

Eldership at Redeemer

[Purpose, Biblical Guidelines & Outline]

Purpose: The Apostle Peter instructed elders in the early church by saying: "I exhort the elders among you: shepherd God's flock" (1 Pet. 5:2; see also John 21:15-16 and Acts 20:28). Elders serve the Good Shepherd by providing his local flocks with spiritual oversight. Elders feed, lead, protect, and nurture members of the church like shepherds do with sheep.

Biblical Guidelines: It is our conviction that the Bible speaks clearly regarding the office of eldership in the local church. As we have studied the scriptures, we believe that the call and aspiration of a man desiring to be an elder is one that is clearly found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

Our elders consist of men from our local church body that have aspired to the role (1 Timothy 3:1) and have shown to be qualified in both their doctrine and their practice (Titus 1:9).

Expectation: Elders are expected to have a serious commitment to the gatherings, provisions and care of the church. Accepting this volunteer role is not to be taken lightly; elders make extensive time commitments and take on great spiritual responsibility in leading the church.

Elders are chosen and affirmed by the current local elder team and location pastor. This document helps outline and clarify the expectations and responsibilities of lay elders.

Eldership is a volunteer role that takes very seriously the life and health of the church. Our eldership works as a team using varying gifts and talents to accomplish the responsibility we share to care for the body.

Outline: The following are four duties that are central to an elder's role and responsibility that we see laid out in scripture. [While this list is not exhaustive, we believe if lay elders devoted themselves to these four things, they will excel as shepherds].

1. Teach

An elder must be “an able teacher” (1 Tim. 3:2; see 5:17). He must hold “to the faithful message as taught, so that he will be able both to encourage with sound teaching and refute those who contradict it” (Tit. 1:9). Jesus’ under-shepherds feed Jesus’ sheep with Jesus’ Word.

At CTK, one of our values is **truth**-we are unapologetically committed to the truth of the Bible and Biblical teaching. Because of this, elders commit to teaching the Bible regularly. Teaching takes on many forms but we commit to this together.

(Example: It may be through preaching, teaching a Bible class, leading a community group, giving a lesson to the youth group, studying Scripture with a member of the church over coffee). (Also, listen closely when members of the church talk about what they’re reading and be alert for rotten food in their spiritual diet-not always to rebuke but to instruct).

2. Lead

Just as shepherds lead their flocks, so elders lead local congregations. The biblical writers also call elders “overseers,” a title that highlights their role as leaders (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:1; Tit. 1:5, 7). Hebrews instructs Christians to “obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account” (Heb. 13:17).

As elders, we are to be brave and lead our churches with courage. Because our role is for the care of believer’s spiritual care and healthy, we cannot sidestep or ignore that which is toxic or harmful to the spiritual health of God’s sheep.

(Something we try to look for is when we see challenges in our church, we want to face them proactively and plan a course forward—to treat church discipline and care as a rescue mission of someone who is lost and caught in harms way).

In our leading it is important for us to not lose sight of our destination. The goal isn’t to lead a church to become an efficient organization, as important as that may be. Rather, as elders we should lead those in our church toward maturity in Christ.

Jesus gave teaching shepherds to the church “to build up the body of Christ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, growing into a mature man with a stature measured by Christ’s fullness” (Eph. 4:12-13).

Elders bring the flock to green pastures and still waters when they help members know Jesus more and increasingly reflect his glory together.

3. Model

Most importantly, elders lead by example. This means that to shepherd the church it is “not [by] lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock” (1 Pet. 5:3).

Not surprisingly, the New Testament lists of elder qualifications focus predominantly on *character* (1 Tim. 3:1-7, Tit. 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-4). An elder’s most basic job is to say “Imitate me as I also imitate Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1).

The mandate to model maturity carries two critical implications:

First, modeling means you must guard your godliness: “Pay close attention to your life and your teaching” (1 Tim. 4:16). Continue to live close to the Lord, nurture your wife and children well, resist sin, and love people. Open your life to the loving accountability of the other elders—modeling maturity is a team project.

That leads to a second implication: modeling requires elders to be among the people. It has been illustrated before that good shepherds smell like sheep, and that only works if people see you up close. So open your life to the church. Invite them into your home, your hobbies, and your ministry. People need a firsthand experience of how you handle stress, relate to your wife, respond to difficult people, and humbly admit when you blow it.

4. Pray

Finally, elders should take up the apostolic shepherding mantle and say, “we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the preaching ministry” (Acts 6:4). Ultimately elders are powerless in themselves to mature anyone in Christ; only the Holy Spirit can do that through God’s Word.

So if you are going to be an elder then you must commit yourself to this habit and strive to be a man of prayer! Build regular prayer into your daily rhythms.

(Ideas for this: Pray over the members of our local church (James 5:14), pray for the staff and the leaders that are a part of our local team. *We do this in our elder meetings when we gather. And if you’re talking to a church member, be sure to consider how to pray for them right then and there).

And just as Jesus often turned aside to pray, so we as elders should join Jesus in interceding for His people—we believe this because the under-shepherds of Jesus are at their best when they reflect Jesus, the Chief Shepherd.

SHEPHERD LIKE JESUS

With all this said, we really can sum it all up this way: *shepherd the members of the church like Jesus shepherds his disciples.*

We want to lead like Jesus. Like Jesus, we want to make teaching the Word central to our ministry. We want to make Jesus and the gospel the primary content of our teaching. In every decision, we desire to lead our people toward knowing and trusting Jesus. We want them to see the character of Jesus exemplified in our lives.

Becoming an Elder: We take very seriously the responsibility and role of eldership-to care and commit to the church. Please spend time in prayer and consider carefully the role you are being asked to step into. Once you have read and prayed through this document please sign it, along with your wife and hand it back to the local pastor.

Reflect back on this document often and use it as an outline and description for how to shepherd the flock.

Recommended Reading: Church Elders: How to Shepherd God's People Like Jesus (9marks.org)

Elder Candidate & Spouse Signatures

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SIGNATURE OF NEW ELDER

DATE

PRINT NAME

Spouse Agreement: I agree to the above expectations, requirements and characteristics. I believe that my husband fits the criteria of this leadership role as an elder and I commit to support him through prayer, encouragement and sacrifice of time.

SIGNATURE OF WIFE

DATE

PRINT NAME, WIFE