

Park Church Eldership

Elders at Park Church bear covenantal responsibility for the local church and are charged by God to serve the church by providing shepherding care, theological leadership, and organizational oversight as we pursue our mission together.

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES FOR ELDERSHIP

- **Jesus is the Chief Shepherd:** Elders/Pastors are called to represent Him in limited ways as Godly, submitted, dependent, humble, finite men, and must never presume to replace Him through self-sufficient, prayerless leadership.
- **Servant Leadership:** The elders exist to serve the church as those who will lay down their lives for its good.
- **A Plurality of Elders:** The plurality of elders corporately bear the responsibility and the authority for shepherding the church. The plurality of elders have equal authority, and strive to show humility and honor toward each individual elder as one who brings unique gifts and perspectives to the team for the good of the church.
- **The Primacy of Shepherding:** Our elder team longs to be marked by a passion to shepherd the church through macro and micro situations by discussing shepherding needs in our body, visitations to homes, hospitals, and workplaces, identifying specific needs in the body, praying for those needs, and ensuring appropriate ongoing care for those situations.
- **The Authority of Elders:** The Plurality of Elders carry the final authority in the church under God. Individual elders do not carry particular authority, nor does the elder team carry authority outside the bounds of Scripture.
- **The Weight of Accountability:** All Elders are accountable to the Plurality of Elders and the plurality is accountable to God. We serve Park Church as servants of God to Whom we will give an account for how we cared for the members of His Church.

ELDER QUALIFICATIONS

The Bible specifically speaks about the qualifications for those who will lead a congregation of people. These qualifications have been the same for nearly 2,000 years. Jesus is the perfect fulfillment of these qualifications as the “chief shepherd” of the Church.

Living “above reproach” (Titus 1:6, 7; 1 Timothy 3:2) is the overarching, summarizing characteristic. You will find similar (but not identical) lists in 1st Timothy and Titus. Living a life above reproach is the first requirement in both lists and Titus repeats it. The other items on the list explain what “above reproach” means. If we peruse the two lists, as well as 1st Peter, we find 17 qualifications of an elder who is above reproach.

1. **A pastor must be devoted to his wife; one-woman man** (Titus 1:6; 1 Tim 3:2). The pastor's marriage illustrates Christ's love for His church—His bride (Eph. 5:22 ff.). A Pastor must love his wife exclusively with his mind, will and emotions and not just his body.
2. **A pastor's children must be in submission, though not perfect** (Titus 1:6; 1 Tim 3:4-5). If a man does not know how to manage his own family, he will not know how to take care of God's church. The first flock for a pastor is his own family as Pastor Dad. A Pastor's qualification for the church starts in his home management as he leads them up in the discipline and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).
3. **A pastor is a faithful steward** (Titus 1:7). Here the term used is overseer (Greek episkopos). It is not another office, but a functional title of the elder. It is what he does. He is a steward, a manager of God's resources and Jesus' flock. He takes responsibility, but not ownership.
4. **A pastor must be humble—not arrogant** (Titus 1:7). A pastor must constantly demonstrate the gospel by admitting when he is wrong and assuming responsibility and restoring relationships.
5. **A pastor must be gentle—not quick-tempered** (Titus 1:7; 1 Tim 3:3). No man will be of any use in the kingdom that is quick-tempered. The difference between how Jesus demonstrated anger is that He was angry at the abuse of others in the name of religion and the dishonoring of God. We get angry at how it affects us.
6. **A pastor must be sober—not a drunkard** (Titus 1:7; 1 Tim 3:3). This is not just overindulgence in alcohol but is idiomatic for any behavior that fuels addictive responses.
7. **A pastor must be peaceful—not violent** (Titus 1:7; 1 Tim 3:3). A pastor is prone to inflict violence through his words. He is to be a peacemaker.
8. **A pastor must have financial integrity—not greedy for gain** (Titus 1:7; 1 Tim 3:3; 1 Peter 5:3). A pastor is to be upright in his financial dealings and not accused of pursuing money over the kingdom of God.
9. **A pastor must be hospitable** (Titus 1:8; 1 Tim 3:2). A pastor's home is to be open for others to enjoy. A pastor's home is not a heaven on earth, but rather a place of ministry.
10. **A pastor must be a lover of good** (Titus 1:8). A pastor genuinely loves what is good. He does not just think he should love it.
11. **A pastor must be self-controlled** (Titus 1:8; 1 Tim 3:2). Self-control is a characterization of every area of a pastor's life: diet, time, mouth, exercise, relationships, sex, and money.
12. **A pastor must be upright** (Titus 1:8). He has integrity in his relationships and in how he treats others.
13. **A pastor must be holy** (Titus 1:8). His life is devoted wholeheartedly to Jesus externally and internally.
14. **A pastor must be able to teach** (Titus 1:9; 1 Tim 3:2). All of the other qualifications are character qualities. This is the only ability-based requirement. He is to be able to teach sound doctrine, not just be able to communicate in an excellent manner. His teaching can be to one or two, to twenty, to one hundred, or to one thousand. Most of the churches in Crete were house churches. The elders were to defend the faith once delivered to the saints against the numerous false teachers that arose.
15. **A pastor must be spiritually mature** (1 Tim 3:6). Positions of authority without spiritual maturity lead to the trap of pride. When pride grows in a man, sin abounds.

16. **A pastor must be respectable** (1 Tim 3:7). That does not mean that everyone must like him or even appreciate him. It means that there is no credible witness to an ongoing sinful behavior.
17. **A pastor must be an example to the flock** (1 Peter 5:3). Elders are examples of biblical expressions sexually, time management, marriage, parenting, worship, relationships and any other way. A pastor should be someone your sons could pattern their life after and the kind of man your daughter should marry.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The overall set of responsibilities incumbent upon Biblical elders of a local church includes four primary areas: to know, feed, lead, and protect the local expression of God's people under their shepherding care.

Know the People under Their Pastoral Care, both Individual Members and Their Corporate State

- Seeking to be pastorally accessible to and available for members of Park Church. (John 10:11-15; 1 Pet 5:1-3)
- Praying faithfully for the specific needs and requests that arise in the church community. (Acts 2:42; 6:4; Jas 5:13-15)

Feed Them with God's Word through Preaching, Teaching, Pastoral Care, and Counseling

- Providing teaching and counsel that comes from the whole of Scripture. (Acts 20:27-28; 1 Tim 4:16; 2 Tim 4:1-5; Titus 2:1)
- Caring for the church and seeking her growth in grace, truth, and love. (Matt 28:16-20; Eph 4:15-16; Col 1:28; Jas 5:14; 1 Pet 5:1-4)
- Equipping the members of the church for the work of ministry. (Eph 4:11-16)

Lead Them in accordance with God's Will with Godly Character and Theological Vision

- Prayerfully seeking God's will for our church community and stewarding her resources to the best of our ability based on studying Scripture, following the Spirit, and—when necessary—outside counsel. (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:1-4)
- Setting an example and joining other members in fulfilling the Covenant Commitments of Members listed below. (Phil 3:17; 1 Tim 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; 1 Pet 5:3)

Protect Them from Internal and External Spiritual Threats, including Unrepentant Sin and False Teaching

- Appointing leaders in the church according to the criteria assigned in Scripture. (1 Tim 3:1-3; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet 5:1-4)
- Guarding against false teachers and teachings on behalf of the church. (Matt 7:15; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Tim 1:3-7; 1 John 4:1)
- Working with other members and leaders in the church to lovingly exercise discipline when necessary, for the glory of God, the good of the one disciplined, and the protection of the church as a whole. (Matt 18:15-20; 1 Cor 5; Gal 6:1; Jas 5:19-20)