

# Three Appeals

Text: 1 Peter 5:1-5

Date: July 24, 2022

## I. An Appeal to the Elders (vs. 1-4)

### A. The Basis for the Appeal (1b)

*To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed:*

### B. The Task of the Elders (2a)

*<sup>2</sup> Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them...*

***What does it mean to "shepherd" God's flock?***

Feed

Lead

Nurture

Protect

### C. The Heart of the Elders (2b-3)

*—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; <sup>3</sup> not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.*

Related passage: 1 Timothy 3:1; Luke 22:24-26; John 13:12-17

Qualifications for Elders at the Alliance Church (see handout)

D. The Reward for Being Faithful (4)

*<sup>4</sup>And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.*

Related passages: 1 Corinthians 3:10-15

## **II. An Appeal to the Congregation (vs. 5a)**

*<sup>5</sup>In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders.*

Related passages: Hebrews 13:17

## **III. An Appeal to All (vs. 5b)**

*All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another because, "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."*

Related passage: Psalm 133

## **Questions for Personal Reflection/Group Discussion**

- What does Peter base his appeal to the elders on? Why do you think?
- Why is the role of elders to the church so important?
- What makes the role of elders uniquely difficult?
- Describe the relationship between the elders and congregation.
- What attribute does Peter command us to have toward one another? Why is this so important?

# Ministry Description for ELDER

|                       |       |                     |         |
|-----------------------|-------|---------------------|---------|
| <b>Ministry Title</b> | Elder | <b>Elected Term</b> | 3 years |
|-----------------------|-------|---------------------|---------|

## Purpose

The Elders are a group of elected men who oversee and shepherd this congregation in the character of Christ for the glory of Christ.

## Ministry Qualifications

The following qualifications must be met to be elected or appointed to a term as Elder at the Alliance Church:

### A Shepherd's Heart

One of the primary roles for an elder in regards to the local church is that he be a "shepherd to God's flock" (1 Peter 5:2 NIV). The ancient shepherd was a supreme picture of tenderness, care, watchfulness, protection, and overall nurture of the flock. This imagery of the ancient shepherd was one that was used frequently in the Old Testament to describe the relationship between God and His people (Psalm 23; Isaiah 40:11; Ezekiel 34:1-24). With this theological and historical understanding in view, it is significant then that in 1 Peter 5:2-4, the apostle instructs the elders of a local church to:

*<sup>2</sup> shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; <sup>3</sup> not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. <sup>4</sup> And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.*

As such, it is required of elders to be willing to lead, feed (i.e. teach), nurture, and protect the "flock" under their care with faithfulness, tenderness, and courage.

### Able to Oversee

In the early days of the Church, the apostle Paul as a matter of practice would appoint elders in each city wherever a church had been planted. In his later years, the church continued to multiply in various places, however, he was unable to appoint elders in these churches as he was now imprisoned in Rome. Thus, in his letter of instruction to Timothy and Titus who now served on his behalf, he made it clear that elders must be men who have demonstrated their ability to manage their own households well, because they would now be called upon to manage the household of God. In addition to this qualification, Paul specifically calls the elders "overseers" (Gr: *episkopos*), thus describing not only their office, but also their God-given responsibility.

*<sup>5</sup> This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you... an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach... (Titus 1:5, 7 ESV)*

*<sup>4</sup> He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, <sup>5</sup> for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? (1 Timothy 3:4-5 ESV)*

At the Alliance Church, we believe that to qualify for the office of "overseer" in the context of this local church, a prospective elder must demonstrate the following:

- *(if married)* His wife must be in wholehearted agreement that her husband is ready to accept this office and responsibility at this time.
- *(if married)* His wife must be a woman "worthy of respect" (see principle in 1 Timothy 3:11)
- *(if married)* His children must be submissive to his leadership. Moreover, the manner in which he leads his family must not be harsh or overbearing.
- His personal finances are in order.
- He is able to help resolve interpersonal conflicts in a manner that is Christ-like and brings honor to God in the process.
- He is able to see the "big picture" of the overall ministry and vision of the church, as well as the smaller details required to operate the organizational aspects of the church smoothly.
- He is able to communicate the vision of the church.

## Above Reproach

The conduct and lifestyle of a prospective elder should mirror the biblical qualifications for Elder found in Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:5b-8 and 1 Peter 5:1-4:

<sup>3</sup> Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. **NOTE: This was in reference to the choosing of deacons. If this is necessary for deacons, then it may be assumed for elders as well.**

<sup>2</sup> Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, <sup>3</sup> not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. <sup>4</sup> He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, <sup>5</sup> for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? <sup>6</sup> He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. <sup>7</sup> Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil (1 Timothy 3:2-7 ESV).

<sup>5</sup>...appoint elders in every town as I directed you— <sup>6</sup> if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. <sup>7</sup> For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, <sup>8</sup> but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. (Titus 1:5b-8).

So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: <sup>2</sup> shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; <sup>3</sup> not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. <sup>4</sup> And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory (1 Peter 5:1-4 ESV)

In summary then, an Elder “above reproach” will be characterized by the following:

- Full of the Holy Spirit
- Full of wisdom
- Faithful to his wife
- Sober-minded, temperate
- Self-controlled, disciplined
- Upright, holy, respectable, an example to others
- Hospitable
- Not a drunkard
- Not violent, but gentle
- Not quarrelsome
- Not greedy
- Manages his household well
- Wife is also worthy of respect (1 Tim 3:11)
- Tested / Proven / Not a new convert
- Not domineering
- Good reputation with outsiders

## Able to Teach

Interestingly, most of the above stated qualifications to be an elder have to do with matters of character. However, there is one spiritual gift that is required of an elder and is paramount to his role as a shepherd and overseer. That is, he must be able to teach. To be clear, this does not mean that he is able merely to teach a Sunday School class using someone else's prepared materials. Rather, he himself must be able to teach and defend the core doctrines of the Christian faith from the Word. The apostle Paul put it this way:

<sup>9</sup> He must hold firmly to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it (Titus 1:9 ESV).

This stated, it is recognized that not every elder will be a “preaching elder” (as distinguished by Paul in 1 Timothy 5:17). However, it is clear from these passages that every elder must be able to teach—that is, clearly explaining and defending the core doctrines of the Christian faith (Titus 1:9)— to those who need to hear it, when they need to hear it.

## Willing to Work Hard

Finally, the role of Elder is work—hard work! The responsibility of shepherding God's “flock” is often thankless and difficult. Sheep can be messy, and elders will often be called upon to help clean up the mess! Moreover, they will be required to give an account for the way in which they shepherded those within their congregation as these are HIS sheep! As such, elders are commissioned to lead, feed, nurture, and protect God's flock in the same way He would. In Hebrews 13:17, the writer exhorts the congregation to obey their leaders because of the awesome responsibility which is on them:

<sup>17</sup> Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you (Hebrews 13:17 ESV).

Thus, when called, an elder will be required to work hard—willingly, not under compulsion (1 Peter 5:2b)—for the sake of God's flock.