scripture of women doing these things. Since we do not believe the Bible contradicts itself, there must be more to those prohibitive passages than a simple face value understanding. It is very important that each passage be interpreted correctly in light of its context within the particular book, the New Testament, and the Bible as a whole. Having done so to the best of our ability we believe women are free to use their spiritual gifts to serve in the church, outside of Eldership, in a way that builds up the body of Christ. Women and men must serve with respect and in submission to the Elders.

(Scriptures that convey a limited role for women - 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; 1 Corinthians 14:34-36; 1 Timothy 2:8-15. Scriptures that convey a more open role for women - Acts 1:14; 2:16-18; 18:18-26; 21:9; Romans 16; Galatians 3:28.)

The Staff

The staff is empowered by the Elders to direct the day-to-day affairs of the ministries of the church. They are paid so they can devote the best hours of their day to building and equipping ministries. The staff's main job is to build and coordinate coaches, leaders, and teams of servant volunteers so ministry can happen and the church's mission be accomplished. The specific staff needs and roles will vary from time to time and one season of ministry to another. The Staff is led by the Lead Pastor.

The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is empowered by the Elders to provide financial oversight and lead in other areas as designated by the Elders. Those serving on the Board of Directors are regular attenders of Crossway with financial/marketplace expertise, which they use to serve the church. The Board of Directors, its tasks and its projects can be created, adjusted and dissolved at the discretion of the Elders. The Executive Pastor leads the Board of Directors.