

Elders

DEFINITIONS

Elder is a translation of a Greek word pronounced pres-boot-TEAR-aus and means "senior" when referring to position, or "older" when referring to age.

Bishop is a translation of a Greek word pronounced ep-IS-ko-pus and means "overseer". As a term, it describes the duties of elders.

QUALIFICATIONS

The following qualifications are found in scripture:

1. Believes on the Lord (as Savior) [Acts 14:23].
2. Blameless steward as known in local churches [1Tim.3:2,7; Tit.1:6].
3. Husband of one wife (see DIVORCE) [2Tim.3:2; Tit.1:6]. It goes without saying that this requirement presumes (and therefore requires) that elders also be men by the weight of scriptural example, but it does not presume that the man **MUST** be married (again, by example).
4. Faithful children (see FAMILY) [Tit.1:6].
5. Sons and daughters (indicating older children) not unruly, but in willing subjection [1Tim.3:4; Tit.1:6].
6. Seeking God's will rather than their own [Tit.1:7].
7. Slow to anger [Tit.1:7] and once angry, not violent [1Tim.3:3].
8. Not a 'tippler' [1Tim.3:3; Tit.1:8].
9. Not associating with ill-gotten financial gains [1Tim.3:3; Tit.1:7; 1Pet.5:2].
10. Ready and willing to serve [1Pet.5:2].
11. Fond of guests [1Tim.3:2; Tit.1:8].
12. Promotes virtue [Tit.1:8].
13. Serious [1Tim.3:2; Tit.1:8].
14. Just [Tit.1:8].
15. Holy (sets himself apart for the work of God) [Tit.1:8].
16. Self-controlled [Tit.1:8].
17. Solid scriptural foundation [Tit.1:9].
18. Vigilant [1Tim.3:2].
19. Of good behavior [1Tim.3:2].
20. Apt to teach [1Tim.3:2].
21. Patient [1Tim.3:3].
22. Not covetous [1Tim.3:3].
23. Rules well his own house [1Tim.3:4].
24. A mature Christian [1Tim.3:6].

HOW CHOSEN

Qualified men are elected by unanimous vote of the existing elders [Acts 14:23; Tit.1:5; 1Pet.5:1].

DUTIES

1. Consider doctrine [Acts 15:6].
2. Exhort, convince, and answer questions on doctrine [Acts 15:2; Tit.1:9,13].
3. Receive visiting elders (missionaries, etc.) [Acts 15:4].
4. Maintain doctrinal purity [Acts 15:23].
5. Oversee relief money (benevolent funds, etc.) [Acts 11:30].
6. Oversee church members [Acts 20:28; 1Pet.5:2].
7. Train the church members [Acts 20:28; 1Pet.5:2].
8. Comfort the weak [Acts 20:35].
9. Be an example [1Pet.5:3].
10. Rule the church [1Tim.3:4,5; 5:17].
11. Pray for and anoint the sick with oil. The oil represents the Holy Spirit. It is the prayer of faith that asks for God's healing hand. It is God who heals, not the oil.

LENGTH OF SERVICE

1. Elders served for life [1Pet.5:4], or until turned from correct doctrine [Acts 20:30].

CHURCH MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARD ELDERS

1. Give double honor to elders [1Tim.5:17].
2. Submit to the leadership of elders when performing their duties as listed in the above section.
3. Do not accuse an elder without two or more witnesses [1Tim.5:19].