



Elder Prerequisites

- Cannot be nominated by self or spouse.
- Elders must have attended DSF for at least two years.
- Elders must be members and have completed the Leadership Covenant.
- Must have volunteered in a ministry for at least two years, preferably in a leadership or coaching role.
- Must be known and approved for consideration by a staff member or a member of DSF's Leadership team.
- Must be a biblically faithful steward of God's financial resources.
- Must have capacity, flexibility and availability to serve in the Elder role. The time requirement varies greatly month to month, but the minimum includes weekly meetings, annual retreat, and committee responsibilities.

Time Commitment for Elders

- Elders' meetings.
- Elders' retreat—one weekend per year.
- Eight to ten hours (on average) per month for review of Elder Board materials, policies, correspondence, meeting preparation, and team conference calls.
- In addition to the regular Elders' meeting, committee responsibilities may require additional hours each month, depending on the committee's requirements.
- If serious issues arise that require immediate attention by the Elder Board, additional hours may be required outside of regular Elders' meetings.

At Dayspring, our Elders:

- Carry the ultimate responsibility and authority to see that the church remains on a true biblical course; that its members are being appropriately shepherded, that the body is being fed through insightful and accurate biblical teaching, and that the life of the church is being well managed with the assistance of competent and godly leaders.
- Guard the body of Christ against harmful influences, confronting those who are contradicting biblical truth or continuing in a pattern of sinful behavior.
- Shepherd the church by being an example and role model, including character, tithing and Christian service.
- Care about the spiritual and physical well-being of congregants; pray regularly for the sick.
- Oversee all Dayspring ministries.

Specific Duties

The Elders of Dayspring are responsible for the following, but will delegate to qualified others in the body so these duties are carried out effectively.

1. Teach

An elder must be “an able teacher” (1 Tim. 3:2; see 5:17). He must hold “to the faithful message as taught, so that he will be able both to encourage with sound teaching and refute those who contradict it” (Tit. 1:9). Jesus’ under-shepherds feed Jesus’ sheep with Jesus’ word.

If you’re an elder, find venues for teaching the Bible regularly. Teach a Sunday school class, lead a home group, give a lesson to the youth group, or study Scripture with a member over coffee. And if you’re offered a chance to preach, take it.

Further, tune in to the church’s overall teaching ministry. Keep a finger on the pulse of what’s being taught through congregational singing and in curriculums of all other ministries. Listen closely when members talk about what they’re reading and be alert for rotten food in their spiritual diet.

Finally, remember that teaching includes training others to perpetuate the church’s teaching ministry. As Paul said to Timothy, “What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2). So bring along an apprentice teacher whenever you can.

2. Lead

Just as shepherds lead their flocks, so elders lead local congregations. The biblical writers also call elders “overseers,” a title that highlights their role as leaders (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:1; Tit. 1:5, 7). Hebrews instructs Christians to “obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account” (Heb. 13:17).

Elders, be brave and lead your church. Don’t hide among the baggage like King Saul. When you see challenges in your church, face them proactively and plot a course forward.

Courageous leadership might involve reaching out to a frustrated member who’s stopped attending, or confronting an unrepentant member through church discipline. Or it could mean wrestling through staffing strategies, budget challenges, or important policies that affect the spiritual identity of the congregation.

As you lead, don’t lose sight of the destination. The goal isn’t to lead a church to become an efficient organization, as important as that may be. Rather, elders should lead church members toward maturity in Christ. Jesus gave teaching shepherds to the church “to build up the body of Christ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, growing into a mature man with a stature measured by Christ’s fullness” (Eph. 4:12-13).

Elders bring the flock to green pastures and still waters when they help members know Jesus more and increasingly reflect his glory together.

3. Model

Most importantly, elders lead by example. Shepherd the church “not [by] lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock” (1 Pet. 5:3). Not surprisingly, the New Testament lists of elder qualifications focus predominantly on character (1 Tim. 3:1-7, Tit. 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-4). An elder’s most basic job is to say “Imitate me as I also imitate Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1).

The mandate to model maturity carries two critical implications. First, modeling means you must guard your godliness: “Pay close attention to your life and your teaching” (1 Tim. 4:16). Continue to live close to the Lord, nurture your wife and children well, resist sin, and love people. Open your life to the loving accountability of the other elders. Modeling maturity is a team project.

That leads to a second implication: modeling requires elders to be among the people. It only works if people see you up close. So open your life to church members. Invite them into your home, your hobbies, and your ministry. People need a firsthand experience of how you handle stress, relate to your wife, respond to difficult people, and humbly admit when you blow it.

4. Pray

Finally, elders should take up the apostolic shepherding mantle and say, “we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the preaching ministry” (Acts 6:4). Ultimately elders are powerless in themselves to mature anyone in Christ; only the Holy Spirit can do that through God’s Word. The sooner an elder realizes this, the sooner he will hit his knees and plead for a continual work of grace among church members, as well as in his own life.

So if you’re a lay elder (or a paid elder!), strive to be a man of prayer. Build regular prayer into your daily rhythms. Pray over your church’s membership rolls during the commute or while you’re walking the dog. Carve out time as an elder board for concerted prayer. And when you’re talking to a church member, be sure to stop and pray for her right then and there.

5. Provide Spiritual Oversight

- Confront false teaching and behavior contradictory to biblical truth and implement appropriate church discipline.
- Maintain the administration of Baptism and Communion as instituted by Christ.
- Review and evaluate teaching and curricula for biblical accuracy and consistency with DSF values (weekend services, classes, and sub-ministry materials).
- Implement and monitor compliance with board policy.
- Mandate ministry to the poor and distressed.

6. Shepherd the Flock

- Participate (as needed) in the biblical process of conflict resolution outlined by Jesus in Matthew 18.
- Direct people into appropriate processes for guidance, assistance, and problem resolution.
- Respond to letters/phone calls from the church body, staff, or public.

7. Manage the Church

- Affirm the annual Dayspring budget.
- Encourage the lead pastor, his or her staff, and volunteers.
- Conduct annual review of the Lead Pastor(s).
- Delegate to qualified assistants, staff, and/or outside experts as needed.
- Delegate to qualified teams.