

Elders Training Dinner

1 Peter 5 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed:

I. Define elder

“[Elders are biblically qualified men who] shepherd, oversee, lead, and care for the local church.” – Strauch p.16

“A true biblical eldership is not a businesslike committee. It’s a biblically qualified council of men that jointly pastors the local church.” – Strauch p. 31

- pastor, bishop, elder
- male servant leadership
- for benefit of other

“An elder is a pastor. Many of us inly apply the title of “pastor” to those in full-time vocational ministry. But in the Bible, the terms elder (presbuteros), pastor (poimen), and bishop (episkopos) are used interchangeably to refer to the same person or group of people. Two particular New Testament texts make this abundantly clear.” – Thune p. 2

Acts 20:17-18 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the *elders* [*presbuteros*] of the church. And when they had come to him, he said to them... “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you *overseers* [*episkopous*], to *shepherd* [*poimainein*] the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

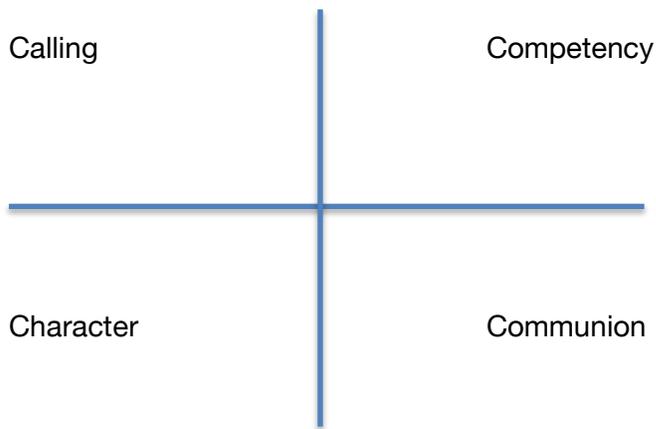
1 Peter 5:1-2 Therefore, I exhort the *elder* [*presbuteros*] among you, as your fellow elders and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, *shepherd* [*poimante*] the flock of God among you, exercising *oversight* [*episkopountes*] not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God.

“The term elder describes the man ‘with reference to his dignity and standing (older); bishop describing the man with reference to his function and duty (oversight)... The chief role of the pastor is feeding the flock through teaching, a role clearly assigned to bishops/overseers in 1 Timothy 3:2 (“An elder must be ... apt to teach”) and to elders in Titus 1:9 (“he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict”). This suggests that pastor is another name for elder and overseer.”

– John Piper, “Biblical Eldership, Part 1,” sermon given May 1, 1999.

Cited by Thune p. 24

II. Qualified (use 4 quadrants)



A. Calling

1. Called to Jesus

1 Peter 5:1 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed:

1 Corinthians 11:1 Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

- devotion and submission
- spiritual vitality
- life of repentance

2. Called by Jesus

a. internal call

1 Timothy 3 The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.

1 Peter 5 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed:² shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly;

- internal call marked by aspiration, desire, willingness
- not compulsion

b. external confirmation

1 timothy 5:22 Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor take part in the sins of others; keep yourself pure.

- elders commission elders
- saints receive them
- wife needs to see your call

3. Sense of Self

Rom 12: 3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

- strengths, weaknesses, talents, gifts
- wounds, fears, idols, regrets, and story
- self awareness is in part knowing gold and shadow

B. Character

1 Timothy 3 The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. ² Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴ He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, ⁵ for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? ⁶ He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. ⁷ Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

Titus 1:5 This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— ⁶ if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. ⁷ For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, ⁸ but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined.

- lead self
- lead family
- lead individuals
- lead groups
- Christian, husband, father, member
- depth of soul

“Character is formed over time. The English word character comes from a Greek and Latin term that describes the mark left by an engraving tool. It is how you have been etched, marked, formed. Christian philosopher Dallas Willard defines character as ‘who a person is and what they can be counted on to do.’”

- Dallas Willard, “Idaho Springs Inquiries Concerning Spiritual Formation”
Cited by Thune p.35

C. Competency

Titus 1:9 He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

1 Timothy 3:2 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

1 Timothy 3:4 He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive,⁵ for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?

Acts 20:28 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. ²⁹I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.

Ephesians 4:11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

- lead his home and church
- lead, feed, protect, care for the church
- elders are missional leaders

So following Strauch, we can summarize an elder's calling according to four basic categories:

- *Elders feed God's flock: by treasuring God's Word and teaching it to others.*
- *Elders lead God's flock: by being examples in both character and skill.*
- *Elders protect God's flock: from false teachers and spiritual apathy and sin.*
- *Elders care for God's flock: by encouraging them in the gospel through all kinds of life circumstances.*

- Thune p. 57

D. Communion

John 17:20 "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

Acts 1:14 All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. ¹⁵ In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said,

Acts 2:14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words.

Acts 2:42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³ And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

“The Bible consistently speaks of elders in terms of plurality. For instance: “When [Paul and Barnabas] had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting, they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed” (Acts 14:23). Likewise, in Titus 1:5: “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you.” Even Paul, who was an apostle with a capital A, submitted his own ministry and calling to the elders in Jerusalem. “Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain” (Galatians 2:1-2).

A properly functioning biblical church is led by a plurality of leaders. Some of them may serve in a full-time, vocational capacity, receiving their financial income from the church (1 Timothy 5:17 – 18; 1 Corinthians 9:7 – 14). Other may serve in a volunteer capacity, receiving their income from another job. One of them may have “first among equals” role, while others may serve in less visible ways according to their gifting and calling. But whatever the nuance of its specific application, the biblical model of church leadership demands the qualified pastor-elders serve together as the spiritual leaders of the church, shepherding the flock and sharing the responsibility, authority, and accountability as a team.” – Thune p. 21

- a. plurality
- b. first among equals
- c. unity
- d. communion

Healthy eldership teams are marked by communion in Christ with one another and with the church.

Unity in doctrine, philosophy, mission, and relationship.