



Scriptural Overview of the Role of Elder

Scripture verses that address the role of an Elder:

TITUS 1:5-9	<p><i>⁵I left you on the island of Crete so you could complete our work there and appoint elders in each town as I instructed you. ⁶An elder must live a blameless life. He must be faithful to his wife, and his children must be believers who don't have a reputation for being wild or rebellious. ⁷A church leader is a manager of God's household, so he must live a blameless life. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered; he must not be a heavy drinker, violent, or dishonest with money. ⁸Rather, he must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must love what is good. He must live wisely and be just. He must live a devout and disciplined life. ⁹He must have a strong belief in the trustworthy message he was taught; then he will be able to encourage others with wholesome teaching and show those who oppose it where they are wrong. [NLT]</i></p>
1 PETER 5:1-4	<p><i>¹And now, a word to you who are elders in the churches. I, too, am an elder and a witness to the sufferings of Christ. And I, too, will share in his glory when he is revealed to the whole world. As a fellow elder, I appeal to you: ²Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. ³Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example. ⁴And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor. [NLT]</i></p>
ACTS 20:28-31	<p><i>²⁸So guard yourselves and God's people. Feed and shepherd God's flock—his church, purchased with his own blood—over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as leaders. ²⁹I know that false teachers, like vicious wolves, will come in among you after I leave, not sparing the flock. ³⁰Even some men from your own group will rise up and distort the truth in order to draw a following. ³¹Watch out! Remember the three years I was with you—my constant watch and care over you night and day, and my many tears for you. [NLT]</i></p>

JAMES 5:14	<p><i>¹⁴Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. [NLT]</i></p>
1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13	<p><i>¹This is a trustworthy saying: "If someone aspires to be a church leader, he desires an honorable position." ²So a church leader must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be able to teach. ³He must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He must be gentle, not quarrelsome, and not love money. ⁴He must manage his own family well, having children who respect and obey him. ⁵For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church?</i></p> <p><i>⁶A church leader must not be a new believer, because he might become proud, and the devil would cause him to fall. ⁷Also, people outside the church must speak well of him so that he will not be disgraced and fall into the devil's trap.</i></p> <p><i>⁸In the same way, deacons must be well respected and have integrity. They must not be heavy drinkers or dishonest with money. ⁹They must be committed to the mystery of the faith now revealed and must live with a clear conscience. ¹⁰Before they are appointed as deacons, let them be closely examined. If they pass the test, then let them serve as deacons.</i></p> <p><i>¹¹In the same way, their wives[e] must be respected and must not slander others. They must exercise self-control and be faithful in everything they do.</i></p> <p><i>¹²A deacon must be faithful to his wife, and he must manage his children and household well. ¹³Those who do well as deacons will be rewarded with respect from others and will have increased confidence in their faith in Christ Jesus. [NLT]</i></p>

Essential Characteristics/Skills of Elders

- Spiritual maturity
- Able to keep confidential information
- Able to exhort in sound doctrine
- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Excellent communication skills
- Team player
- Humility
- Conflict-resolution skills

Essential Components of an Elder

The biblical teaching on church leadership begins and ends with the character of the individuals who are called to the leadership team of the church. Our evaluation of individuals who aspire to serve as Elders at Dayspring Fellowship includes a comprehensive process to evaluate the “Five Cs,” with the primary focus on Character.

1. Character (1 Timothy 3:2–7 and Titus 1:6–9):

- *Above reproach*—Elders must lead by example and demonstrate a lifestyle free from patterns of sin.
- *Husband of one wife*—Elders, if married, must be devoted spouses.
- *Temperate*—Elders must be self-controlled, enslaved to nothing, and free from excesses.
- *Prudent*—Elders must be sober, sensible, wise, balanced in judgment, not given to quick, superficial decisions based on immature thinking.
- *Respectable*—Elders must demonstrate a well-ordered life and honorable behavior.
- *Hospitable*—Elders must be unselfish with personal resources, willing to share blessings with others.
- *Able to teach*—Elders must be able to communicate truth and sound doctrine in a non-argumentative way.
- *Not addicted to wine*—Elders must be free from addictions and willing to limit their liberty for the sake of others.
- *Not pugnacious or quick-tempered*—Elders must be gentle, patient, and able to exercise self-control in difficult situations.
- *Uncontentious*—Elders must not be given to quarreling or selfish argumentation.
- *Free from the love of money*—Elders must not be stingy, greedy, or for sordid gain, or preoccupied with amassing material things.
- *Manage own household*—Elders must have a well-ordered household and a healthy family life.
- *Not a new convert/not a new believer*—Elders must not be new believers. They must have been a Christian long enough to demonstrate the reality of their conversion and depth of spirituality.
- *Good reputation with outsiders*—Elders must be well-respected by unbelievers and free from hypocrisy.
- *Not self-willed*—Elders must not be stubborn, or prone to forcing their opinions on others or abusing authority. They must be servant-minded.
- *Loving what is good*—Elders must desire the will of God in every decision.
- *Just*—Elders must desire to be fair and impartial. Their judgments must be based on scriptural principles.
- *Devout*—Elders must be devoted Christ followers, seeking to be conformed to His image. They must be committed to prayer, worship, the study of Scripture, and the guarding of their spiritual walk.
- *Holding fast the faithful Word*—Elders must be stable in the faith, obedient to the Word of God, and continually seeking to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

2. **Competence:** Defined as specific, Holy Spirit-endowed gifts and abilities, combined with skills acquired through training and life experience.

3. **Chemistry:** The intangible quality of being able to “fit” within the existing team. The ability to blend into and enrich the current circle of community and relational harmony within the board.

4. **Courage:** The ability, when needed, to enter into difficult exchanges and defend the faith, the church, and individuals in ways that preserve and maintain the community. The ability to speak the truth in love without destructive results.

5. **Calling:** The ability to sense God’s calling on one’s life for a particular season of service to the body of Christ: “I think God is in this.”

Essential Spiritual Gifts for Elders

The spiritual gifts of discernment, wisdom, and leadership are considered foundational gifts for those who serve as Elders; however, the presence of other gifts such as teaching, administration, encouragement, and mercy greatly enhance Elder functioning.

1. Discernment

The gift of discernment is the divine enablement to distinguish between truth and error. It is the ability to discern the spirits, differentiating between good and evil, right and wrong. Scripture references are: 1 Corinthians 12:10; Acts 5:1–4; and Matthew 16:21–23. People with this gift:

- Distinguish truth from error, right from wrong, pure motives from impure motives.
- Identify deception in others with accuracy and in an appropriate manner.
- Determine whether a word attributed to God is authentic.
- Recognize inconsistencies in a teaching, prophetic message, or interpretation.
- Can sense the presence of evil.

2. Wisdom

The gift of wisdom is the divine enablement to apply spiritual truths effectively to meet needs in specific situations. Scripture references are: 1 Corinthians 12:8; James 3:13–18; 1 Corinthians 2:3–14; and Jeremiah 9:23–24. People with this gift:

- Focus on the unseen consequences in determining what next steps to take.
- Receive an understanding of what is necessary to meet the needs of the body.
- Provide divinely guided or given solutions in the midst of conflict and confusion.
- Hear the Spirit provide direction for God’s best in a given situation.
- Apply spiritual truth in specific and practical ways.

3. Leadership

The gift of leadership is the divine enablement to envision the future of the church coupled with a humble heart to serve others. Scripture references are: Genesis 12:1; Isaiah 43:18–19; Matthew 7:7; Matthew 20:25–28; Luke 22:27; John 10:3–4, 11; I Corinthians 2:9–13; and James 1:5. People with this gift:

- Are servants by nature; eager to see the church prevail in the world.
- Demonstrate spiritual foresight that anticipates the work of God.
- Allow Scripture and prayer to inform their decision-making process.
- Impart vision to others using clear communication.
- Can assess significant past events and their potential for impact on the present and future.
- Are able to think creatively and apply ideas and concepts in new ways.
- Desire accountability in fulfilling their responsibilities and meeting the needs of those they serve.

4. Teaching

The gift of teaching is the divine enablement to understand, clearly explain, and apply the Word of God, causing greater Christ-likeness in the lives of listeners. Scripture references are: Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28–29; Acts 18: 24–28; and 2 Timothy 2:2. People with this gift:

- Communicate biblical truth that inspires greater obedience to the Word.
- Challenge listeners simply and practically with the truths of Scripture.
- Present the whole counsel of God for maximum life change.
- Give attention to detail and accuracy.
- Are committed to consistent personal time of biblical study and reflection.