

## WHAT IS AN ELDER?

The words elder and pastor are used interchangeably in the Bible and refer a man within the body of Christ called and appointed to serve, shepherd, and equip the members, leaders, and staff of local body.

“And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.”  
- Ephesians 4:11-12

Although an elder does possess ecclesiastical authority, the primary motivation for this position should not be power, but rather a sincere love and commitment to serve the bride of Christ. “Let the leader be as one who serves.” - Luke 22:26

The plurality of elders (having more than one pastor) promotes greater unity, accountability, and productivity for the benefit of the body and the spread of the Gospel.

## WHAT DO ELDERS DO?

The primary duties of elders include praying and studying Scripture, leading the vision of the church, caring for the people of the church, teaching, living lives that are exemplary, protecting the people of the church from false doctrine and teachers, and developing other leaders.

1. **GOVERN.** The elders oversee the theology, doctrine, vision, finances, strategic partnerships, property, polity, mission, membership, and overall direction of Vertical Church. 1 Timothy 5:17, 1 Timothy 3: 4-5, 1 Thessalonians 5:12, Hebrews 13:17, etc.
2. **SHEPHERD.** The elders ensure the spiritual care of the church through prayer, discipline, protection, exhortation, and encouragement. Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:2, 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8, 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12, etc.
3. **TEACH.** The elders have the primary responsibility of preaching, teaching, and guarding the doctrines held within the scriptures. 1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:9, Ephesians 4:11-16, 1 Timothy 5:17, James 3:1, 1 Timothy 4:11-16, etc.

All of these duties/responsibilities should be done joyfully, eagerly, honorably, and humbly - knowing that elders will give an account for how they have led.

## WHO CAN BE AN ELDER?

Although men and women are equally valued and important in God's sight and plan, we believe God has ordained differences between men and women's roles within the home and the church. These differences are not a matter of quality, importance, or competence but rather complementary distinctions that honor Christ and best reflect the living picture of Christ and His church and His created design. Therefore, women should be encouraged, equipped, and empowered to utilize their giftings in ministry, while reserving the primary responsibility and authority in leading the home and church to able men in submission to the headship of Christ.

Genesis 1:26-27; 2:18; Acts 18:24-26; 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; Galatians 3:28  
Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Timothy 2:11-15; 3:1-7; Titus 2:3-5; 1 Peter 3:1-7

An elder must...

- Have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ
- Actively attend, give, and serve at Vertical Church
- Feel a calling to pastorate
- Be committed to the mission, confession, and doctrinal distinctives of Vertical Church
- Be faithful, teachable, and humble
- Meet the biblical requirements (1 Timothy 3, Titus 1)

Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full[a] respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

1. **"Above Reproach"** This does not mean perfection but it does carry the idea of living in such away to be free from accusation and of such moral quality as to not bring shame or disgrace to the body of Christ.
2. **"Faithful to His Wife"** His mind and heart are devoted to his wife. He is a "one-woman man."
3. **"Temperate"** Safe or sober mindedness that regulates outward behavior. This speaks of a man who is able to control his desires and emotions.
4. **"Self-controlled"** Has good judgment and common sense. He has a "sound mind".
5. **"Respectable"** Having a well-ordered life.
6. **"Hospitable"** Loves people and seeks to actively engage them where they are. "Friend of sinners"
7. **"Able to Teach"** A Pastor should be apt and skilled in taking the scriptures and helping others understand it's meaning and contemporary application.
8. **"Not Given to Drunkenness"** This is not limited to alcohol but applies to any idol of addiction.
9. **"Gentle"** This does not mean passive or soft but rather mild, reasonable, and willing to yield for the sake of the body.
10. **"Not Quarrelsome"** A Pastor should not be argumentative or contentious.
11. **"Not a Lover of Money"** This does not mean a Pastor cannot earn or have money. However, It does mean that we should not be dominated by materialism or the desire for financial gain.
12. **"Managing His Own Family Well"** Simply put, qualified elders are expected to govern, shepherd, and teach their families. The Puritans used to say that you can't Pastor the big church (congregation) if you can't pastor the little church (family).
13. **"Not a Recent Convert"** A Pastor should not be an immature or recent convert.
14. **"A Good Reputation with Outsiders"** Must be well thought of and in good standing with those outside the community of faith.