



THE ROLE OF THE ELDER

Watermark Community Church

ABOUT

The following document outlines the biblical role of Elders and the practical principles applied by the Elders at Watermark Community Church.

IMPORTANCE OF THE ELDER

- It is the model in Scripture.
 - Acts 6:2-4
 - Acts 15:1-2
 - Acts 20:17
 - 1 Timothy 5:17
 - Hebrews 13:17
 - 1 Peter 5:1-4
 - James 5:14
- It is the means of leading individual churches.
 - Titus 1:5
 - Acts 14:23

FUNCTION OF THE ELDER

- Daily concern for the church
 - 2 Corinthians 11:28
- Model
 - 1 Peter 5:3
 - If counseling from experience, you want to be able to say this is how I did it in line with scripture.
- Teach/know doctrine
 - 1 Timothy 3:2 (able to teach)
 - Titus 1:9
 - Acts 6:2-4
- Protect against/refute false doctrine
- Shepherd/spiritual care
 - 1 Peter 5:2
 - Hebrews 13:17
 - Sexual sin is most commonly dealt with.
- Discipline
 - Matthew 18
 - Divorces, drugs, and porn are most commonly dealt with.
- Practical Care
 - James 5:14



QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS

- Above reproach
- One wife
 - If you don't have a good marriage, how are you going to lead the bride of Christ?
- Sober-minded/self-controlled
- Respected in the church
- Hospitable
- Able to teach
- Not a drunk
- Not quarrelsome
- Not a lover of money
- Manages household well
- Not a new Christian
- Respected by non-believers
- Humble
- Holy/set-apart
- Disciplined
- Knows the Bible and firm in doctrinal conviction
- Able to refute false doctrine (must be bold)

BECOMING AN ELDER

- 3 M's
 - Maturity: general and spiritual
 - Marriage: healthy and spouse's maturity
 - If there is not a ministry at home, then there is not a ministry with others.
 - Margin: time
- Several personal meetings
- Time with family, community, and business associates
- 36 doctrinal and current event questions: written and oral "exam"
- Group setting with other core leaders for multiple weeks
- Staff feedback
- Church body feedback

WHY BECOME AN ELDER?

- Prayer and asked/called
- Aspiration to do whatever God wants
 - 1 Timothy 3:1
- Counsel of trusted, faithful friends
 - Proverbs 11:14
 - Proverbs 15:22
 - Proverbs 20:18



WHAT IS MOST CHALLENGING?

- Doing the hard things that need to be done—the last one percent
 - Galatians 1:10
 - Silence is support
- Account to God/higher call
 - James 3:1
- Time commitment
 - Acts 6:1-4
 - Elder meetings/prayer
 - Various teaching opportunities
 - Daily people stopping to talk
- Prioritization
 - With wife?
 - With family?
 - Part of Elder role?
- Need to know doctrine deeply and broadly
- Pastoral care situations

WHAT IS MOST REWARDING?

- Serving the King
- Being encouraged by all the stories of life change
- Seeing the gifts God has given as He uses them
- Spending time with other Godly men
- Increased motivation and desire to practice spiritual disciplines
- Other people praying for you

DISTINCTIVES OF WATERMARK'S ELDERS

- Selection is not just a vote but includes doctrinal testing and years of modeling faithfulness among other elements.
- The Elders are not an approval board but primarily focus on shepherding the flock.
- There is no defined term.
- Significant time commitment
 - Weekly prayer time: 1.5-3 hours on Fridays
 - Weekly meeting on theology, staffing, partnering requests, etc.: approx. 3 hours on Mondays
 - Community issues: counsel and support
 - Care, correction, and discipline: requires a lot of time
 - Leadership requests from staff
 - "Presidential appearances" leaders make
 - Fellowship time with the other Elders
 - Estimates on weekly time commitment:
 - Light: 10 hours
 - Medium: 15 hours
 - Heavy: 30-40hours
- Relational component
 - Deep authenticity and accountability



- Spend time together to enjoy one-another

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership* by Alexander Strauch
- *Introducing our Elders: A Great Day or the Beginning of the End*
 - This Watermark message can be accessed at watermark.org.
- *Leadership Like None Other*
 - This can be accessed at wordsfromwags.com.
- *Come & See: Everything You Ever Wanted in the One Place You Would Never Look* by Todd Wagner

ELDER QUESTIONS

Please give a short paragraph answer as well as a longer more in depth answer of each of the following. Answers should be given both pastorally and theologically. Be able to defend and explain your position from Scripture. Be able to explain the weakness of your position as well as articulate the best arguments against each of your beliefs.

1. Divorce and Remarriage. Is there an allowable basis, and if so what is it? Can a person who divorced be remarried?
2. The Gifts. Are they all still being used?
3. What is the purpose/calling of an Elder?
4. End times. What is the rapture? What is the millennium kingdom? How do the church and Israel play out during these events?
5. Women in the Church. What role should/can they play? Should/can they teach, and if so is there any restriction? Can they be an Elder/overseer?
6. What is the difference between Dispensational and Covenant Theology?
7. What is the purpose of the Church? When did it begin? How do you measure its success?
8. How do I /can I know God's will? What is God's will for our lives?
9. Calvinism/Arminianism. Historical background. What is predestination & election, and why do they matter?
10. Share the gospel: Lead me to Christ (Romans Road, Bridge Illustration, etc.).
11. Is Contemporary Worship, even if Anthropocentric, okay?
12. Do I have a guardian angel? Can I be one?



13. Is it okay for Christians to date a non-Christians?
14. What is the purpose of missions?
15. Do babies who die go to heaven?
16. How do you know the bible is God's word? Why is it different than other books that claim to be divine?
17. Explain the hypostatic union.
18. Do Christians need to obey the Old Testament Law?
19. What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? How do you live the spiritual life?
20. Aren't all religions basically the same? What makes Christianity different? What is your basic understanding of Muslim, Buddhism, Hinduism, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witness, New Age Movement, and Unitarianism?
21. Be able to discuss the philosophies of the day (post-modernism, fatalism, nihilism, naturalism, relativism, etc.)
22. Why do trials occur and suffering happen? What is purpose of James 5?
23. What is God's position on homosexuality? Are people born this way? How do you answer those who believe that redefining marriage to include same-gender couples (or any other redefinition of marriage)?
24. Why does doctrinal competency matter?
25. What is a seeker church? Are we one? Is that good or bad?
26. Is it okay for believers to drink? What does the bible say about areas of conscience?
27. Is tithing biblical? What is different between Old and New Testament giving?
28. Is debt biblically allowable? Should Christians have debt? Are there different types of debt?
29. Should we ever recommend a licensed counselor? What does it mean to counsel biblically?
30. What is community?



31. What is accountability? Are there any areas that are off-limits within an accountability relationship?
32. Should we be a place that is “confidential” or “safe”? What is the difference?
33. Baptism: Who is it for? Should people baptized as infants be baptized again?
34. Differentiate between creation, evolution and theories of Genesis 1.
35. Is it okay for believers to use contraception? Artificially inseminate? Freeze embryos?
36. Read the Manhattan Declaration. Should believers sign this document? Why or why not?