

# The Biblical Basis for Shepherd Ministries

*“Serving the Lord with gladness.”*



## Biblical Basis for Elder Ministries

The term "elder" is frequently misunderstood today. In the Old Testament and early New Testament, when the Jewish patterns were still in place, it meant "elder statesman." The Sanhedrin were all "elders of the people." They were the experienced and wise men of the community.

As the church began to function in New Testament times it took on other meanings beyond the simple older wise man. Timothy was an elder, yet he was young, and Paul exhorted him to not let anyone despise his youth. We make the distinction of elders being lay, unpaid people, and pastors paid overseers, but the Bible does not make such a distinction.

It is our purpose here to show that elders are the core of leadership in the local church. We will also show that elders are defined using three Greek words that are variously translated in the Bible as "elder," "bishop," and "pastor." We will show how the three are one of the same and used interchangeably throughout the New Testament.

Elder is a special New Testament word. It is translated as elder, bishop, and pastor. In its origin use it was correlated with leadership in the church. There are three New Testament words are used to describe the office and function of what we know as a pastor or elder. We make the distinction of elders being lay, unpaid people, and pastors paid overseers, but the bible does not make such a distinction. The numbers within brackets are the number of the Greek word in Strong's Concordance.

- Presbuteros <4245> = elder, presbyter
- Episkopos <1984> = bishop, overseer
- Poimen <4166> = pastor, shepherd

**"Presbuteros"** referred to aged ones, and not necessarily an office. Yet it becomes clear by the use of the term that it is one who 1) Rules 2) Labors in the Word and doctrine 3) Prays for the sick 4) Are always plural in the church (more than one).

- 1 Timothy 5:17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.
- Titus 1:5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:
- James 5:14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

Peter considered himself to be a "Presbuteros."

*"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed."* –1 Peter 5:1

The apostle John referred to himself as a Presbuteros. Though he was by office an "apostle" in function he was an elder (presbuteros).

- 2 John 1:1 *The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;*
- 3 John 1:1 *The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.*

## **Relationship Between Pastors - Elders - Deacons**

In Philippians 1:1 Paul makes reference to the close proximity of the relationship of Elders and Deacons

*“Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers (episkopos) and deacons (diakonos):”*

In Philippi Paul recognized the two key leadership roles of the church to be vested in overseers (episkopos) and deacons (diakonos). Both were evident in the local assemblies. Both were necessary to the effective ministry to the body of Christ.

Notice that Paul describes them as “overseers” and uses the word “episkopos.” They are plural. There usually was not single pastor/elder over the flock but a team of pastor/elders shepherding the congregation.

Team ministry is an important theme in Jesus ministry and also that of the apostles and the early church. Bishops were overseers and pastors were feeders, protectors, watchmen, and examples to the flock. Indeed, Peter combines the two in our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:25) when he calls him Shepherd and Bishop.

*In our study we have excluded the use of “elder” where it refers to the chief priests and elders, as well as elders before the throne in Revelation to save space and since it is not helpful to discerning the use in the New Testament church. Elders, by whatever name they were called, were the building blocks of leadership in the church. For a full understanding of eldership and it's function study the following passages*

*[Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2-23; 16:4; 20:17-20; 21:18; 22:5;  
1 Tim 3; 5:1, 17, 19; Titus 1; Heb 13; Jam 5:14; 1 Pet 5]*

## **“PRESBUTEROS” – ELDER**

### **PRESBUTEROS**

<4245> presbuteros pres-boo'-ter-os  
comparative of presbus (elderly); TDNT-6:651,931; adj  
AV-elder 64, old man 1, eldest 1, elder woman 1; 67

- 1) elder, of age, 1a) the elder of two people
- 1b) advanced in life, an elder, a senior 1b1) forefathers
- 2) a term of rank or office 2a) among the Jews
- 2a1) members of the great council or Sanhedrin (because in early times the rulers of the people, judges, etc., were selected from elderly men)
- 2a2) of those who in separate cities managed public affairs and administered justice
- 2b) among the Christians, those who presided over the assemblies (or churches) The NT uses the term bishop, elders, and presbyters interchangeably
- 2c) the twenty four members of the heavenly Sanhedrin or court seated on thrones around the throne of God

#### ELDER (singular)

- 1 Timothy 5:1 Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren;
- 1 Timothy 5:2 The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.
- 1 Timothy 5:19 Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.
- 1 Peter 5:1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:
- 1 Peter 5:5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.
- 2 John 1:1 The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;
- 3 John 1:1 The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

#### ELDERS (plural)

- All references in the book of Acts: Acts 11:30; Acts 14:23; Acts 15:2; Acts 15:4; Acts 15:6; Acts 15:22; Acts 15:23; Acts 16:4; Acts 20:17; Acts 21:18
- 1 Timothy 5:17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.
- Titus 1:5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:
- Hebrews 11:2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.
- James 5:14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:
- 1 Peter 5:1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

## **BISHOP / OVERSEER**

### **EPISKOPE**

<1984> episkope (ep-is-kop-ay')  
from 1980; (to look out for) and from 4649; (watchman)  
AV-visitation 2, bishoprick 1, office of a bishop 1; 4

- 1) investigation, inspection, visitation
- 1a) that act by which God looks into and searches out the ways, deeds character, of men, in order to adjudge them their lot accordingly, whether joyous or sad
- 1b) oversight
- 1b1) overseership, office, charge, the office of an elder
- 1b2) the overseer or presiding officers of a Christian church

### **FROM THE VERB “TO VISIT”**

<1980> episkeptomai (ep-ee-skep'-tom-ah-ee) – translated as “visit” or “look after”  
middle voice from 1909 (look out for) and the base of 4649 (watchman)  
AV-visit 10, look out 1; 11

- 1) to look upon or after, to inspect, examine with the eyes
- 1a) in order to see how he is, i.e. to visit, go to see one
- 1a1) the poor and afflicted, the sick
- 1b) to look upon in order to help or to benefit
- 1b1) to look after, have care for, provide for: of God
- 1c) to look (about) for, look out (one to choose, employ, etc.)

#### Usage:

- Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.
- Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:
- 1 Timothy 3:1 This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.
- 1 Timothy 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;
- Titus 1:7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;
- 1 Peter 2:25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.
- Hebrews 13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you.

## PASTOR / SHEPHERD

Peter tied elder (presbuteros) together with shepherd (poimen) when he referred to Jesus as the Chief Shepherd (archi-poimen) He also calls himself an elder (presbuteros). Note that Jesus clearly delineated Peter's calling to "feed my sheep" in John 21:16-17. Peter echoes that to elders in the first epistle of Peter.

*1 Peter 5:1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*

### **POIMEN**

<4166> poimen (poy-mane')

AV-shepherd 15, Shepherd 2, pastor 1; 18

1) a herdsman, esp. a shepherd

1a) he to whose care and control others have committed themselves, and whose precepts they follow

2a) the presiding officer, manager, director, of any assembly: so of Christ the Head of the church

2a1) of the overseers of the Christian assemblies

2a2) of kings and princes

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The tasks of a Near Eastern shepherd were:

- to watch for enemies trying to attack the sheep -to defend the sheep from attackers -to heal the wounded and sick sheep -to find and save lost or trapped sheep -to love them, sharing their lives and so earning their trust.

- Matthew 26:31 Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.
- Mark 14:27 And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.
- John 10:2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.
- John 10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.
- John 10:12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.
- John 10:14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.
- John 10:16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.
- Ephesians 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;
- Hebrews 13:20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,
- 1 Peter 2:25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

### **Chief Shepherd**

<750> archipoimen (ar-khee-poy'-mane)

from 746 and 4166; TDNT-6:485,901; n m

AV-chief shepherd 1; 1

1) chief shepherd

1a) of Christ the head of the church

**Word  
Pictures  
for  
Elders**

## Word Pictures For Elders

In recent years a debate has surfaced which argues for “elder rule” for the government of the church. In this case proponents argue that the elders are to be the ruling or governing body of the church. This concept has thrust elders into managerial roles rather than the biblical exemplary and spiritual role God intended. There is a danger in thinking of elders as “rulers” or “dictators.” Elders are to be “role models,” leading by example more than by legislation. The danger of elder rule is that it creates a scenario of politics of power. The church addressed the issue early on in Acts 6 when complaints arose that the Greek women were being left out in the administration. The elders (the apostles) established that the elders were to give themselves to “the Word of God and prayer.” The clear message was that administrative duties were “waiting on tables” ministries better suited for deacons, not elders. The following are “word pictures” that give us a better idea of what elders are all about.

### Overseer

“Episkopos” is the Greek word used to describe an elder’s leadership role. It means “overseer” as a watchman over the flocks in Israel that stood in a tower above the flock to gain a view of all that was happening. We would do well to understand what God commanded Ezekiel as a “watchman over the house of Israel.” This is what God means for elders.

*“So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.” – Ezekiel 33:7*

*“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch <sup><69></sup> for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.” – Hebrews 13:17*

#### **To Watch or Oversee**

<69> agrupneo ag-roop-neh'-o  
ultimately from 1 (as negative particle) and 5258; TDNT-2:338,195; v  
AV-watch 4; 4  
1) to be sleepless, keep awake, watch  
2) to be circumspect, attentive, ready

The management principles of the church of God are not the same as management principles of the world. The New Testament sense of management is that elders are to superintend, as guardians and protectors. There is no lordship intended here. The Greek words are all consistent with the watchman principle.

## **Guardian**

A guardian is one who has been given the legal custodianship, or parenthood, over another. Paul links this guardianship to that of a real parent's ability to supervise his family affairs.

*“One that ruleth<4291> well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule<4291> his own house, how shall he take care<1959> of the church of God?)” 1 Timothy 3:4-5*

*“Let the elders that rule <4291> well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.” – 1 Timothy 5:17*

### **To Rule Over**

4291 proistemi (*pro-is'-tay-mee*)

from 4253 and 2476;

AV-rule 5, maintain 2, be over 1; 8

1) to set or place before 2) to be over, to superintend, preside over 3) to be a protector or guardian 4) to care for, give attention to

## **Caretaker**

“Taking care” of the house of God should be looked at more as a medical term than a managerial term. A doctor is to “care for” his patients. It does not mean he is to manage them except in the sense of providing for their health. The same is true in the church context. We are a hospital, not a business.

### **To Take Care of**

1959 epimeleomai (*ep-ee-mel-eh'-om-ahee*)

middle voice from 1909 and the same as 3199; ;v

AV-take care of 3; 3

1) to take care of a person or thing, Used in Luke 10:35 of the Good Samaritan who took on responsibility for the wounded man.

Used in I Timothy 3:5 to describe the taking care of the church of God.

## Manager - Steward

*“For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;” – Titus 1:7*

### **A Steward**

3623 oikonomos (*oy-kon-om'-os*)

from 3624 and the base of 3551;

AV-steward 8, chamberlain 1, governor 1; 10

1) the manager of household or of household affairs

1a) esp. a steward, manager, superintendent (whether free-born or as was usually the case, a freed-man or a slave) to whom the head of the house or proprietor has entrusted the management of his affairs, the care of receipts and expenditures, and the duty of dealing out the proper portion to every servant and even to the children not yet of age

1b) the manager of a farm or landed estate, an overseer

1c) the superintendent of the city's finances, the treasurer of a city (or of treasurers or quaestors of kings)

2) metaph. the apostles and other Christian teachers and bishops and overseers

## Leader (as an example goes before)

*“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.” – Hebrews 13:17*

### **To Lead**

2233 hegeomai (*hayg-eh'-om-ahee*)

middle voice of a (presumed) strengthened form of 71;

AV-count 10, think 4, esteem 3, have rule over 3, be governor 2, misc 6; 28

1) to lead

1a) to go before 1b) to be a leader 1b1) to rule, command 1b2) to have authority over 1b3) a prince, of regal power, governor, viceroy, chief, leading as respects influence, controlling in counsel, overseers or leaders of the churches 1b4) used of any kind of leader, chief, commander

1b5) the leader in speech, chief, spokesman

2) to consider, deem, account, think

## A Lord

Peter dealt with this issue in I Peter 5. In the early church we already see that some elders were operating as “lords over God’s heritage.” Peter condemns this as ungodly.

*Neither as being lords over God's heritage,  
but being ensamples to the flock. – 1 Peter 5:3*

### **To Lord Over**

2634 katakurieuo (*kat-ak-oo-ree-yoo'-o*)

from 2596 and 2961;

AV-exercise dominion over 1, overcome 1, be lord over 1, exercise lordship over 1; 4

1) to bring under one's power, to subject one's self, to subdue, master

2) to hold in subjection, to be master of, exercise lordship over

## An Example

Both Paul and Peter use the idea of modeling in their exhortations to godliness. Elders are to be models of Christ in conduct. Paul says “*Be imitators of me as I also am of Christ.*” I Cor. 11:1 He uses the word “mimic.” Peter uses a different word that means “image” or “statue,” as in the sense of a replica. The word used is “Tupos,” meaning literally a type or forerunner.

### **A Pattern or Template**

5179 tupos *too'-pos*

from 5180; TDNT-8:246,1193; n m

AV-ensample 5, print 2, figure 2, example 2, pattern 2, fashion 1, manner 1, form 1; 16

1) the mark of a stroke or blow, print

2) a figure formed by a blow or impression 2a) of a figure or image or statue

2b) of the image of the gods

3) form 3a) the teaching which embodies the sum and substance of religion and represents it to the mind, manner of writing, the contents and form of a letter

4) an example

4a) in the technical sense, the pattern in conformity to which a thing must be made

4b) in an ethical sense, a dissuasive example, a pattern of warning

4b1) of ruinous events which serve as admonitions or warnings to others

4c) an example to be imitated 4c1) of men worthy of imitation

4d) in a doctrinal sense 4d1) of a type i.e. a person or thing prefiguring

## Creative Exercise

If you had to communicate the definition of “elder” to a culture whose language you did not know how would you help them understand what an elder is. Draw a picture below that depicts the ministry of elder.



**Qualifications**  
**for**  
**Elder/Shepherds**

## QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELDERS

### I Timothy 3:1-7

- 1 This *is* a true saying, If a man desire <3713> the office of a bishop <1984>, he desireth <1937> a good <2570> work <2041>.
- 2 A bishop <1985> then <3767> must <1163> be blameless <423>, the husband <435> of one <3391> wife <1135>, vigilant <3524>, sober <4998>, of good behaviour <2887>, given to hospitality <5382>, apt to teach <1317>;
- 3 Not given to wine <3943>, no striker <4131>, not greedy of filthy lucre <146>; but <235> patient <1933>, not a brawler <269>, not covetous <866>;
- 4 One that ruleth <4291> well <2573> his own house, having his children in subjection <5292> with all gravity <4587>;
- 5 (For if a man know not how to rule <4291> his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)
- 6 Not a novice <3504>, lest being lifted up with pride <5187> he fall into the condemnation of the devil.
- 7 Moreover he must <1163> have a good <2570> report <3141> of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

### Titus 1:6-9

- 6 If any be blameless <410>, the husband <435> of one <3391> wife <1135>, having faithful <4103> children not accused <1722> of riot <810> or unruly <506>.
- 7 For a bishop <1985> must be blameless <410>, as the steward <3623> of God; not selfwilled <829>, not soon angry <3711>, not given to wine <3943>, no striker <4131>, not given to filthy lucre <146>;
- 8 But a lover of hospitality <5382>, a lover of good men <5358>, sober <4998>, just <1342>, holy <3741>, temperate <1468>;
- 9 Holding fast <472> the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine <1319> both to exhort <3870> and to convince <1651> the gainsayers <483>.

## BIBLICAL QUALIFICATIONS

### External Qualifications

- <0435> Husband of one wife / male - aner
- <4103> Faithful children / believers - pistos
- <5292> Obedient children - hupotage
- <4291> Rule house / cause to stand - proistemi
- <3504> Not a novice - neophutos
- <3141> Good report / testimony - marturia

### Spiritual Character

- <3741> Holy / pious - hosios
- <1342> Just / virtuous - dikaios
- <4998> Sober / self-controlled - sophron
- <1933> Patient / gentle - epieikes
- <1468> Temperate / self-disciplined - egkrates

### Personal Character

- <0146> Not greedy/or money hungry - aischrokerdes
- <0866> Not covetous / not avaricious - aphilarguros
- <0410> Blameless / irreproachable - anegkletos
- <0423> Blameless / unaccused - anepileptos
- <0829> Not self-willed / not self-indulgent - authades
- <0269> Not brawler / not contentious- amachos
- <3711> Not prone to anger / quick tempered - orgilos
- <4131> No striker / not quarrelsome - plektes
- <3943> Not given to wine / not drunken - paroinos
- <3524> Sober / calm / without wine - nephaleos
- <2887> Good behavior / orderly life - kosmios

### Personal Abilities

- <3713> Eager Desire / reaching for - oregomai
- <1317> Able to teach / skillful teacher - didaktikos
- <1651> Able to convince / refute - elegcho
- <3870> Able to exhort / admonish - parakaleo
- <0472> Holding fast / hold out against - antechomai
- <5358> Lover of good/loving goodness - philagathos
- <5382> Lover of hospitality / hospitable - philoxenos

## External Qualifications

### <0435> **Husband of one wife / male** - aner

There is no apparent quality definition in the word “aner” which means husband. It also means a male. Which should give us a clear sense of meaning that a woman cannot be an elder. Now this flies in the face of some modern theologies on the liberation of women but it seems quite emphatic on the part of the apostle Paul that women had no such role in the church. A study of Pauline attitude towards women may offend the feminists of our day, and may seem to us to be culturally insensitive in today’s world but remember we are not to be governed by this changing world’s standards but by the eternal, changeless Word of God.

Others have derived from this qualification that Paul was prohibiting divorced and remarried men from serving as elders. Still others specify that this disqualifies single men from serving. In such a case Paul himself evidently would not qualify being a single man. Yet Paul clearly calls himself an elder and an apostle. What then is the clear meaning intended here? We may never know for certain. Let us therefore employ good hermeneutical principles of biblical interpretation; “When the first sense makes good sense, seek no other sense.”

### <4103> **Faithful children / believers** - pistos

The godliness of ones’ children does not qualify and individual to be an elder but it is evident that a father who has not been able to lead his own household to faith in Christ and to godly character should not be set over the house of God lest the same thing happen in the church. “How then shall he rule/oversee the house of God?” One might infer from this that they also must “believers,” for that is the meaning of “pistos.” It cannot mean simply well-behaved since that is addressed in the next

### <5292> **Obedient children** - hupotage

The sense seems to be that the children need to be well disciplined, not rebellious. In comparing Scripture with Scripture we come to a better understanding of the apostles intent. Example is the issue. People follow good examples. If a man’s household is not worthy to be replicated then he should not be an elder.

I Timothy 3:4 “having his children in subjection <5292> with all gravity <4587>,” and Titus 1:6 “having faithful <4103> children not accused <1722> of riot <810> or unruly <506>.”

### <4291> **Rule house / cause to stand** - proistemi

To “rule” one’s house is the first evidence that there is leadership potential and the giftedness required of an elder. Home life is not irrelevant to the office of elder. The home is the first church - “*the church that is in your house.*” A father is the head of his household. His first responsibility before God is to that mini-church. How he manages that household will determine whether he is fit to be graduated to manage the house of God. Put your own house in order then look after the church.

### <3504> **Not a novice / not a new believer** - neophutos

Maturity in spiritual matters is a requirement to the office of elder. A new believer has not been tested. He has not had enough time to prove himself faithful. He has not had the opportunity to show his metal under fire. How will he react when the going gets tough? Only time will tell. Seasoned veterans cannot be hurried. Good wine must ferment and the longer the better. No requirement is set for the age of an elder, though in Israel 30 years of age was a requirement for leadership in the congregation. It is years of experience that is being measured not chronological age.

### <3141> **Good report / good testimony** - marturia

Solomon said a man’s good name is a rare and precious jewel. It does matter what other people think of you. (Proverbs 22:1 & Ecclesiastes 7:1) You as an elder are men on display, as Paul said, “Known and read of all men.” (2 Corinthians 3:2) Let the church decide the quality and good report of its elders. This is why Paul insists that an elder be “above reproach, and blameless or unaccusable.” His reputation is the reputation of Christ and the church. Elders are to be Christ-like in conduct and character. Character plays a very important role in the selection of elders as we will see later.

## Spiritual Qualifications

<3741> **Holy / pious** - hosios

Holiness is a very subjective thing. It is internal. It is private. Who can be holy? Who among us thinks of himself as holy? Yet the Word tells us that “*without holiness no man will see the Lord,*” and “*Be holy for I am holy.*” Holiness here is not sinless perfection else no one would stand. But holiness is an attitude of heart. It is a longing after purity. It is having a heart for God and the things of God. David said, “As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for you O God.” That is holiness.

<1342> **Just / virtuous** - dikaios

Elders are often called on to be judges. This was true when Moses first selected elders over the people and it is still true today. It is important that they be impartial and fair. An elder needs to be one who can put aside his personal likes and dislikes, and his own personal preconceived ideas and judge a matter fairly and objectively. Rash people and people quick to rush to judgement do not make good elders. That means an elder must put aside personal politics, friendships and be equally fair with friend or foe.

<4998> **Sober / self-controlled** - sophron

Literally it means a mind safe from danger or a mind that is properly fenced in. Paul uses this word four times in reference to eldership. It has the sense of a sword that is made of hardened steel.

1) of a sound mind, sane, in one's senses 2) curbing one's desires and impulses, self-controlled, temperate

<1468> **Temperate / self-disciplined** - egkrates

“Eg” is preposition meaning on or with, “Krates” is dominion or strength. It gives the meaning of one who has a strong sense of self discipline. He is a well disciplined person, not sloppy or careless. He makes himself do what he knows is good for him, even when it is hard.

1) strong, robust 2) having power over, possessed of (a thing) 3) mastering, controlling, curbing, restraining 3a) controlling one's self, temperate, continent

<1933> **Patient / gentle** - epieikes

It is often translated as “gentle.” It is also translated “moderation.” It is the combination of “epi,” to be on, and “eikes,” to be like, a copy of something. The idea being “nice enough to be copied.” Likeable, easy going. The kind of person you don't mind being with. Twice it is coupled with “easy to get along with.”

## Personal Character

<0146> **Not greedy/or money hungry** - aischrokerdes

Paul seems excessively concerned about the matter of money in the life of an elder. Why? “The love of money is the root of all evil.” Paul knew that in his day as in ours there are certain things that easily turn away men from serving the Lord. Loving one’s job more than loving one’s God is at issue here. On the spiritual side of this it is important that an elder be a tither. No excuses! If Jesus is not Lord of your money he is not Lord of your life.

<0866> **Not covetous / not avaricious** - aphilarguros

The other side of the coin, to use a pun, is that enticement with gain can become an stumbling block. We all know there are some men who would use the Word of God as a get rich quick gimmick. They don’t usually start out with that intent but the incitement to get a profit, to turn a buck, make money off this ministry is a snare. Pastor’s beware! The writing of books, selling of tapes, or taking of offerings is not what the ministry is all about. Money matters often hinder God’s work. Beware!

<0410> **Blameless / irreproachable** - anegkletos

designates one against whom there is no accusation, implying not acquittal of a charge, but that no charge has been made. “egkaleo” from which the word is derived means “to call into question” Therefore anyone who is of questionable qualifications should not be considered for eldership. It is the dubious nature of his character that disqualifies him. His righteousness is not clear.

<0423> **Blameless / unaccused** - anepileptos

The root you will recognize are the root for our word “epilepsy.” The meaning is a snag or snare, or weakness that can drag one down. The word derives from “seizure.” It means *irreprehensible*, designating one who affords nothing upon which an adversary might seize, in order to make a charge against him. O put it in practical terms, not one who can be accused of “falling down” on the job.

<0829> **Not self-willed / not self-indulgent** - authades

Comes from the root word “hedone” from which we get the word “hedonism.” We get our English word “Selfish” from it. It is anything that is self-pleasing, self-willed, arrogant, conceited. A self-willed person is a person in love with himself. He will not be submissive to authority therefore should not be given authority. He is the lord of his life and Christ is not Lord Supreme. Self is still on the throne of his life.

<0269> **Not brawler / not contentious**- amachos

The root is “mache” from which we get the word “macho.” It is one who is contentious, argumentative, hard-to-get-along-with, who muscles in on others. He is pushy. One who arms for battle.

<3711> **Not prone to anger / quick tempered** - orgilos

The root of the word is “orge” from which we get the word. One enflamed by his passions or emotions. One who exhibits a natural disposition to be angry. “*An angry man abounds in transgression.*” – Prov 29:22 Temper flare ups should not be a normal scene in an elders life and ministry.

<4131> **No striker / not quarrelsome** - plektes

Literally, a bruiser, or a bully. One who lashes out at others either physically or verbally. He is an abusive person whether at home, at work, or at church. Nothing should disqualify a man for eldership faster than a bad attitude, and a contentious spirit. Grouches need not apply.

<3943> **Not given to wine / not drunken** - paroinos

Literally, means “with wine.” One addicted to the bottle or any other drug dependency.

<3524> **Sober / calm / without wine** - nephaleos

One who is modest in conduct. Temperate or under control. A calm and collected spirit. It does not necessarily refer to wine at all but to a orderly personal life.

<2887> **Good behavior / orderly life** - kosmios

It is used to describe apparel as “modest.” In good taste. He is one about whom others will say, “Good choice! That’s a good fit.”

## Personal Abilities

<3713> **Eager Desire / reaching for** - oregomai

This particular qualification is of great concern in our day and age. An elder must “want” to be an elder. He must long to be a man of God. There is nothing more noble in his world view than to be a servant of the Living God. He is humbled by it. He surrenders himself wholly to it. It is his calling from the Lord. Too often we have to convince elders to serve. We have to water down the requirements and make it almost a negligible work to gain their consent to serve. These ought not to serve.

<1317> **Able to teach / skillful teacher** - didaktikos

“Skillful in the art of teaching” does not mean that one needs a degree in teaching. It is not a matter of one’s secular education or educational level. It is a gift of God, a desire and need to pass on to others what you yourself have learned. It is that eagerness to impart light, to show the way to others. He has an enthusiasm for the Word. He loves the Word. Psalm 1 and Psalm 19 are his passion.

<1651> **Able to convince / refute** - elegcho

It literally means “to find fault with.” It is the willingness and ability to reprove, rebuke, convince, tell (one’s) fault, and bring conviction to others in things that are not what they ought to be. Paul commands Timothy to “*reprove, correct and instruct with all patience.*” An elder needs to be a man of courage who is not ashamed to call a spade a spade. He tells it like it is. He is bold when it comes to the Word. “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation...*”

<3870> **Able to exhort / admonish** - parakaleo

The Holy Spirit is given the name “Comforter” which in Greek is “parakletos.” It is one who is summoned, called to one’s side, especially called to one’s aid. An elder is to have this character too. He is the helper. The one who comes along side to assist in their spiritual walk by giving support and encouragement. Hebrews 2:8 uses a derivative of the word with the old King James word “succour.” “*For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*” It is this commiserating identification with the sufferer that is to be the character of the elder. Not just empathizing but providing aid and assurance that everything will turn out all right.

<0472> **Holding fast / hold out against** - antechomai

Able to withstand, endure, to put oneself on the line in the fight for truth. He is tenacious and tough. He is anchored to the solid rock which cannot move. Therefore he is as Paul said in I Corinthians 15:58 “*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*” Titus 1: 9 “*Holding fast <472> the faithful word as he hath been taught.*”

<5358> **Lover of good/loving goodness** - philagathos

He is a lover of excellence. A lover of all things that are good. He rejoices in the good that he sees. He revels in it. He isn’t overwhelmed by evil but he overcomes evil with good. Therefore in adversity he has learned to see the good and rejoice in it. He has learned Philippians 4:8 “*Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*” Elders have to see a lot of the bad things within the church. They see the dirt. Therefore elders should have the ability to see the good in every situation as well as the bad.

<5382> **Lover of hospitality / hospitable** - philoxenos

“Xenos” means foreigner or stranger. The elder is to be a lover of strangers. He is to be hospitable. He loves to meet new people. He welcomes them with open arms. His home is open for fellowship, not only with the well-known and familiar saints, but especially to those new to the community of faith. He is guest conscious in the church context. He looks for the stranger in their midst and makes him feel at home, wanted and welcomed.

# Biblical Commands To Elders

Acts 6:1-7; I Timothy 1-6; II Timothy 1-4; Titus 1-3; I Peter 5:1-10; James 1:27

Study the exhortations to elders in Timothy, Titus, and I Peter. Try for a one or two word summary of the command. List those commands as done below. Then evaluate each of them in the light of exhortation to Timothy to “discharge all the duties of your ministry.” Answer the question: “What is the elder’s ministry?” Determine which each command falls under: Personal character, preaching-teaching, personal disciplines, administration supervision, people ministries, prayer. How much involves personal disciplines, prayer, performance with the word, people, and administration. Compare to administrative duties. Are there any? Divide yourselves into four groups and share the results when you finish.

Examples

	<b>Character Disciplines</b>	<b>Word Teaching</b>	<b>People Skills Relationships</b>	<b>Prayer Habits</b>
Discipline the stubborn 3:10	_____	_____x_____	_____x_____	_____
War a good warfare 1:18	_____	_____	_____	_____x_____
Exercise godliness 4:7-8	_____x_____	_____	_____	_____
Pray everywhere 2:8	_____	_____	_____	_____x_____

## Study the 1 Timothy Passage

	<b>Character Disciplines</b>	<b>Word Teaching</b>	<b>People Skills Relationships</b>	<b>Prayer Habits</b>
<b><u>I Timothy</u></b>				
1. Warn them to be sound 1:3	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Don’t listen to fables, etc 1:4	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. War a good warfare 1:18	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Hold onto faith 1:19	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Keep a clear conscience 1:19	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Intercede for all men 2:1-8	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Keep women in place 2:12	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Pray everywhere 2:8	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Appoint godly elders 3:1-7	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Appoint godly deacons 3:8-16	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. Suffer reproach 4:10	_____	_____	_____	_____
12. Point out end times 4:1-5	_____	_____	_____	_____
13. Exercise godliness 4:7-8	_____	_____	_____	_____
14. Let no one despise you 4:12	_____	_____	_____	_____
15. Be an example 4:12	_____	_____	_____	_____
16. Devote to public reading 4:13	_____	_____	_____	_____
17. Exhort 4:13	_____	_____	_____	_____
18. Teach 4:13	_____	_____	_____	_____
19. Neglect not gift 4:14	_____	_____	_____	_____
20. Meditate 4:15	_____	_____	_____	_____
21. Know Scriptures 4:16	_____	_____	_____	_____
22. Rule well 5:17	_____	_____	_____	_____
23. Rebuke not elderly 5:1	_____	_____	_____	_____
24. Honor widows 60+ 5:3	_____	_____	_____	_____
25. Let elders get paid 5:17	_____	_____	_____	_____
26. Don’t quickly accuse elders 5:19	_____	_____	_____	_____
27. Publicly rebuke elders in sin 5:20	_____	_____	_____	_____
28. Be impartial 5:21	_____	_____	_____	_____
29. Don’t lay hands on suddenly 5:22	_____	_____	_____	_____
30. Keep self pure 5:22	_____	_____	_____	_____
31. Teach servants to love master 6:1	_____	_____	_____	_____
32. Flee covetousness 6:5-6	_____	_____	_____	_____
33. Warn the rich to give 6:17	_____	_____	_____	_____
34. Fight good fight of faith 6:12	_____	_____	_____	_____

## Study the 2 Timothy Passage

	Character Disciplines	Word Teaching	People Skills Relationships	Prayer Habits
<b><u>II Timothy</u></b>				
1. Stir up your gift 1:6	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Keep sound teaching 1:13	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Guard your trust 1:14	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Be strong in grace 2:1	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Mentor other men 2:2	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Endure hardness 2:3	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Strive for mastery 2:4	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Remind men 1:14	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Warn about quarreling 1:14	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Study - do your best 2:15	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. Correctly handle Word 2:15	_____	_____	_____	_____
12. Avoid godless chatter 2:16	_____	_____	_____	_____
13. Flee youthful lusts 2:22	_____	_____	_____	_____
14. Pursue righteousness 2:22	_____	_____	_____	_____
15. Avoid arguments 2:23	_____	_____	_____	_____
16. Don't quarrel 2:24	_____	_____	_____	_____
17. Be kind to everyone 2:24	_____	_____	_____	_____
18. Be able to teach 2:24	_____	_____	_____	_____
19. Don't be resentful 2:24	_____	_____	_____	_____
20. Gently instruct 2:25	_____	_____	_____	_____
21. Live godly 3:12	_____	_____	_____	_____
22. Suffer persecution 3:12	_____	_____	_____	_____
23. Continue what/ learned 3:13	_____	_____	_____	_____
24. Preach word 4:2	_____	_____	_____	_____
25. Be prepared always 4:2	_____	_____	_____	_____
26. Correct 4:2	_____	_____	_____	_____
27. Rebuke 4:2	_____	_____	_____	_____
28. Encourage 4:2	_____	_____	_____	_____
29. Keep your head 4:5	_____	_____	_____	_____
30. Endure afflictions 4:5	_____	_____	_____	_____
31. Do evangelism 4:5	_____	_____	_____	_____
32. Discharge your duties 4:5	_____	_____	_____	_____

# Study the Titus Passage

	<b>Character Disciplines</b>	<b>Word Teaching</b>	<b>People Skills Relationships</b>	<b>Prayer Habits</b>
<b><u>Titus</u></b>				
1. Appoint elders 1:5	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Stewards of God 1:7	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Hold firmly the message 1:9	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Refute opposition 1:9	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Rebuke them sharply 1:13	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Avoid foolish things 1:14	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Teach sound doctrine 2:1	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Teach older men 2:2	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Teach older women 2:3	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Encourage young men 2:6	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. Be an example of good 2:7	_____	_____	_____	_____
12. Show integrity 2:7	_____	_____	_____	_____
13. Be sound in speech 2:8	_____	_____	_____	_____
14. Teach slaves faithfulness 2:9	_____	_____	_____	_____
15. Encourage w/ authority 2:15	_____	_____	_____	_____
16. Rebuke with authority 2:15	_____	_____	_____	_____
17. Let no one despise you 2:15	_____	_____	_____	_____
18. Stress these things 3:8	_____	_____	_____	_____
19. Avoid foolish stuff 3:9	_____	_____	_____	_____
20. Warn divisive people 3:10	_____	_____	_____	_____
21. Discipline the stubborn 3:10	_____	_____	_____	_____

## Study the Non-Pauline Passages

	Character Disciplines	Word Teaching	People Skills Relationships	Prayer Habits
<b><u>I Peter</u></b>				
1. Be shepherds 5:1	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Care for flock 5:1	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Willing mind 5:1	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Eager to serve 5:1	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Feed flock 5:2	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Not out of obligation 5:2	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Not greedy of gain 5:2	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Not as lords 5:3	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Be example to flock 5:3	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Be humble 5:5	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. Cast your care of Him 5:7	_____	_____	_____	_____
12. Be Sober/Self-controlled 5:8	_____	_____	_____	_____
13. Be Vigilant/alert 5:8	_____	_____	_____	_____
14. Resist the devil 5:9	_____	_____	_____	_____
15. Stand firm in faith 5:9	_____	_____	_____	_____
16. Suffer patiently 5:9	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b><u>James</u></b>				
1. Visit fatherless, widows 1:27	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Anoint/pray for sick 5:14-15	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b><u>Acts 20:17-36</u></b>				
1. Serve with humility of mind v19	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Kept back nothing profitable v20	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Taught publicly / house to house	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Declared repentance and faith v21	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Count not my life dear to myself	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Pure of the blood of all men	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Declared whole counsel of God	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Take heed to self v28	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Take heed to flock v28	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Feed flock of God v28	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. Protect from wolves v 29	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b><u>Hebrews 13:7</u></b>				
1. Rule over you	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Watch for you souls	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Give and account	_____	_____	_____	_____

## Evaluate Your Ministry Skills

Learning to be an elder is to learn the meaning of these words and put them into practice in his everyday church life. Each elder is called upon by God to be a “watchman” over his flock, the people entrusted to his care. That duty necessitates mastery of the task as Paul exhorted. Let each elder begin his stewardship by determining to add to his faith the virtues and disciplines necessary to the task. Using these biblical instructions as our guide we would have to conclude that the duty of an elder is to personal holiness, prayer, people, and proclamation of the word. Take the time right now to look at your life as it is. Identify current ministry disciplines already in practice. Then add to those what you need to enrich your spiritual leadership.

1. How is your private prayer life? I Timothy 2:1-4

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2. Who are you mentoring or discipling? 2 Timothy 2:2

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3. What are your disciplines in studying the Word? 2 Timothy 2:15

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4. What people are receiving your nurturing care on a regular basis? 1 Peter 5:1-3

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5. Is there anything negative in your life that disqualifies your from eldership? I Timothy 2:1-4

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