



Elder Candidate Process

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According to scripture, the office of elder is one of two offices within the New Testament Church. As the New Testament clearly identifies and communicates, the term "pastor" is synonymous with "elder" and "overseer." Therefore, the elders at Heartland Church are responsible for shepherding the flock, and for oversight of the church and its ministries. Foundationally, the elders are charged with leading the church to function as a New Testament Church.

The process to become an elder at Heartland Church is outlined in Article III Section 5 Part B of the bylaws. When the need for additional elders arise, there will be an active search initiated by the elders (pastors) for men who meet the biblical qualifications. The elders (pastors) will examine each candidate to determine if they meet the biblical qualifications. The number of candidates presented to the membership for approval will depend upon the needs of the church. There is not a preset number of elders, nor is there a preset term of service. The elders will present candidates to the church one week prior to a church vote. The prospective elder must receive at least 75% favorable vote by ballot to be approved. A candidate does not assume the role of elder until they have been voted on and affirmed by the church body at Heartland Church.

The examination process will be executed as outlined below. Please understand this document is designed to be an overview of the process. The process may vary slightly depending on the specific candidate, the number of candidates, etc. Additionally, there is no set timeline for how long the process will take. The timeline will be determined by the acting elders as they discern areas that more, or less, time needs to be spent on.

Phase 1: Qualification

The qualifications are defined by specific Scripture passages in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Timothy 5:17, and 1 Peter 5:1-4.

Phase 1.1 - Acting elders will teach the elder candidates the qualifications of elder as defined by the scriptures above.

Phase 1.2 - Elder candidates will affirm they meet the qualifications.

Phase 1.3 - Acting elders will affirm the elder candidates meet qualifications.

Phase 2: Training

The training of elders will be focused in on both theological foundations and practical ministry.

Phase 2.1 Theological Training -Acting Elders will teach through the following theological topics with the elder candidates.

- God
- The Bible
- Human Condition
- Jesus
- The Holy Spirit
- Soteriology (Salvation)
- Ecclesiology (Church)
- Eschatology (End times)

All elders should be in agreement on the issues in the chart below both in thought and in practice.

Theology <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authority, Sufficiency and Inerrancy of Scripture• Trinity• Dvinity of Jesus• Substitutionary Atonement	Distinctives <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Believers baptism• Congregationalism (local church autonomy)• Leadership plurality
Love for the church <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sacrificially giving• Graciously serving• Urgently discipling and evangelizing• Regularly Attending	Cultural Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complementarianism• Ephesians 5 marriages (heterosexual)

Phase 2.2 Practical Ministry Training - This phase will hone in on the practical aspects of ministry. It will include the following but will not be limited to the following.

- Responding to a crisis.
- Conduct when interacting with non-believers
- Caring for a grieving person
- The ministry aspect of a funeral
- Leadership Plurality
- General shepherding practices

Phase 3: Affirmation

At the conclusion of phase 1 and phase 2 the elder candidates will walk through a two-part affirmation process.

Phase 3.1 Acting Elder Affirmation- The acting elders will vote to affirm each candidate.

Phase 3.2 Church Affirmation - The elders will present candidates to the church one week prior to a church vote. The prospective elder must receive at least 75% favorable vote by ballot to be approved.

Supplemental Resources

Questionnaire to be used in Phase 1 to clarify candidates meet the qualifications. This resource was derived from a resource provided by Kahului Union Church.

Circle the most appropriate response: #5 high (or superior), #3 acceptable, #1 low (or weak). U is unknown

Character

Above reproach: 1 2 3 4 5 U

This quality seems to be the overarching qualification on which the rest support. The elder must have an excellent reputation in his personal life, family life, interpersonal life and ministry life. He should carry no glaring sins in his life that would cause people not to respect his spiritual leadership, counsel and discipline. In no way does this mean he is sinless (I Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:6-7; Acts 6:3)

Willing: 1 2 3 4 5 U

A man must serve willingly or voluntarily, without constraint. He must not feel as though he has to serve, but rather that God wants him to do so if affirmed by the leadership and church. Thus, he readily makes the necessary sacrifices to serve as an elder. (I Peter 5:2; I Tim. 3:1)

Personal

Temperate & Self-Controlled: 1 2 3 4 5 U

Temperate seems to imply the idea of a balanced, moderate life. (I Tim. 3:2)

Self-controlled means having control over natural passions and desires by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is self-disciplined. (Titus 1:8)

Prudent & Sensible: 1 2 3 4 5 U

He shows good judgment in various life situations. Emotionally mature, he does not make quick and superficial decisions based on emotion or immature thinking. (I Tim. 2:2; Titus 1:8)

Respectable: 1 2 3 4 5 U

His peers esteem his character and see him as an inspiring example. (I Tim. 3:2; I Peter 5:3)

Not addicted to wine: 1 2 3 4 5 U

This requirement focuses on the misuse of alcohol. When alcohol rules, God doesn't. The spirit of his qualification includes all addictive substances or behaviors, for no Christian should allow himself/herself to be dominated or controlled by anything that will harm his/her body, cloud his/her thinking or hinder his/her testimony for Jesus Christ (I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7; Eph. 5:18; I Cor. 6:19-20, 10:22-33; Rom. 14)

Free from the love of money & not fond of sordid gain: 1 2 3 4 5 U

A man whose priorities are to "seek first the kingdom of God..." will allow material things to take their proper place under God's direction. Proportionate and generous giving will be an act of joyful service. He is not greedy, nor does he set his affections on money. This does not demand he be poor, but that his life not be dominated and motivated by money. He is, the kind of man whose business practices and motives, in relation to financial gain, never come into question. (I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7; Matt. 6:19-34; I Tim. 6:9-10, 17-19; Heb. 13:5, 1 Peter 5:2)

Loves what is good: 1 2 3 4 5 U

His moral excellence is evident to others. In addition, from within his heart, he earnestly desires those things that are holy and good. (Titus 1:8; Phil. 4:8; I Cor. 13:6)

Devout: 1 2 3 4 5 U

He is to be a man who is close to God and separated from sin. (Titus 1:8)

Marriage and Family

The husband of one wife: 1 2 3 4 5 U

If he is married, he should be purely devoted to his own wife. He should be known literally as a "one woman man." Whether married or single, his reputation in relationships with the opposite sex should be beyond reproach.

The man's family: 1 2 3 4 5 U

The apostle Paul does not intend to provide an exhaustive elder qualification list in either I Timothy 3 or Titus 1 or in both combined. What he does list however, provides helpful indicators of a potential elder's genuine spiritual maturity and fitness to lead others. One key area to examine is the man's example and leadership within his own family, if he has one. The reasoning is from the "lesser to the greater." If a man fails to evidence godly example, leadership and discipline within his own family (a lesser sphere of responsibility), then how will he do this with respect to God's family, the church (a greater sphere of responsibility)? This does not mean that he will have a perfect family. (I Tim. 3:4-5)

Manages his own household well: 1 2 3 4 5 U

He is to be the leader in his home who effectively oversees and manages his family. (I Tim. 3:4)

Keeping his children under control & not accused of dissipation or rebellion:

1 2 3 4 5 U

As a father, his firmness makes it advisable for his children to obey, his wisdom makes it natural for them to obey and his love makes it a pleasure for them to obey. (I Tim. 3:4; Titus 1:6; Eph. 6:4)

Having children who believe: 1 2 3 4 5 U

The Bible does not promise that every child of a believer will become a dedicated follower of Christ. God is a perfect Father and yet He has wayward children. (Luke 15:11-32, 13:34-35, 19:41-42). However, an elder must model a genuine godly example within his home and through his nurturing influence and teaching (Eph. 6:1-4) and exercise a sanctifying influence upon his children (I Cor. 7:14). If so, then one can generally expect to see his children following in the faith of their father. (Titus 1:6)

Interpersonal

Not pugnacious & quick tempered: 1 2 3 4 5 U

He must not be quick-tempered and given to physical violence or verbal abuse. He exhibits restraint during times of volatile and emotional upheavals. (I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7)

Gentle: 1 2 3 4 5 U

He is conciliatory, considerate, reasonable, respectful, and while never compromising truth, is willing to yield his rights for the sake of love. (I Tim. 3:3; Titus 3:2, Phil. 4:5, James 3:17; I Peter 2:18; I Cor. 6:7)

Uncontentious: 1 2 3 4 5 U

He does not quarrel and engage in selfish argumentation, but is peaceable. He is not critical, argumentative or punitive but tolerant, accepting, patient and considerate. (I Tim. 3:3; 2 Tim. 2:23-25; Rom. 12:16-18, 14:19, 15:5-6; Eph. 4:1-3)

Not self-willed: 1 2 3 4 5 U

He does not force his own ideas and opinions on other people. He does not stubbornly insist upon having his own way. Where opinions or methodology varies among secondary issues, he must be willing to yield in a peaceable and respectful manner to the consensus of the total leadership. (Titus 1:7; James 3:13-18)

A good reputation with those outside: 1 2 3 4 5 U

Unbelievers, as well as believers, are to respect his integrity. He is to be "above reproach" in the world, as well as in the church. (I Tim. 3:7; Col. 4:5-6; I Thess. 4:11-12; I Peter 2:12, 3:15-17)

Ministry

Not a new convert: 1 2 3 4 5 U

He must be a mature believer who has been a Christian long enough to demonstrate the reality of his conversion and the depth of his spirituality. Linking a trusting, obedient heart to time produces maturity. A person placed in leadership before he senses the awesomeness of Christian service is particularly vulnerable to sinful pride. (I Tim. 3:6)

Hospitable: 1 2 3 4 5 U

"A lover of strangers." Rather than being cliquish, he warmly reaches out to believers and non-believers that he does not know. He ministers to their temporal and emotional needs. This may be expressed by ministering to people within his home. (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8)

Able to teach: 1 2 3 4 5 U

He must be able to communicate God's truth in the Bible to others. He can teach and apply God's Word to his life and others. He must also be equipped to instruct others in sound doctrine and correct those who espouse doctrinal error. (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9)

Holding fast the faithful Word: 1 2 3 4 5 U

He is stable in his faith and obedient to the Word of God in all respects. He is not a hypocrite but earnestly seeks to live what he teaches. (Titus 1:9)

Just: 1 2 3 4 5 U

This may have reference to his being a righteous man. It is equally probably that it refers to the prospective elder's dealings with others. He is to be fair and impartial. He is able and willing to make honest, objective judgments based upon Scripture's commands and principles. (Titus 1:8)