

THE CASE FOR
BIBLICAL ELDERSHIP

NRF PROCESS OF THE SELECTION OF ALL ELDERS SHALL BE AS FOLLOWS:

- Upon determination that the candidate meets the requirements of Article V, his name will be submitted to the members of NorthRidge for a period of thirty days, alongside the Biblical requirements for an Elder.
- If there is a Biblical objection to the candidate put before the members of NorthRidge, the person objecting will have thirty days in which to address this objection with the Elders.
- The member who makes the objection must be willing to go with an Elder to confront the candidate in love to see if it can be resolved.
- If the objection cannot be resolved, then the candidate's name must be removed from consideration.
- When the thirty-day period expires, if (a) no Biblical objection has been raised by the members of NorthRidge or (b) a raised objection has been resolved, the candidate will be installed by the Elders.

ALEXANDER STRAUCH

BIBLICAL ELDERSHIP: AN URGENT CALL TO RESTORE BIBLICAL CHURCH LEADERSHIP

- “While attending college away from home, I was invited to a church that taught and practiced authentic biblical eldership. The elders of this church took seriously the New Testament commands for elders to be biblically qualified and to actively shepherd the flock of God. They provided strong leadership, loving pastoral care and discipline, sound Bible teaching, and humble sacrificial examples of Christian living. As a result, they were highly esteemed by the church. The inspiring example of these men first awakened in me a positive interest in the subject of church eldership.” pg.9
- “Biblical eldership requires a biblical church leadership structure and a biblical leadership style, both of which desperately need fresh clarification and Spirit-empowered restoration.” pg.12

WHAT IS AN ELDER?

- "According to the New Testament concept of eldership, elders lead the church, teach and preach the Word, protect the church from false teachers, exhort and admonish the saints in sound doctrine, visit the sick and pray and judge doctrinal issues. In biblical terminology, elders shepherd, oversee, lead, and care for the local church." A.S
- All this as opposed to "an official church board, lay officials, influential people within the local church, or advisors to the pastor. Policymakers, financial officers, fund raisers and administrators." A.S.
- John Piper "elders are responsible for teaching and governing the congregation. As leaders they give guidance and direction to the church. As teachers they oversee the life of the church to preserve its biblical faithfulness. They are wardens of the Word of God. Titus 1:9 says that the elder "must hold firm to the sure word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it." The elders are the trustees of the truth in the life of the church.

10 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CHURCH ELDERS

BY

JERAMIE RINNE

1. Elders are shepherds. Both the Old and New Testaments repeatedly employ the metaphor of "shepherding" to describe the spiritual leadership of God's people. Not surprisingly, the New Testament views elders as shepherds as well (e.g. Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4). The elders' mission is to lead, teach, protect and love their church members the way shepherds care for the sheep in a flock, so that the church members will grow up into spiritual maturity (Ephesians 4:11-13).
2. Elders are pastors. This second point restates the first, but it bears repeating. The word "pastor" means "shepherd." We often call paid preachers "pastors" and lay leaders "elders." This distinction can subtly shape our thinking so that we view pastors as the professional ministers and elders as the church's board of directors who support the ministers. But a pastor is an elder, and an elder is a pastor. Elders should do those things in a local church that they assume a pastor would do, even if they spend fewer hours per week than the paid pastor.

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- 3. Elders are plural.** We always find elders (plural) in New Testament churches (e.g. Acts 15:4; 20:17; Titus 1:5). Each congregation should have a team of shepherds.
- 4. Elders must be godly.** The New Testament job descriptions for elders focus largely on character qualities (e.g. 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). Elders must be self-controlled, sensible, holy, and hospitable. They can't be drunkards or bullies or money-grubbers. Elders must be "above reproach."
- 5. Elders should model godliness.** The elders' character matters because the elders model Christian maturity for the church (1 Peter 5:3; Hebrews 13:7). Church members should be able to see in their elders inspiring, albeit imperfect, examples of the character of Jesus.

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6. Elders should teach. Elders must be able to teach (1 Timothy 3:2) so that they can build up the church in sound doctrine and refute false teachers (Titus 1:9; cf. Acts 20:30-31). Elder teaching can take lots of shapes: one-to-one instruction, small groups, classes, or preaching. An elder doesn't need a PhD in biblical studies, but he does need to be able to faithfully explain biblical truth.

7. Elders must lead. Elders have a measure of authority over the local church. That's why the New Testament also calls them "overseers." The elders' authority is not absolute or unquestionable, nor should it be exercised in a domineering manner. Yet God calls his shepherds to provide leadership for the flock, and, in general, God expects the church to submit to that leadership (Hebrews 13:17).

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8. Elder leadership starts at home. If married, an elder should be "a one-woman man" (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6), which at the very least means that he is a faithful husband. If he has children, he must parent them well so they're not out of control (1 Timothy 3:4). You should demonstrate able leadership of your own household before you presume to lead God's household.
9. Elders must be men. Male-only eldership is a hotly contested issue. And yet the Bible seems extremely straight-forward: an elder must be a "one-woman man." Just as God calls men to be the heads of their households, so he calls faithful men to lead his church.
10. Elders are not Jesus. Jesus is the Chief Shepherd, and elders are merely his temporary helpers (1 Peter 5:4). At their best, elders model Jesus' character, teach Jesus' word, and lead the church by pointing it toward Jesus and his mission. Good elders never lose that awareness that they themselves are still sheep, utterly dependent on the grace of the Good Shepherd. end

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- Acts 20:28 *“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”*
- 1 Peter 5:1-4 *“The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.”*
- Ephesians 4:11-13 *“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;”*

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- Acts 15:4 *"And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them."*
- Acts 20:17 *"From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church."*
- Titus 1:5 *"For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—"*

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- 1 Timothy 3:1-7 "This is a trustworthy saying: "If someone aspires to be a church leader, he desires an honorable position." 2 So a church leader must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be able to teach. 3 He must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He must be gentle, not quarrelsome, and not love money. 4 He must manage his own family well, having children who respect and obey him. 5 For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church? 6 A church leader must not be a new believer, because he might become proud, and the devil would cause him to fall. 7 Also, people outside the church must speak well of him so that he will not be disgraced and fall into the devil's trap." NLT

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- Titus 1:5-9 " I left you on the island of Crete so you could complete our work there and appoint elders in each town as I instructed you. 6 An elder must live a blameless life. He must be faithful to his wife, and his children must be believers who don't have a reputation for being wild or rebellious. 7 A church leader is a manager of God's household, so he must live a blameless life. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered; he must not be a heavy drinker, violent, or dishonest with money.8 Rather, he must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must love what is good. He must live wisely and be just. He must live a devout and disciplined life. 9 He must have a strong belief in the trustworthy message he was taught; then he will be able to encourage others with wholesome teaching and show those who oppose it where they are wrong." NLT

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- *1 Peter 5:3_ "Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example." NLT*
- *Hebrews 13:7 "Remember your leaders who taught you the word of God. Think of all the good that has come from their lives, and follow the example of their faith." NLT*
- *1 Timothy 3:1 "This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work."*
- *1 Peter 5:4 "and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away."*

- 1 Timothy 3:2 *“So a church leader must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be able to teach.”*
- Titus 1:9 *“He must have a strong belief in the trustworthy message he was taught; then he will be able to encourage others with wholesome teaching and show those who oppose it where they are wrong.”*
- Acts 20:30-31 *“Even some men from your own group will rise up and distort the truth in order to draw a following. 31 Watch out! Remember the three years I was with you—my constant watch and care over you night and day, and my many tears for you.”*
- Hebrews 13:17 *“Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.”*