

ELDERS

BE SHEPHERDS OF GOD'S FLOCK
THAT IS UNDER YOUR CARE,
SERVING AS OVERSEERS...

1 Peter 5:2



SUMMIT VIEW CHURCH

WE EXIST TO BRING GLORY TO GOD AND HELP PEOPLE BECOME MORE LIKE JESUS

What is an Elder?

Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers--not because you must, but because you are willing as God wants you to be, not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

1 Peter 5:2-4

The elders are members of the body who provide general watch-care and oversight. They continually evaluate the teaching ministry of the church and review major ministry decisions and strategic initiatives. They use their wisdom, discernment and shepherding gifts to ensure the church remains on a true course biblically and that the life of the church is being well managed with the assistance of other competent and godly leaders. Scripture indicates that the ultimate decision-making authority in the church rests with the elders.

Scripture also states the role of elder is equal to that of an overseer. Paul tells us that "if anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task" (1 Timothy 3:1). They are to care about the spiritual and physical well-being of members, regularly praying for the sick. They are to guard the body against harmful influences, confronting those who are contradicting biblical truth or who are continuing in patterns of sinful behavior. In doing so, they are to continually close potential entrances for Satan, so that the truth of Christ will remain credible to both the congregation and the community (1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:28-31; Titus 1:9; James 5:14).

Biblical Qualifications for Elders

Elder qualifications are summarized in 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9:

- 1. Holding fast the faithful Word** – Elders must be devoted Christ followers seeking to be conformed to His image. They must be committed to prayer, worship, the study of Scripture and the guarding of their own walk. They must be upright, holy and disciplined. They must also be stable in faith, obedient to the Work of God and continually seeking to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.
- 2. Above reproach** – Elders must lead by example and demonstrate a lifestyle free of patterns of sin.
- 3. Husbands of one wife** – Elders, if married, must be devoted spouses.
- 4. Temperate** – Elders must be self-controlled, enslaved to nothing, free from excesses. Elders must be respectable, sober, sensible, wise, balanced in judgment and not given to quick, superficial decisions based on immature thinking.
- 5. Hospitable** – Elders must be unselfish with their personal resources. They must be willing to share blessings with others.
- 6. Able to teach** – Elders must be able to communicate truth and sound doctrine in a non-argumentative way.
- 7. Not given to drunkenness** – Elders must be free from addictions and willing to limit their liberty for the sake of others.
- 8. Not violent, but gentle** – Elders must be gentle, patient and able to exercise self-control in difficult situations. Elders must not be given to quarreling or selfish argumentation.

9. **Free from the love of money** – Elders must not be stingy, greedy, out for sordid gain, or preoccupied with amassing material things. Elders should be an example of tithers who give with joy.

10. **Manage own family** – Elders must have a well-ordered household and a healthy family life. Elders must manage their own families well and see that their children obey with proper respect. Children must be believers, not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient.

11. **Not a new convert** – Elders must not be new believers. They must have been Christians for long enough to demonstrate the reality of their conversion and depth of their spirituality.

12. **Good reputation with outsiders** – Elders must be well-respected by unbelievers and free from hypocrisy. They must be correct or proper in conduct, worthy of respect. Elders must also be blameless; free of charge or accusation.

13. **Not self-willed** – Elders must not be stubborn, prone to force opinions on others or abuse authority. They must always consider the needs of others. They must be servants.

14. **Loving what is good** – Elders must desire the will of God in every decision.

15. **Just** – Elders must desire to be fair and impartial. Their judgments must be based on scriptural principles.

What is the Biblical Role of an Elder?

Elders are to guide and direct the body towards spiritual growth, humility and service. They are to guard and protect the body, seeking to assist members with their needs and warning them against false teachers.

- **Elders pray for the church.** Elders are to be people of prayer. The only direct instruction for elders concerning prayer (in the New Testament) can be found in James 5:14. This passage specifically addresses elders to pray for those who are sick. This, however, does not restrict their prayer life to ministering to the sick. In fact, the elders should be intercessors for the church—locally and at large. As the apostles (early church leaders) demonstrated, the elders should be praying for boldness, leadership, and direction, as well as releasing people from the grip of the enemy and sending people out to do the work of ministry. (James 5:14; Acts 2; Matthew 9:35-38; Matthew 10:1-4; Ephesians 4:11-12)
- **Elders lead the church by example.** Elders are to provide a scriptural role model and are to set a pattern before others, demonstrating what it means to be a fully-devoted follower of Christ. Their lives should demonstrate balance and order with the single purpose of glorifying God. (1 Peter 5:3-4)
- **Elders teach the church through the study of the Word.** Elders are to make sure that the body is being taught the truth of God's Word. They are to provide accurate, insightful teaching with application, admonishing people so that they may be "thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:17. (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9)

- **Elders set direction and manage the church.** Elders are to oversee the affairs of the church. These affairs range from the identification of ministry needs to the delegation of how those needs will be met. Elders are to appoint leaders and send out missionaries. They are to be people who can manage the church's needs with the same care as they would their own homes. (1 Timothy 3:4-5)
- **Elders protect the church.** Elders are to confront those who teach false truths or live contradictory lives. They should always approach people with love and concern, and their goal should be to restore such a person to the body of Christ. Elders are a guard for believers, weeding out false teachers, so that the body may be instructed in truth and not deceived by the enemy. (Galatians 6:1; Acts 20:29, 31; Titus 1:9)
- **Elders discipline the body.** Periodically the need arises to hold church members accountable to Biblical standards when their lifestyle or attitudes are in clear violation of those standards. In Matthew 18, Jesus clearly outlined this process of discipline, and it is expected that elders will faithfully follow it; obviously, the intent is full restoration and healing of the brother or sister in sin. (Matthew 18:15-17)

How do we Choose our Elders?

According to church history as recorded in Acts 14 and Titus 1, the first elders were appointed by the founders of the church. By this example, it is implied that the existing spiritual leadership of the church is to be intimately involved in the process of selecting elders. They are involved to make sure that the selection is based on spiritual qualifications rather than superficial criteria.

There are no scriptural guidelines beyond prayer and fasting to establish a process for elder selection. Therefore, it would appear that each church is given a fair amount of freedom in determining their selection process. When Summit View Church was founded, there was a steering committee established to give guidance and accountability to the pastors. After three years, those seven committeemen established our process for selecting elders. This process consisted of prayer and fasting and interviews with nominated candidates, in an attempt to prayerfully assess the readiness of the candidates to serve as an elder. The candidate was then selected and introduced before the church congregation. A specified amount of time was given to affirm the selection of the committee. Any member of Summit View Church was given the opportunity to voice any concern or objection to the candidate. After all of this, the Elder Board members were named.

Now that Summit View Church has an established Elder Board and a much larger congregation, our process for enlisting new elders is outlined below.

If the elders determine that additional elders are needed, they shall initiate the following process for elder selection:

1. The congregation shall be provided with teaching regarding the biblical qualifications for elders and their scriptural role.
2. With the biblical qualifications in mind, members of the congregation will be given two weeks to submit prayerfully the names of participating members for consideration.

3. Men whose names are submitted shall be so informed, and they shall be urged to engage in self-appraisal and personal evaluation in light of the scriptural qualifications. Any person may withdraw his name at that point if he does not aspire to the position of elder (1 Timothy 3:1) or if he does not believe he adequately meets the qualifications.
4. The existing elders shall review the names of the nominees and shall conduct interviews with selected individuals.
5. After prayerfully considering the applicants, the elders shall make final conclusions on who will be selected to become elders. Those nominees who have not been chosen shall be informed by the elders as to the reason for their not being recommended, with reference to whatever qualifications might not have been fulfilled.
6. The name of the prospective elder(s) shall be brought before the body of Summit View Church, who will then be given 30 days to show cause why any one of the prospective elders would not be qualified to serve. Consistent with Matthew 18:15 and Matthew 5:24, anyone with such cause must first express his or her concern to the prospective elder and then must also express his or her concern to the Board of Elders for consideration.
7. If at the end of the 30-day response period there is no substantive reason to disqualify the candidate the prospective elder will be presented to the church. At that time, the congregation will pray for the elder in a service of dedication.
8. After the elder is selected, there will be a six month integration period. During this time, both the Board and the new candidate will have time to evaluate the suitability of this position for all involved. The new elder will serve as an active participant in the life of the Board. The only exception is that for that period of time, the new member will not have voting privileges.

In the event of vacancy or special need, the elders may refer to previous nominees to make a selection, or they may re-initiate the whole selection process, as they deem necessary.

What is the Practical function of Elders at Summit View?

We believe the practical function of elders in the church is to provide the spiritual leadership that God establishes through them, in accordance with the church's needs as outlined in His word.

This includes:

- Sound teaching
- Prayer and healing
- Wisdom and discernment
- Shepherding
- Stewardship of God's resources
- Overall focus
- Church discipline

The elders are required to be in unity as they listen to God and follow His Word. This means each will have no personal agenda, but rather bear with the others as their collective discernment and gifting is put into balance by the Holy Spirit. Eldership is a position of humility. They are to be an example to the body of Christ, as well as their community.

Some of the practical outcomes of a healthy Elder Board include:

1. Clear overall vision and mission of the church
2. Intentionally and effectively designed programs/ministries
3. Healthy and effective staff members and their families
4. A healthy, active body of believers from whom God raises up new ministers on a regular basis
5. The sick and brokenhearted find healing and restoration within our midst
6. The community is being reached for Christ
7. Issues of discipline or strife are dealt with fairly and promptly, with honor to Christ
8. Sound financial condition of the organization
9. People are operating within Christ's power and their respective giftings
10. The ability to identify and learn from past mistakes

My Response

I would like to nominate the following person for the Elder Board:

Reason for Nomination:

My Name: _____

Date: _____

Please turn in your completed form at the hub, the office, or drop it in the mail: 7701 NE 182nd Ave. Vancouver, WA 98682



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