

Elder Selection Process



GRAPEVINE
CHURCH OF CHRIST

Here is a trustworthy saying:
Whoever aspires to be an overseer
desires a noble task.

1 Timothy 3:1

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it 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 will never fade away.

1 Peter 5:1-4

For the Sake of Others

We are the people of God in Grapevine, Texas. We have been called to love one another and to love our community by sharing the good news of Jesus Christ in both word and in deed.¹ As we continue our journey together, we strive to fulfill the vision God has for our family and to be a people who give our lives to and live our lives for Jesus Christ.

As you know, we continue to be blessed with new members to Grapevine and are steadily increasing in the number of people who worship and visit with us each week. Our seasoned and lifelong members provide a steadiness to this church family as we experience a season of youth as seen in the number of children and teens present in our children's and youth ministries. These are encouraging realities for our future and additional leadership is needed.

Our elders recognize the need for additional men to serve as elders and they desire to empower the congregation in discerning, selecting and affirming additional men. The need is for pastors — men who feed and care for others spiritually and have experience in the life of faith. Spiritual leaders are critical to the growth and maturity of the body of Christ. Being an elder is a noble task dependent upon the work of the Holy Spirit in someone's life.²

The following process is designed for the active participation of the church. It is rooted in the relationship of the shepherd and the sheep. While much is said about the character of an elder in scripture there is little said about the detailed procedures for selecting elders. Exact procedures are a matter of discretion for the local church. We humbly submit to this process as a learning community. During this season of discernment we will have various opportunities for prayer and fasting.

May we actively participate in a spirit of prayer and discernment to the glory of God.

¹ Colossians 3:16,17

² Acts 20:28

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Step 1

The Willingness To Serve

September 11 - October 02 (3 weeks)

- I. All men of the congregation will be asked to consider their desire and eligibility to serve as an elder.
 - A. A printed and online study form will be provided for this purpose.
 - B. The desire to serve must be communicated in writing by the man wishing to serve using the Notice of Desire to Serve form (Addendum 4).
- II. If the members have specific men that they feel are qualified to serve as elders, ***they should go to those individuals to communicate and discuss that interest.*** It is important that the members take an active part in this process by communicating their feelings to men that they wish to lead them. It is also critical that the members take the time to study the qualities and qualifications of an elder to help in this process.
- III. Any man considering his desire to serve:
 - A. Is encouraged to count the cost for himself and his family.
 - B. Is to consider the possibility of not being affirmed and the implications concerning his feelings and response to others.
 - C. Should takes the time to discuss his with his wife and family in the spirit of prayer and discernment.
 - D. Should considers the support that he has received from the members of the congregation during this process.
 - E. Will be given three (3) weeks to submit their notice of the desire to serve.
- IV. All notices must be signed.
 - A. The number of men is not limited in the first step.
 - B. In the case where biblical qualifications or qualities may be in question, the current elder group will discuss the matter in private with the individual to provide opportunity for clarification or for the individual to withdraw from the process.

Step 2

Elder/Potential Candidate Conversations

October 02 - October 16 (2 weeks)

- I. The elder group will meet privately with the candidates to assist them in counting the cost of leadership, to review their desire to serve and to discuss their time of prayer and study of the qualities and qualifications of an elder and the risk of not being selected at this time.
- II. All elder candidates will agree to participate in two training/ orientation sessions to be scheduled after the selection process.
- III. Candidates and their wives will meet with the current elder group and their wives for a luncheon on Sunday, October 30th.
 - A. The inclusion of wives acknowledges their presence and role as significant with some of the training/orientation specific to them.
 - B. A candidate may withdraw from the process at any time.

Step 3

Congregational Discernment of Candidates

October 16 - October 28 (2 weeks)

- I. Each member of the congregation are encouraged to refer to the study material concerning qualifications and qualities for elders along with the list of men willing to be considered.
- II. In the spirit of Christ, members are encouraged to contact the candidate and discuss any objection in person **BEFORE** submitting an objection to the elder group. When an objection is offered, the person will be asked if he or she has discussed the objection with the candidate.
- III. If any member of the congregation has an objection about the biblical qualifications or qualities of the candidate, they must submit a written, signed objection to the elder group. Unsigned objections will not be considered.
- IV. The elder group will prayerfully and carefully examine the objections and their resulting consensus will be communicated to the objecting members.
 - A. If a situation cannot be satisfactorily resolved one-to-one, then the elder group will be consulted for discernment and decision by consensus.
 - B. Disqualifying objections will be considered by the elder group so they might counsel with the candidate. Only the elder group and the candidate will know the name of the member(s) raising the objection.
- V. Advancement of candidates will be determined through this period of discernment and objection. If asked to withdraw from the selection process by the elders, the candidate will do so quietly.

Step 4

Congregational Prayer, Reflection, and Preparation

October 30 - November 6 (1 week)

- I. The congregation is informed that the candidates have counted the cost and are prepared to deal with non-affirmation. Candidates will not be questioned in front of the congregation.
- II. All candidates will agree to serve in partnership with the other elders upon confirmation.
- III. The elders recognize the demand of service and sabbatical time will apply as needed.
- IV. Congregational Activity
 - A. The current elder group will encourage one week of congregational prayer.
 - B. A prayer guide will be given to our members detailing what to pray for throughout the designated time of prayer.
 - C. Automated texts/emails will be provided for specific prayer reminders throughout the week.
 - D. The Friday during this week, the church will be available for prayer between 6 and 9pm. We will have prayer requests available as well as the names of each candidate and their spouse for both individual and congregational prayer.
 - E. An optional fasting schedule will also be provided for each of these days. When we fast in prayer, the discipline helps us to allow God to replace our sacrifice with His presence and grace. Hopefully, at the end of the period of fasting, we hope to experience clarity of thought from a holy perspective.

Step 5

Communicating the Results & Elder Ordination

November 6

- I. Sunday morning special emphasis:
Our Sunday focus will be on choosing to lead... it will be a challenge to lead through service.
- II. New elders are introduced through a short video and ordained. At the conclusion of the service, the existing elders will join the Preaching Minister on stage as we invite the elder candidates to the front and one of the existing elders will give them a charge and a challenge.
- III. Church wide fellowship luncheon and celebration.

Final Actions

- I. Upon completion of the selection process the elder group will destroy any sensitive information related to the candidates.
- II. The elder group will prepare a written report in which they evaluate the selection process and offer recommendations for the future.
- III. The report will be preserved in the church office for review by any member who requests it.
- IV. The master notebooks of this selection process and the previous selections will be preserved in the elders' files for confidential review by the elder group only.

Addendums

Addendum 1

Conversations that Matter

Grady D. King, D. Min (Page 1 of 2)

1. Why be an elder?
2. What concerns you most about being an elder?
3. Of all the elders you have known, who would be your example and why?
4. Who has most shaped, or had the greatest influence on your faith?
5. What is your view of who God is?
6. What spiritual habits do you have in your life besides “coming to church?”
7. What are you three greatest strengths?
8. What keeps you awake at night?
9. What are you afraid of? Share a time when you feel you made a decision out of fear? What was the result? What did you learn?
10. What is your greatest ministry burden or passion?
11. The unique talent, gift, and experience I bring to the elder group is...
12. I am basically as person who is oriented toward:
 - A. Getting things done in a direct and active communication manner
 - B. Getting things done with attention to details in a low key, non-directive manner.
 - C. Communicating with people in a direct and active communication manner.
 - D. Communicating with people through collaboration in a reflective manner.
13. Which two of these best describe your approach to working with others
 - A. Let's Go
 - B. Let's Stay Together
 - C. Let Me Help You
 - D. Let's be Careful

Addendum 1

Conversations that Matter

Grady D. King, D. Min (Page 2 of 2)

14. What are your spiritual gifts? Choose 4 from below and share how these gifts show up in your life:
- Pastoring
 - Helping
 - Service
 - Giving
 - Mercy
 - Teaching
 - Faith
 - Exhortation (Encouragement)
 - Discernment
 - Wisdom
 - Evangelism
 - Administration
 - Leadership
 - Knowledge
 - Prophecy
15. Of all the characteristics of God besides love, what does our church need to grow in?
16. When it comes to church, the thing that gets “under my skin” (irritates, provokes) me the most is...
17. How do you engage in spiritual conversations with people outside of church?
18. When I disagree with someone I usually...
19. What is your conflict style? (How do you approach conflict?)
20. When I am stressed I tend to...
21. The best way to treat me when I am stressed is...
22. I view the ministers on staff as...

Elder Job Description

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

Acts 20:28

The following job description is to serve as an introduction into the role and responsibilities of an elder at the Grapevine Church of Christ. This position is more than that of trustee or even board member. Granted, there will be moments when certain administrative decisions will need to be made, but this position is primarily about caring for the people that God has entrusted to us.

The list below will give the prospective candidate an overview of what will be expected once they become an elder in this congregation.

Overall requirements:

Expectations of the shepherds of the Grapevine Church of Christ:³

- Keep watch over the flock
- Take care of the flock
- Feed the flock
- Pray over and anoint the sick
- Give guidance
- Preach and teach
- Exhort and admonish
- To be servants
- To be an example
- To prepare God's people for service

Specific Requirements:

- Shepherding meetings take place at least two times per month.
- The shepherd is encouraged to develop relationships with the congregation, staff, deacons, and ministry leaders so as to provide encouragement and to further the atmosphere of peace (wholeness) and stability within the church family.

³ Ephesians 4:10-12, Acts 20:28, 1 Timothy 3:5, Titus 1:9-10, James 5:14, 1 Peter 5:1-5, Hebrews 13:17, Acts 6:2-4

Addendum 3

Shepherd's Covenant

As a shepherd of the flock at Grapevine Church of Christ, I agree to these promises to each other:

- I will consider each shepherd, regardless of how long he may have served, of equal status as a shepherd of this church. I will not consider any one as a junior or senior shepherd.
- From the first day I serve as a shepherd, I understand that I have full co-responsibility with the other shepherds for the oversight of this congregation.
- I am under the oversight of the other shepherds and therefore, we mutually pledge accountability for — and to — each other.
- I pledge to accept and love each elder as a brother in Christ. While I understand that we will not agree with every action, we mutually commit to love each other as a child of God and pledge to do all we can to express God's affirming love for each other.
- I pledge to use "every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" with the other shepherds. To that end, I pledge to refrain from any actions which may appear to be divisive to the unity of the entire eldership.
- I pledge to respect the view points and feelings of each elder, and as a result, we mutually agree to be open, honest and share true feelings, opinions, struggles, joys and hurts. I will trust each elder, as much as I am able, and express feedback in a sensitive and controlled manner.
- Out of mutual respect, I pledge not to dominate any of our proceedings together.
- On matters of opinion, I pledge to support the decisions of the group as if the vote were unanimous.
- I agree that all decisions of policy, including personnel matters, pertaining to the life of this church will be made by a majority of the group.
- I understand that if for some reason I am absent from a decision, I pledge to consider myself as having voted with the majority on any motion.

Addendum 4

Notice of Desire to Serve

Please fill out the following questionnaire. Use the blanks provided for any additional information.

As we begin this elder selection process, we encourage you to ask the spirit to help direct your thoughts to your role as a Godly leader who is committed to being disciples of Jesus Christ. As in every search process, we would hope to find men who fully embody the qualities listed in scripture, but we also understand that no one is perfect. Full maturity in the faith is a journey and each of us are at different points on that journey (1 Cor 13:12, Phil 1:6). Therefore, as you prepare make the decision to express your desire to be an elder, we have provided some deeper questions for you to consider. Hopefully, these questions will guide you to be a leader who is giving their life to and living their life for Jesus Christ.

Now a bishop [Elder] must be above reproach, married only once, temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an apt teacher, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way — for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how can he take care of God’s church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may be puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace and the snare of the devil.

1 Timothy 3:3-7 (NRSV)

Name _____

Are you above reproach? Are you respected in the community?

The first quality listed is above reproach, literally meaning “not able to be held.” In other words, if charges were leveled against you, you wouldn’t even be held for questioning because your reputation is so solid. You are teflon, not velcro. Your integrity is such that accusations just won’t stick. This is also addressed in verse 7. This shows the importance of this quality. The reputation of Christ is tied to that of the church, and the reputation of the church is tied to that of its leaders. How are you above reproach?

Are you married only once? Are you committed to your wife? Is your faith actually working in the most intimate and intense of relationships?

This selection describes a man completely devoted to his wife not only in body, but also in mind and heart. Why is this important? A strong marriage helps protect an elder from moral failure, provides needed support when he faces draining church challenges, and offers a powerful example to younger believers (1 Peter 5:3).

Are you temperate, sensible and respectable? Have you shown wisdom in decision making?

Temperate means “clear-headed,” and self-controlled could actually be translated “prudent or thoughtful.” These words picture a man who has his head on straight. Why? Because an elder must often think his way through thorny relational, financial, and doctrinal questions—all of which can have eternal consequences. (Perhaps this is why spiritual leaders are called “elders,” suggesting a certain amount of life experience. Wisdom doesn’t always come with age, but it rarely comes without it.)

Are you violent, quarrelsome or gentle? Have you shown the ability to keep your temper in check?

Paul describes an elder as a man who is not violent, but gentle and not quarrelsome. Church leaders will face volatile situations in which a soft word will turn away anger, but a harsh word will stir up wrath (Proverbs 15:1). If a man is known to have either an explosive anger (“losing it”) or a slow, simmering anger (“carrying a grudge”), the church will suffer.

Are you hospitable? Are you willing to be inconvenienced for others?

When we hear the word hospitable, we picture inviting someone over for an evening of lasagna dinner and conversation. In the ancient world, where inns were notoriously filthy and even dangerous, the word pictured someone opening his home for guests to stay days or even weeks on end. Hospitality involved sacrifice and cost a great deal in time, space, money and effort. In other words, Paul’s question is: will this man think of others before himself? Church folk need constant attention, their crises rarely come at convenient times. A good elder recognizes, however, that these frustrating folk are beloved of God and are “bought with his own blood” (Acts 20:28).

Are you apt to teach? Are you capable of teaching Scripture to others?

The primary strategy for personal and corporate transformation is not excellent programming or even quality relationships, but rather the patient teaching of Scripture (2 Timothy 4:2). The first requirement of a good teacher is not presentation skills, but mastery of content. Have you given yourself to study of Scripture and to filling yourself with the Word of God?

Addendum 4

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Are you a lover of money? Do you have a strong sense of stewardship?

Paul is describing a leader whose life will be marked by generosity and simple contentment. (See 1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19) A man who lives under the love of God will steward his own money and the church's finances with God's glory and the church's mission always in mind.

Have you managed your household well? Do you have a track record of discipling leaders?

Have you shown the ability to lead others to greater maturity in Christ? To answer that question, look at your family first. When Paul says an elder must manage his own family well, he means a man's family is his first little congregation, and "whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much" (Luke 16:10). But if three of his four children have no use for the church, what does this say of his spiritual leadership?

Are you a drunkard? Do you practice self-control? Do you allow things or desires to control you?

One of the primary functions of a leader is to help people find ways to help people along the path letting go of those things which keep us from experiencing the abundant life that Jesus promised for those who would follow him. The Spiritual leaders of the church should be able to model what it means to be in control of those desires that hope to control those who seek to follow Christ. Self Control is one of the primary markers of a God hungry leader. (Galatians 5:22-23, 2 Peter 1:5-9)

Addendum 4
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Are you a new convert? Have you been a Christian long enough to maintain humility?

The chief occupational hazard of spiritual leadership is pride, and too much visibility too soon in a man's Christian pilgrimage can inflate his ego. Have you in relationship long enough to consider others better than himself...to look not only to his own interests, but to the interests of others. (Philippians 2:3-8)

I, _____

desire to be considered as an elder of the Grapevine Church of Christ.

Signed, _____

Selection Process Calendar

**The Willingness
to Serve**

three weeks



two weeks

**Elder / Candidate
Interviews**

**Congregational
Discernment of
Candidates**

two weeks



one week

**Congregational
Prayer, Reflection,
and Preparation**

**Communicating the
Results & Elder
Ordination**

