



## A Study of Biblical Eldership

- A. Elder - Presbyter - in greek it is *presbuteros*  
It is used 67 times in the NT. 16 times it refers to a church leader.

Acts 11:30	<i>sending heir gift to the elders</i>
Acts 14:23	<i>Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church</i>
Acts 15:2,4,22,23,16:4	<i>the apostles and elders</i>
Acts 20:17	<i>sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church</i>
Acts 21:18	<i>all the elders were present</i>
1 Tim. 4:14	<i>the body of elders laid their hands on you</i>
1 Tim. 5:17	<i>The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor</i>
1 Tim. 5:19	<i>Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless</i>
Titus 1:5	<i>appoint elders in every town, as I directed you</i>
James 5:14	<i>call the elders of the church to pray over him</i>
1 Peter 5:1	<i>To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder</i>

- B. Bishop - Overseer - in greek it is *episkopos*  
It is used 9 times in the NT. 6 times it refers to a church leader.

Acts 20:28	<i>of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers</i>
Philippians 1:1	<i>with the overseers and deacons</i>
1 Timothy 3:2	<i>the overseer must be above reproach</i>
Titus 1:7	<i>an overseer is entrusted with God s work</i>
1 Timothy 3:1	<i>if any man aspires to the office of overseer</i>
1 Peter 5:2	<i>exercising oversight</i>

- C. Pastor - Shepherd - in greek it is *poimen*  
It is used 28 times in the NT. 3 times it refers to a church leader.

Ephesians 4:11	<i>and some to be pastors and teachers</i>
Acts 20:28	<i>Be shepherds of the church</i>
1 Peter 5:2	<i>Be shepherds of God s flock that is under your care</i>

- D. Miscellaneous words of leaders

Hebrews 13:7	<i>Remember your leaders</i>
Hebrews 13:17	<i>Obey your leaders and submit to their authority</i>
Hebrews 13:24	<i>Greet all your leaders and all God s people</i>
1 Thessalonians 5:12	<i>appreciate these who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord</i>
1 Timothy 5:17	<i>Let the elders who rule well</i>

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### 5. What are elders to do?

- A. Oversee, Lead      1 Peter 5:2 - *Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers-not because you must, but because you are willing*
- B. Equip              Ephesians 4:12 - *for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry*
- C. Teach              1 Timothy 5:17 - *whose work is preaching and teaching*  
1 Timothy 3:2 - *able to teach*
- D. Protect, Care Help Titus 1:9-11  
Acts 20:28-31  
1 Peter 5:1-2  
1 Thess. 5:12
- E. Pray                James 5:14 - *call the elders of the church to pray over him*
- F. Be Examples      1 Peter 5:3 - *being examples to the flock*
- G. Ordain others     1 Timothy 4:14 - *with the laying on of the hands of the eldership*

### 6. What are the requirements to be an elder?

Scriptural requirements are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9

### 7. Is the position of deacon and elder the same?

No, according to 1 Timothy 3, a distinction is made in both title and responsibility. The elder is to teach and lead while the deacon (*diakonos*) is to serve. The scriptural qualifications for each position are very similar with the only difference in that an elder must be gifted to teach.

### 8. Are elders simply the members of the pastoral staff?

While members of the pastoral staff may serve as elders, it is clear from Scripture that elders were selected from those within the church, not brought in from another place.

Acts 14:23      *Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church*  
Titus 1:5        *appoint elders in every town, as I directed you*

### 9. How are elders selected?

#### A. The desire of the man

1 Timothy 3:1 - *It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do.*

#### B. The conviction of existing leadership

Titus 1:5 - *appoint elders*

Acts 14:23 - *Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church*

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10. How is a church benefited by elders?
- A. In following Scripture, a church will be blessed.
  - B. There is a plurality of leadership, not just in hands of one person.
  - C. After pastor resigns or is removed, there is constant, on-site leadership during the interim.
  - D. With mutual submission of elders, there is true accountability over pastor, a church is protected from a pastor that is teaching false doctrine, unethical, or problematic.
  - E. More complete leadership with plurality of leaders, inadequacies and weaknesses are covered by others.
  - F. There is a larger group of people recognized by the church to teach. It is part of what an elder is ordained to do.
  - G. There is no clerical hierarchy, leaders and ministers come out of the body.
  - H. A stream-lined process for decisions to be made and recommendations brought to the body.
  - I. More people are freed up to be involved in serving and ministering.
  - J. Church leaders are put into position by Biblical requirements, thus safe-guarding the church from those in leadership positions that are not spiritually qualified.
  - K. The church is blessed with godly leaders who pray to the Head of the Church (Jesus Christ) about the direction of His church and then work together to bring this vision to the body.