

To Serve as an Elder
(I Timothy 3:1-7 / Titus 1:6-9)

His Character

Above reproach (blameless) – **not hiding or covering up sin (no accusation sticks)**
Temperate (well balanced) – **not given to extreme emotion or ideas (responds vs. reacts)**
Self-controlled (prudent or sober-minded) – **makes thoughtful decisions, ordered life**
Gentle (forbearing) – **kind and meek in dealing with others, being patient with other's faults**
Not overbearing (self-willed) – **not forcing their ideas upon others, always wanting their way**
Not quick tempered – **not easily angered, careful in speech and actions**
Upright (sensible or sober-minded) – **doing the right thing, reasonable decisions**
Holy (just) – **honoring God**
Disciplined (devout or self-controlled) – **consistent in devotions and prayer**

His Reputation

Respectable (showing good behavior) – **earned respect vs. demanding respect**
A good reputation (testimony) with outsiders (those outside of the church)
As to not fall into disgrace – **not seen as rash or unreasonable to the community**
Blameless (above reproach) as a steward (I Corinthians 4:2) – **faithful and trustworthy**

His Lifestyle

Hospitable (welcoming to strangers) – **willing to spend time with those he's never met**
Not given to drunkenness (addicted to wine) (Ezekiel 44:21) – **best to abstain**
Not a lover of money (greedy for money or covetous) - **generous**
Not pursuing dishonest gain (fond of sordid gain) – **not peddling the gospel**
Loves what is good – **a heart for the things of God**

His Family

Husband of one wife (lit. a one-woman man) (Ezekiel 44:22 / Leviticus 21:7)
Manages (rules) his family (household) well
Children who obey (are under control or submissive) with proper respect (all dignity/reverence)
If he cannot manage his family, how can he manage the church?
Children who believe (who are faithful)
Children who are not wild (dissipation) and disobedient (rebellious or insubordinate)

His Knowledge

Able to teach (to understand and communicate God's truth)
Not a recent (new) convert (or a novice)
He may become conceited (puffed up)
Holding firmly to the message (faithful word) as he was taught (II Thessalonians 2:15)
Able to encourage (exhort) others with sound doctrine
Able to refute (convict) those who oppose (contradict) sound doctrine

Discussion questions for qualities of church leaders

Consider each of the character qualities for leadership. How would the opposite of these qualities impact a member and/or a visitor to our church? (Colossians 4:5-6 / I Peter 3:15-16 / Matthew 5:16 / Romans 14:19 / I Peter 2:15-17) ***Being harsh can turn someone away before they even hear what you have to say. People have an expectation that the behavior of believers is at a higher standard than the rest of the world – this ought to be true. We know that every person is created in God’s image and as such, worthy of respect. The gospel message is offensive – we should not be. I am no better than the worst of sinners, I have simply given my life over to Christ. His love, His, peace, and His joy should be demonstrated in our lives and in our words and actions toward others.***

Why is a leader’s reputation (which includes their lifestyle and behavior in and outside of the church) so important? (I Corinthians 5:6-8; 10:23-33 / Matthew 23:13-15, 27-28 / I Timothy 5:19-21) ***The bread of sincerity and truth should be seen within us. We are free in Christ, but we must consider the needs and conscience of others above our own. When we are seen as completely different people, depending on our setting, we show that we are hypocrites, pretending to be something we’re not. Be careful not to believe everything you hear about a church leader (Satan seeks to destroy). But, when a leader is found to be acting in a way that dishonors his Savior, he is to be publicly rebuked for his sin.***

Why is it important for a leader to have his marriage and family in order? (Ephesians 6:4 / Colossians 3:21 / Genesis 1:27-28; 18:19 / Deuteronomy 6:6-9) ***Godly marriages and families are the foundations for our churches and our culture – the first institution ordained by God. Children are to be taught to fear and to love God within the structure of the family. A leader who has not invested in his family will be inadequate and distracted in his ministry. A leader who has invested in his family will have their support and encouragement in his ministry. God’s priority is the family.***

Why must we be cautious with a recent convert as far as leadership positions are concerned? What should a potential leader demonstrate in their lives that would indicate their maturity and readiness to serve as a leader? (Hebrews 13:7, 17 / I Timothy 4:12, 15-16 / I Thessalonians 5:12-13 / I Peter 5:2-3 / II Thessalonians 3:2) ***Leaders are to set an example for others to follow. It is difficult to do so without having experience in facing challenges that come with ministry. (Godly leaders are likely to become targets of the enemy) Two tactics the enemy is likely to use with a new believer in leadership: to overwhelm them with responsibility so that they burn out or to let them achieve a measure of success and become proud. Physical age is not as important as spiritual age. A leader must demonstrate His knowledge and commitment to the truth of God’s word and a life that is growing in love, faith and purity.***

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The Role of an Elder
(Acts 20:27-31 / I Peter 5:1-5)

Be Shepherds (Pastors)

Of God's flock (church)

Of those placed under your care

Of the church He purchased with His own blood

Be Overseers (Bishops)

Serving not because you must

Serving because you are willing (as God wants you to be)

Serving not for money

Serving because you are eager to serve

Serving not as one lording it over those entrusted to your care

Serving as one who leads by example

Be Guardians

Keep watch over yourselves

Keep watch over all the flock

Keep watch for savage wolves

They will come in

They will even arise from your own number

They will distort the truth

They will seek their own followers