



BIBLICAL ELDERSHIP RESOURCES

Passing the Baton of Leadership From One Generation to the Next

Elder Development Program (EDP)

An Pastoral-Elder Development Program

Start To Finish

Copies of this School of the Shepherds training program can be obtained by going to the BER website or contacting us at the address below.

Elder Development Program (EDP)
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INTRODUCTION

It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do.

(1 Tim 3:1)

The primary goal of this Elder Development Program (EDP) is developing godly, spiritually qualified pastoral-elders for the local church. Though we specifically address elders throughout, the content can be modified as needed for other leadership roles. Indeed, the teaching on eldership in Scripture is given to all Christians (“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable...” 2 Tim 3:16), and we all are intended to learn from and apply that teaching to our own individual lives as it applies.

So who can benefit from this material and how can they use it?

- **The church:** to train and prepare men for spiritual leadership as elders in the local church.
- **An existing elder:** to grow as a disciple by improving his understanding and effectiveness in leading and shepherding God’s people.
- **A potential elder:** to prepare specifically for the “fine work” of eldership.
- **Young men:** to help build a foundation and pathway toward maturity and eventually becoming an elder.
- **Men and women in general:** to adapt this training for their respective leadership roles in the church.
- **For Christians in business or community:** to foster Christian character in their workplaces and extend their leadership to spiritually caring for the people they lead and manage.

MODULAR APPROACH

This training material presents a robust, comprehensive training program, arranged in modular form. Depending on the individual’s starting point and desired leadership goal, the modules can be selected according to the need. For churches wanting the best preparation for new elders, we recommend the full program. However, we recognize that needs, time constraints and levels of acceptance will vary from church to church, and this program can be modified to suit the need.

WHY IS PREPARATION IMPORTANT?

The church should not put a person into a leadership role prematurely and without adequate preparation:

Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin. (1 Tim 5:22)

An elder must be ... not a new convert. (1 Tim 3:6)

While 1 Timothy 3 deals with qualifications of existing elders, Titus 1 focuses on the qualifications for new elders (Titus 1:5). These lists contain the characteristics that a man should already have before becoming an elder. So there must be some level of Christian life experience and evaluation *before* a man becomes an elder.

We see examples of preparation for leadership in many places in Scripture: Joshua learning under Abraham’s leadership, Timothy and Titus learning under the apostle Paul’s tutelage, etc. Paul specifically instructs Timothy to propagate this personal training:

The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. (2 Tim 2:2)

The benefits of preparation are clear: the local church, with prepared, strong, mature elders who know how to look after the flock, sets the stage for fulfilling the Great Commission of making disciples (Matt 28:18-20). The elders provide an example of discipleship as they grow in their ability to train themselves and train others to

become better disciple-makers.

On the other hand, consequence of preparation are equally clear: poor shepherding leaders to poor discipleship which leads to ineffectiveness in reaching the world with the gospel. The local church that fails to prepare and train elders had better prepare to fail. Many churches struggle under the tremendous burden of poor leadership. Scripture warns us of the consequence of poor shepherding:

They were scattered for lack of a shepherd, and they became food for every beast of the field ... surely because My flock has become a prey, My flock has even become food for all the beasts of the field for lack of a shepherd, and My shepherds did not search for My flock, but rather the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock; therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: "Thus says the Lord God, 'Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will demand My sheep from them and make them cease from feeding sheep.'" (Ezek 34:5, 8–10)

"... the people wander like sheep, they are afflicted, because there is no shepherd." (Zech 10:2)

There is too much at stake to treat this issue haphazardly. We must prepare men for eldership.

IMPORTANCE OF EVALUATION

For some people, the importance of evaluation is obvious. However, in some churches the evaluation process can easily give way to expedience ("We need more elders now!") or timidity cowers before strong personalities ("Who are you to judge my character?"). If none of this is an issue with you, feel free to skip this section.

Examples of testing or evaluation are not uncommon in Scripture (for example, see Heb 11:17, James 1:3, 1 Peter 1:7). Paul explicitly states concerning elders that a man's home behavior and leadership are under scrutiny (1 Tim 3:4-5). Evaluation is implicit in the entire list of elder qualifications—what good are these qualifications without evaluation? Certainly the individual elder or potential elder should evaluate himself, but we maintain that it is inherently required for the church to carefully evaluate each individual for the role.

In Scripture, we see that deacons are to be first tested or evaluated before serving, so why would we not also want to test potential elders?

These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. (1 Tim 3:10)

If the Bible instructs us that all believers are subject to evaluation by and accountable to others, then elders and potential elders even more so:

[If] anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. (Gal 6:1)

If an existing elder is to be held accountable for his actions and behavior (with appropriate caveats), would it not be wise to rigorously evaluate potential elders ahead of time?

Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning. (1 Tim 5:19–20)

We conclude that a potential elder should be assessed by others. An unexamined life may lead to unacceptable leadership. The importance of competent, mature leadership in the church, for which Christ shed his blood, cannot be overstated. His people are precious to Him, and we dare not be slack in preparing or evaluating those who would become spiritual shepherds in the church.

However, this evaluation is not just a screening process, but it can be an aid to spiritual growth. The process may uncover weaknesses and blind spots, helping the individual grow in character and competence. Practically speaking, we are blindest to our own weaknesses, and we all need the objective, loving feedback of those with more mature faith.

HOW LONG WILL PREPARATION TAKE?

In one sense, preparation takes a lifetime of learning. A humble, godly elder is always growing but knows he will never arrive at perfect eldership until the Chief Shepherd returns (1 Peter 5:4). Nevertheless, a basic foundation should be required for beginning to serve as a recognized elder.

The time of preparation depends on each individual's level of spiritual maturity, experience, age and life circumstances. For example, someone who rises up from being a young believer in the congregation may require the full, extensive training laid out herein, and thus a significant amount of time. On the other hand, a mature Christian who has moved into the area with previous eldership experience will not need as much preparation.

The time needed will also depend on the church's standard and expectations; some may desire more rigor and in-depth preparation, while others may opt for less. Every church will answer to the Lord for well how they prepare men. However, we would challenge each church to set the bar high—the investment will not be wasted, and God's people will benefit.

For a potential elder, we would envision a one- to two-year process as the best-case scenario.

DISCLAIMER

This training is not administered by BER but is to be used by and under the control of the local church or by individuals who are preparing themselves. Our goal is to give a broad outline that can be adaptable to varying contexts. Internal church culture, doctrinal commitments and denominational distinctives may affect how you use the various modules.

There are no guarantees or assurances that anyone completing this training program will or should become a church elder. There are many intangible and attitudinal issues that in the godly judgment of the existing elders or at the congregational review may postpone a candidate's appointment or may disqualify him.

Entering into this process involves a serious commitment of time and effort. The experience might leave a man feeling exhilarated or uncomfortable, and probably at times both. Our goal is for the potential elder to be well prepared for the awesome and weighty task of shepherding the people of God. Whether in the end he becomes an elder or not, the exercise of going through this preparation will leave him profoundly changed and hopefully further on his path toward Christian maturity.

SELECTION OF CANDIDATES

SELECTING MEN

If the potential elders have not already been identified, the following suggestions will be helpful for recognizing men who may be ready or capable of becoming elders.

Pray: Pray the Lord would reveal the men of His choosing (see Acts 13:2, 14:23, 20:28).

Observe: Look for God's grace in men's lives that would indicate a growing shepherd's heart; men who:

Desire the work of an elder

It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. (1 Tim. 3:1)

Have an aptitude for teaching the Word

The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. (2 Tim 2:2)

An overseer, then, must ... able to teach. (1 Tim 3:2)

Show concern for people's spiritual lives

Therefore, I exhort the elders among you ... shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness. (1 Peter 5:1-2)

Live an exemplary Christian life – morally and doctrinally

... in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified ... (Titus 2:7)

Compare well with the elder qualifications as listed in 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1 and 1 Peter 5.

Observe before and after Sunday service and during Bible study groups, fellowship meetings and social times. Identify which men are starting spiritual conversations, greeting visitors or showing hospitality to others. Ask your spouse and others who are spiritually minded whom they observe shepherding others.

Of course, there will be some men who present themselves as desiring to be elders. This is not necessarily a sign of fleshly ambition but may be an indicator of a Spirit-placed desire.

INVITING MEN

Based on your observations, discussion with the other elders and prayer, invite a select individual or group of individuals to begin the formal pre-candidate evaluation process.

PRE-CANDIDATE EVALUATION

The pre-candidate evaluation involves a personal interview to assess the man's spiritual life and growth. We have prepared questions below grouped into eight areas, some of which may require a degree of preparation by the individual. We recommend either one or two elders meet with the potential candidate to discuss these. In preparation for the interview, certain church documents should be made available (doctrinal statements, distinctives, position papers, etc.) for the candidate to study.

THE INTERVIEW

Testimony

- Have the individual write out his personal testimony (see Appendix 1 for guidelines).
- Does he have a clear, unambiguous testimony?
- Can he articulate clearly the way of salvation, including, sin, confession, repentance and faith, how it relates to works and grace, and biblical passages in support?
- Has he been baptized? When? How? How does he describe his spiritual growth since being saved?

Personal call to ministry in general

- What burdens has the individual felt toward serving in the Lord's work?
- What *are* his spiritual gifts? Has he *identified* his spiritual gift? If not, have him study one of the following or another gifts-inventory: Spiritual Gifts 1 Corinthians 12:1-11¹, Spiritual Gift Inventory².
- What ministries or services has he been involved in for the Lord? How is he using his spiritual gift?
- What evidence does he or others see that his spiritual gift and ministry have been affirmed or recognized?

Personal call to be an elder

- How does the individual sense God's leading him into a greater shepherding ministry?
- Does his desire give evidence of being based on right motives? (See 1 Peter 5:1-4.)
- What evidence does he see that God has been using him to informally shepherd others?
- Does he sense any who have resisted his shepherding efforts?

Weakness and propensities

- Has the individual had struggles in any of these areas: moral, legal, financial, psychological, relational, addictions?
- What are the issues he is dealing with at the present time?
- What are two significant areas of growth that he needs in his quest for spiritual maturity?

Agreement with the church's doctrine

- Has the individual read the church's essential doctrines statement? (See Appendix 2.)
- Does he wholeheartedly, unreservedly agree with it? What areas of concern/disagreement does he have?

Agreement with this church's view of eldership

- Does the individual agree wholeheartedly, unreservedly with the church's view of eldership and church governance? (See Appendix 3.)
- What areas of concern, disagreement or tension does he have with it?

General agreement with the church's distinctives

- Has the individual read the church's statement of distinctives, things that are important to the church's identity and commitment but not necessarily on the level of essential doctrines?
- Does he wholeheartedly and unreservedly agree with the church's distinctives?
- What areas of concern, disagreement or tension does he have with them?

¹ <https://bible.org/seriespage/6-spiritual-gifts-1-corinthians-121-11>

² http://elmertowns.com/?page_id=5

Interview with the individual's spouse

- Does the candidate's wife wholeheartedly concur with the individual's desire to prepare to be an elder?
- Does she have any reservations?
- Can she confirm that he is a "one-woman" man, not flirtatious? Does she feel secure in his love and affections?

THE ASSESSMENT

We recommend that the interviewer(s) discuss the results of the interview with the entire elder team. Deciding to accept him into the training program, of course, will be a judgment call by the elders.

If the interview shows the candidate is ready for the training, then the candidate should be invited into the formal process. If it is determined that the individual is not ready to begin the training process, a recommended plan of action should be provided for him to help him grow spiritually from the experience and not become disheartened, with the hope that in the future he may become ready for the elder training process.

Shepherding God's people is one of the most important roles and functions in the church, so all the elders need to be on the same page concerning each individual who will be starting the process. It will be more difficult later to deal with disagreement among elders after a man has been through the process, than before the process begins.

Now, on to the Personal Life Preparation, the first step in the formal process of elder preparation.

PERSONAL LIFE PREPARATION

An elder's spiritual disciplines will affect his heart and skills for spiritual shepherding. He must first shepherd himself before he can shepherd others. Preparation for being an elder, therefore, is not just reading a couple of books and answering questions. Pastoring others flourishes from the outflow of one's own spiritual life.

MENTOR GUIDANCE

Having a personal mentor provides guidance and accountability for a candidate's preparation for eldership. We see this modeled in the growth of young men like Timothy, Titus, and others who spent considerable time with the apostle Paul. Personal mentoring will help guard the candidate against approaching leadership in an isolated, impersonal or academic way. Shepherding is personal; much about leadership is gained through personal interaction with existing shepherd-elders.

Each candidate should be assigned a mentor from among the existing elders or other godly men. The two will meet regularly for prayer, discussion, Q&A and accountability. The mentor does not need to be an "expert" in all things leadership or eldership, but should be someone with experience, willing to discuss what the candidate is learning and interact on any issues that arise. The mentor also will be the first line of evaluation of the candidate.

Since character development is a big part of that preparation, we have included in Appendix 4 an excellent set of questions that can be asked to help begin discussion on key issues in a man's life and personal growth.

BIBLE READING

An elder, being a man of God, should be familiar with all of Scripture:

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. (2 Tim 2:15)

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (2 Tim 3:16–17)

We recommend the candidate read afresh the entire Bible through in one year. This will help him engage the overall flow and connectedness of Scripture. In addition, this will establish a robust practice of spending time in the Word of God daily as the primary place for spiritually feeding the soul of the shepherd.

We suggest completing the BER online lessons: [Bible Reading](#)¹. Then see Appendix 5 for one method for reading the Bible in one year, or choose one of the many other plans for reading the Bible through in a year.

PRAYER

In the apostles' example, we see the importance of prayer for spiritual leadership.

So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables ... But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." (Acts 6:2, 4)

So also an elder must be a man of prayer. His public praying must reflect and be backed by his private praying.

Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord ... (James 5:14)

We recommend completing the BER online lessons on [Prayer](#)¹. The candidate should share with his mentor the plan he will use for praying.

¹ <http://biblicaleldership.com/bible-reading>. See also, D.A. Carson "Praying with Paul" (Baker Publishing).

WITNESS

A church's mission to make disciples includes reaching the lost (and seeing them baptized):

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matt 28:18–20)

Elders as leaders should model the work of evangelism. This is not just for the gifted evangelists; Paul writes to Timothy, "Do the work of an evangelist" (1 Tim 4:5). Indeed, all Christians should be actively sharing their faith, not the least of whom are elders.

Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence ... (1 Peter 3:15)

Unfortunately an elder's shepherding work can eclipse his efforts and energy for witnessing. We recommend that the candidate always have a "top three" list of people he is praying for and seeking to share the good news of salvation with.

If the candidate hasn't done so already, see Appendix 1 for writing out a personal testimony. Writing it out helps a person crystalize how he can effectively communicate what God has done in his life, and be ready to do share it intelligently.

STEWARDSHIP

Financial giving is a touchy issue for many because of the overemphasis on "fundraising" in many churches, but giving provides a tangible demonstration of a person's spiritual commitment and sacrifice. We believe God's will done in God's way will not lack God's support. However, elders, as in many areas, are to be examples for the people of God. Apart from overt and ostentatious giving (Mark 12:41-44), an elder needs to be "all in," fully committed to the local church.

Each church will handle this issue differently, but the candidate should in some way be challenged about his level of financial commitment to the Lord's work. If the Good Shepherd was willing to lay down his life for the sheep (John 10:11), then an elder should be willing to sacrifice financially for the congregation.

"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep" (John 10:11)

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Luke 12:34)

I [Paul] testify that according to their [Macedonian's] ability, and beyond their ability, they gave ... (2 Cor 8:3)

Questions to ask or contemplate:

- Is the candidate giving regularly to this church, to missions and to the Lord's servants?
- Is the candidate known for being generous with his time, resources and talents for the Lord's work?

We suggest for study the following resources: [Biblical Financial Stewardship](http://biblicaleldership.com/prayer-0)².

¹ <http://biblicaleldership.com/prayer-0>

² <https://bible.org/seriespage/biblical-financial-stewardship>

BIBLICAL QUALIFICATIONS

An elder must be qualified, according to biblical standards. We recommend the candidate complete the workbook “Spiritual Maturity: Based on the Qualifications for Elders,” published by Biblical Eldership Resources and found on the BER website. This study looks at the 31 qualifications for eldership and provides an opportunity for an individual to evaluate himself. The candidate and mentor should review together his self-evaluation in the book and identify strengths and weaknesses.

Actions items:

- What steps can be taken to improve in the areas of weakness?
- Should this eldership training be suspended for the individual in order to give attention to serious failure in any area?

THEOLOGICAL COMMITMENT

INTRODUCTION

Theological preparation is for potential elders. After all, an elder must be characterized as

“... holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.” (Titus 1:9)

The term “theology” means “the study of God.” Obviously a lifetime is not long enough to “study” God. But an elder must have a good understanding of our Lord, as seen through the key doctrines of the faith and the theological perspectives of their church. Great harm will inevitably fall on the church should a man holding to errant doctrines be accepted into spiritual leadership. If he cannot agree with the church on key doctrines, then he should not become an elder. While no man is perfect in every aspect of his understanding of God’s truth, and even a group of elders can be wrong, there can be no stalemate or disagreement in the area of the main doctrines—there **must** be complete accord.

We recommend a rigorous course of study for the elder candidate followed by an examination:

But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. (2 Peter 1:20–21)

Theological preparation should include the topical areas listed below. Candidates will differ in their levels of theological astuteness, so the topics should be selected based on the need of the candidate. For example, if the deity of Christ is already a well-studied topic by a candidate, he will not need a new study on that topic. Other topics may need more study. In the end, however, the candidate should be tested on ALL the topics.

The goal is to not just “finish the elder preparation course” but to know well the key doctrines. The candidate must be able to articulate them well, know the key scriptures involved and understand at least some of the refutations of common erroneous teachings concerning those topics.

We suggest first completing the online lessons Protecting Against False Teachers¹ and A Call to Study² prior to the study of the doctrinal topics listed below.

¹ <http://biblicaleldership.com/protecting-false-teachers>

² <http://biblicaleldership.com/call-study>

KEY DOCTRINES

- **Doctrine of God - Theology Proper**

<i>Eternality</i>	<i>Self-sufficiency</i>	<i>Omnipresence</i>	<i>Simplicity</i>
<i>Creator</i>	<i>Sovereignty</i>	<i>Immutability</i>	<i>Providence</i>
<i>Monotheism</i>	<i>Omniscience</i>	<i>Transcendence</i>	<i>Trinity</i>
<i>Self-existence</i>	<i>Omnipotence</i>	<i>Immanence</i>	

- **Doctrine of Jesus Christ – Christology**

<i>Pre-existence</i>	<i>Substitutionary death</i>	<i>Priestly ministry</i>
<i>Incarnation & deity</i>	<i>Resurrection & ascension</i>	<i>Coming for His saints</i>

- **Doctrine of the Holy Spirit – Pneumatology**

<i>His personality</i>	<i>His ministry</i>	<i>Gifts of the Holy Spirit</i>
<i>His advent</i>	<i>His baptism</i>	<i>Filling & anointing</i>

- **Doctrine of the Bible – Bibliology**

<i>Revelation</i>	<i>Infallibility & inerrancy</i>	<i>Translation</i>
<i>Inspiration</i>	<i>Transmission</i>	<i>Subject and purpose</i>

- **Doctrine of Man – Anthropology; Doctrine of Sin – Harmartiology**

- **Doctrine of Salvation – Soteriology**

<i>Salvation</i>	<i>Justification</i>	<i>Redemption</i>
<i>Security of salvation</i>	<i>Grace & Mercy</i>	<i>Reconciliation</i>
<i>Assurance of salvation</i>	<i>Sanctification</i>	<i>Regeneration</i>

- **Doctrine of the Church – Ecclesiology**

<i>Its membership</i>	<i>Its mission</i>	<i>Its organization</i>
<i>Lord's Supper</i>	<i>Baptism</i>	

- **Doctrine of Angels - Angelology**

<i>Good angels</i>	<i>Satan & demons</i>
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- **Doctrine of Last Things – Eschatology**

<i>Heaven, hell, eternal state</i>	<i>Resurrection & judgment</i>	<i>Return & rule of Christ</i>
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CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

<i>Health & welfare gospel</i>	<i>Miraculous gifts</i>	<i>Attractional church issues</i>
<i>Process theology</i>	<i>Emergent church issues</i>	<i>Marriage & divorce</i>
<i>Pro-life, abortion</i>	<i>Euthanasia</i>	<i>Gender, sexual orientation</i>
<i>Racial issues</i>	<i>Creation research</i>	<i>Church discipline</i>

BIBLICAL THEMES

- **Covenants**

<i>Adamic</i>	<i>Noahic</i>	<i>Abrahamic</i>	<i>New</i>
<i>Palestinian</i>	<i>Mosaic</i>	<i>Davidic</i>	

- **The Entire Message of the Bible** - Using both the OT & NT, the elder candidate should be able to articulate the over-arching message of the entire Bible—either in essay form of 1,000 words or in a single 30-minute sermon.

- **Chronology of the Bible** - Candidate should be able to arrange the books of the Bible in historical order.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Some excellent online resources for theological study can be found at:

- “[Passages Every Elder Must Know](http://biblicaleldership.com/passages-every-elder-must-know)”¹ on the BER website (Biblical Eldership Resources)
- “[100 Bible Knowledge Questions](https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/kevindeyoung/2014/05/15/100-bible-knowledge-questions)”² on the Gospel Coalition website
- [Biblical Training](https://www.biblicaltraining.org)³ website
- [Bible.org](http://www.bible.org)⁴ website

SUGGESTED READING

We recommend reading through portions of the [Systematic Theology](#) by Wayne Grudem in preparation for eldership. The others listed below are good resources for future reading for all elders.

- [Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine](#), by Wayne Grudem.
- [Romans Series](#), by D. Martyn-Lloyd Jones
- [The Cross of Christ](#), John R.W. Stott
- [The Training of the Twelve](#), by A.B. Bruce
- [Our Lord Prays for His Own](#), by Marcus Rainsford

TESTING

Upon completion of each individual portion of the theological study, the candidate should be tested. He should be able to explain the various doctrines in an understandable way. This can take the form of a written test, an oral exam or both.

A written test gives time for reflective responses; in addition, writing the answers helps clarify thinking. It can be given by simply selecting topics from the list above and having the candidate write out a brief essay or outline of his understanding of each doctrine, supported with Scripture references.

An oral exam has the advantage of spontaneous discussion generated by the verbal responses of the candidate that can lead into dynamic in-depth questioning. An oral test will involve meeting with the candidate and having him succinctly explain various doctrines (that the mentor selects).

A thorough examination would involve both a written test and an oral exam. Obviously you won’t be able to cover every doctrine, but the candidate should be prepared to explain all of them. While the level of mastery required is ultimately determined by the current elders, we encourage establishing a high standard.

¹ <http://biblicaleldership.com/passages-every-elder-must-know>

² <https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/kevindeyoung/2014/05/15/100-bible-knowledge-questions>

³ <https://www.biblicaltraining.org>

⁴ <http://www.bible.org>

BOOK OF ROMANS

The book of Romans contains the premier teaching of the great and important doctrine of justification, which is the gospel of grace. Every elder must know this book well, for it contains the foundational truth on which rests so much of the rest of sound doctrine. This was the apostle Paul's "go to the wall issue":

But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed! (Gal 1:8–9).

While the book of Galatians contains Paul's defense of the doctrine of justification against the specific false teaching of religious legalizers, the book of Romans lays out the full glory of the doctrine in a systematic, logical manner. We would not err by saying this is a core doctrine of his Christian theology.

As such, an elder candidate, to become a defender of the true faith, must:

- Understand the grand theme of justification as laid out in the book of Romans and why this is such a critical teaching for the church today.
- Know the key teachings presented in the book: universal sin and guilt, justification by grace through faith, sanctification by "reckoning" the new life to be true, Israel's role in the gospel, the outworking of justification.
- Be able to outline of the propositional logic presented, showing the relationship between the parts of the book and the whole.
- See Appendix 6 for an outline on studying the book of Romans.

BOOK OF HEBREWS

While the book of Romans provides the theology of justification through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the book of Hebrews extols the supremacy and magnificence of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. He is superior to all else, especially as compared to all things religious, whether the Jewish understanding of the Old Testament or all other religious efforts to live pleasing to God.

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much better than... (Heb 1:1–4a)

An elder candidate, therefore, should gain a good understanding of the book of Hebrews, as a foundation for growing devotion and appreciation of the Lord and His prominence in the Christian's life. He should be able to:

- Understand and articulate the book's teaching on the superiority of Christ to the angels, Moses, Abraham, the tabernacle and its priesthood.
- Appreciate and explain the significance of Christ being our High Priest and His one-time, unique and all-sufficient sacrifice.
- Be able to outline of the main flow of the book, showing the relationship between the parts of the book and the whole.
- See Appendix 7 for an outline on studying the book of Hebrews.

BIBLICAL ELDERSHIP STUDY

An elder candidate must thoroughly understand the biblical teaching of shepherd-eldership. This part of the preparation will lead the elder candidate through a 12-lesson, in-depth study of New Testament church leadership using the book *Biblical Eldership* along with the accompanying workbook, *Biblical Eldership: Study Guide*. A special edition of the workbook, *Biblical Eldership: Mentor's Guide*, can be used by the mentor.

We suggest studying this chapter by chapter using the study guide, and the candidate and his mentor meeting after each chapter to discuss the material. The lessons should be spaced at least two weeks apart to give enough time to study and digest the material thoroughly. This study can be done in a group setting as well, with a study leader guiding the discussion.

See Appendix 8 for an outline on how to approach this study as an individual or as a group.

SHEPHERDING EFFECTIVENESS

INTRODUCTION

Elder candidates should be trained in the *practice* of eldership also. This involves more than just knowing the biblical teaching, going to elders' meetings and making decisions. Training encompasses understanding the practical issues of shepherding and real shepherding opportunities under the guidance of experienced elders.

This portion of the elder preparation consists of two overlapping parts: the study of shepherding (Effectiveness) and the practice of effective shepherding (Rotations).

THE STUDY (COGNITIVE LEARNING)

We have identified foundational teaching for each of the main areas of practical shepherding. These fall into the following categories: Personal Life¹, Leading, Teaching, Protecting, Caring, Elder Relationships

This teaching is found in the *Effectiveness*² section of the BER website and is composed of over 200 short (15 minutes or less) videos, audios and texts. These lessons have review questions, discussion questions and application suggestions. They can be done individually or in group. At a minimum, each lesson should be reviewed with the candidate's mentor.

How much of this practical training should be done before becoming an elder is subject to the mentor and/or elder's discretion. The candidate and mentor should work together to select how many and which topics to be studied. The more that can be learned before becoming an elder the better. Ideally, these should coordinate with the rotations (see next section). There is a lot to choose from!

ROTATIONS (PRACTICUM LEARNING)

Introduction

Elder training should also involve practicums, that is, practical hands-on experiences in a variety of ministry areas. Universities have long recognized the value of interspersing academic study with practical hands-on job training. Medical schools (in the US) usually give med students two years of classroom and lab studies, followed by a third year of "rotations." These rotations are designed to put students into supervised clinical situations to gain hands-on learning and practice in applying their medical learning to real-life cases.

¹ Some of this material was used earlier in this elder training program in the section on "Personal Life Preparation."

² www.BiblicalEldership.com/effectiveness

Potential elders need to develop experience in basic shepherding skills, like visiting the sick and encouraging the downtrodden. They will benefit from opportunities to participate in baptisms, funerals, and premarital counseling and marriage ceremonies. They will value the skills developed in leading small group Bible studies and fellowships, serving in the children's ministries and outreach planning. In addition, potential elders should experience firsthand the interactions of elders with each other during elders' meetings, where godly men deal with real whole-church issues.

So, as part of elder training, rotating through various aspects of elder's work and ministry should be standard procedure in preparing for spiritual leadership. The following is a general guide for elder training "rotations."

Devising a plan

1. First, the mentor should work with the candidate to plan out the rotations. The mentor will not provide all the "on the job" training, but he will make sure the best ministry mentors are used for the various rotations. These should focus on areas of ministry where the candidate has had little or no experience, so that he becomes at least familiar with all areas of the church's ministry.
2. See Appendix 9 for a worksheet on developing a customized plan for the rotations. Feel free to use or modify it as needed.
3. We recommend at least six rotations, each lasting one month. Each rotation should address one of the main effectiveness areas outlined on the Biblical Eldership website (see Effectiveness¹ menu) and provide at least four opportunities for involvement.
4. For each area, the mentor should guide the potential elder in selecting one or two tasks to work on. The specifics, such as supervision, observation and accountability, need to be agreed upon at the beginning. But here are some examples:
 - *Caring effectiveness area.* The potential elder should read/listen to the "Effectiveness/Caring" material online and then accompany an experienced elder in visiting someone in the hospital or who is a shut-in. Multiple visits would be recommended. During this time, the two should interact on the material read and also discuss each visit ahead of time and debrief after each visit.
 - *Leading effectiveness area.* The potential elder should be given an opportunity to lead a small group discussion. He should study the material online dealing with small group leading.
 - *Leading/communication.* The potential elder may be given opportunity to give announcements on a Sunday morning.

To be sure, some men may already be competent in some areas, so there is no need to be redundant. The idea, though, is to stretch them into new areas, to improve their abilities and understanding of the various ministries of the church – all with the goal of helping them become effective overseers of the church.

Quality of rotations

Ultimately, the quality of this training depends on the experience of the mentors and the determination of the candidates. At the very least, a mentor shares his own wealth of experience and provides feedback on the candidate's experience during the rotation. In essence, mentoring goes follows this progression:

- The candidate reads or watches the relevant resource/material from the BER website.
- I (mentor) will do it, you (mentee) will watch, then we will discuss what I did and why.
- You (mentee) will do it, I (mentor) will watch, then we will discuss what you did and how you can improve.

¹ www.BiblicalEldership.com/effectiveness

LEADERSHIP/TEMPERAMENT

There are many non-tangibles that play into the cohesiveness of elders working together as a team of shepherds. We recommend the candidate (and the existing elders if they haven't already) use of one of the many excellent leadership or team profile tools available online. DISC Profile¹ is one that is particularly helpful. Individuals will discover their personality and leadership temperament, which will help them understand and appreciate each other's differing leadership styles. This will aid in the elders' learning to work effectively together.

CONGREGATIONAL FEEDBACK

Congregational feedback and input is important. A certain level of congregational involvement is inferred from the study of the young Jerusalem church:

"Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task." (Acts 6:3)

While that situation involved the character of those whose task was more suitable to deacon's work, wisdom would suggest the astuteness of also soliciting feedback concerning a potential elder's character and suitability for being a shepherd—from those he would shepherd. This is not a vote, but rather the elders being wise to hear how others in the congregation perceive the character and abilities of a man. The congregation will either ratify the elders' sense of God's raising up a man to eldership or they may raise serious concerns that should cause the current elders to take pause and investigate.

We suggest that prior to asking for the congregation's feedback, the elders teach (or remind) the congregation about the biblical qualifications for elder. Then, feedback sheets could be distributed for everyone to fill out for each candidate. We have prepared a sample letter to the congregation (Appendix 10) and a sample feedback questionnaire (Appendix 11). Feel free to use or modify as needed, but we encourage some kind of formal feedback process. These forms, when completed, should be returned and be available to all the elders and to the candidate.

DECISION AND AFFIRMATION

PRAYER AND FASTING

The calling of the first missionaries sent out from the church at Antioch (Barnabas and Saul, also called Paul) took place in the context of prayer and fasting:

While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. (Acts 13:2–3)

We find those same two, Paul and Barnabas, on their return from their first mission tour appointing elders in the various congregations they had established:

When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. (Acts 14:23)

We recommend following the precedent of those first church planters, that the elders of the church should pray and fast when making the final determination of whether a candidate should join them as a recognized elder.

¹ <https://www.discprofile.com/what-is-disc/overview/>

Through prayer, the elders seek God's will in the selection. Through fasting, the elders remind themselves that it is God's will we seek, not our own limited and oft-biased desires. Personal desires and perspectives should be sacrificed and selfish motives be set aside. Recognizing new elders is more important than most everything else, including eating!

SPOUSE'S AFFIRMATION

We recommend an interview with the candidate's wife to affirm that she too has counted the cost of her husband giving his time and energy to being an elder. Her sacrifice in many ways will be as great as his. We must be careful that a man's efforts in shepherding God's people does not negatively impact his first responsibility, that is, to shepherd and lead his own family. A wife often has a better judgment of this than the husband, so elders are wise to seek her feedback.

UNANIMITY OF THE CURRENT ELDERS

While many decisions by the elders can be carried by a simple majority or consensus, we believe unanimity (all elders wholeheartedly in agreement) is necessary for recognizing a new elder. If even one elder dissents, then it is unwise to go ahead. Consider what Scripture says: "Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?" (Amos 3:3 NKJV).

On the other hand, one elder should not be allowed to hold a complete, unquestioned veto over the others. Division over recognizing a new elder creates a serious situation that must be addressed *before* a new elder is recognized. Nothing will be more divisive than a new elder not having the full confidence of every other elder. This will plague the elder team with disharmony, dysfunction and discord at every turn, and it will neutralize the harmony and growth the entire church.

The existing elders (presuming they are biblically qualified and therefore spiritually mature) should be able to work through the concerns, and either 1) the dissenting elder is convinced to recognize the candidate, 2) the dissenting elder convinces the others not to recognize the candidate as an elder or 3) the dissenting elder steps down in deference to the others. Where there is strong contention, the elders should unanimously commit to a time of prayer and fasting, seeking the Lord's intervention. For more on handling disagreement among elders, see [Decision Making Among Elders](http://biblicaleldership.com/decision-making)¹ and [Handling Conflict](http://biblicaleldership.com/handling-conflict-0)² on the BER website.

PUBLIC CEREMONY

In the New Testament we see the practice of public recognition through laying on of hands in Scripture:

Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. (1 Tim 4:14)

Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin. (1 Tim 5:22)

The symbolism carries a rich sense of solidarity expressed between those who lay hands on the individual and the individual himself. There is a definitive, public identification that communicates to the congregation that the whole leadership endorses the individual for his ministry task.

A most appropriate time for doing this is during the main service of the church. The elders and the candidate(s) go to the front of the congregation, an explanation is given and the elders then gather around to physically place their hands on the shoulders, back or head of the new elder(s). While doing this, two or three elders pray over the individual(s), and thus "commend [them] to God and to the word of His grace" as Paul did with the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:32).

¹ <http://biblicaleldership.com/decision-making>

² <http://biblicaleldership.com/handling-conflict-0>

WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION

Be sure to document the recognition of the individual(s) to the role and position of elder. We suggest that all the elders sign this document to ensure a record that all agree to recognize the individual as an elder, before God and one another.

CELEBRATE

Recognizing a new elder is a momentous occasion, this calls for a celebration—God in his love and good provision has given the church a new shepherd to join the team of elders in the great task of teaching, leading, protecting and caring for His people.

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APPENDIX 1: PERSONAL TESTIMONY WORKSHEET

INTRODUCTION

Testimony (Webster's Definition): a declaration or statement, written or verbal, made for the purpose of establishing or proving some fact, especially one made under oath by a witness in court.

God tells us in Scripture to do this with our Christian faith:

You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. (Acts 22:15)

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. (1 Peter 3:15-16)

Let them give thanks to the LORD for His lovingkindness, and for His wonders to the sons of men! Let them extol Him also in the congregation of the people, and praise Him at the seat of the elders. (Ps 107:31-32).

In its simplest form, a Christian's salvation testimony is the brief, concise testimony of how God has come into one's life. The apostle Paul's salvation experience is recorded in Acts 9:1-22, and he shared his testimony on at least two occasions (Acts 22:3-21, 26:4-23). In each case, three aspects of his life are clearly outlined: his life before he came to faith in Christ, how Christ came to him, and what his life was like afterward. Following the apostle's example (see 1 Cor 4:16, 11:1; Phil 3:17, 4:9), we would suggest crafting one's testimony in three parts: before, how and after coming to Christ.

THREE-PART TESTIMONY

Your life before you came to Christ

Confess a guilt, fear, fault or problem common to everyone.

Do not tell more details of sin than are necessary. The goal is not to exalt the sinful lifestyle but to show your need of Christ.

Avoid words and expressions that are offensive or inappropriate.

Don't embellish or inflate the story, but be accurate.

Word your testimony to avoid putting others in a bad light.

Do not injure the reputation of others. Do not use names without permission.

"... for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret." (Eph 5:12)

How you came to Christ

How did you become aware of your need of Christ? Was it a speaker, something you read, the testimony of a Christian?

What was your initial response to God's Spirit? What, specifically, did you do to receive Christ? (John 1:12)

Your life like now as a result

What has changed? How is your life different than before coming to Christ?

Report the results to the praise of God and His Word.

Give an example of how you followed God's wisdom and ways, or applied a biblical principle.

Don't describe the Christian life you experience now as a "rose garden" without any troubles.

Talk about how you deal now with struggles and temptations.
 Don't make yourself out to be perfect now, but forgiven.
 Make sure Christ is the "hero" of your testimony, not you.

ALTERNATE

For those who came to Christ early in childhood an alternate format might contain these main ideas:

- How I came to an early faith in Christ
- How faith in Christ has affected my life as an adult

SPIRITUAL SUGGESTIONS

- Focus on bringing glory and attention to what God has done more than on what you have done.
- Your testimony must exalt Christ, not your experience or emotion.

Let all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; let those who love Your salvation say continually, "The Lord be magnified!" (Ps 40:16)

"Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." (1 Cor 1:31)

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

- Concentrate on one section at a time.
- Jot down initial ideas and develop them into a complete draft.
- It may take you several attempts to get it the way you want it and accurately recount what happened.
- Include a verse of Scripture in your testimony – this means that you have memorized it as well.
- Avoid using religious phrases or "Christianese":
 - If you must use them, make sure to define them.
 - Challenge yourself to explain the concepts using different words.
 - You may only get one chance to do this – think ahead of time about how to clearly say it.
- Keep it less than three minutes – practice it and memorize it, and you will be more likely to use it.
- Don't ramble on, but be clear how you will finish strongly.
- Spend time choosing words that communicate the clearest message.
- Speak loud enough to be heard. Your message can will influence the lives of others.
- If the Lord leads you, offer a personal appeal to them by using their name and asking them a question relating to your story: "Joe, have you considered Christ in a personal way like this?"
- The best witnesses are recounting facts that they know of firsthand, i.e. eyewitness account.

"Don't feel your story is colorless compared to Paul's or anyone else's. Your conversion is as much a miracle as theirs. Your testimony doesn't have to be exciting ... just interesting and real to your audience."

CBMC Lifestyle Evangelism Workbook

TESTIMONY WORKSHEET

Summary of my life BEFORE making Jesus Christ my personal Lord and Savior (Acts 26:4-11)

“...I lived as a Pharisee.” Acts 26:5

How I MET Christ and RECEIVED Him (Acts 26:12-18)

“...I saw a light from Heaven...” - Acts 26:13

How I am different AFTER my encounter with Christ (Acts 26:19-23)

“But I have had God’s help to this very day...” - Acts 26:22

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APPENDIX 2: DOCTRINAL STATEMENT - SAMPLE

GOD

There is one God, creator of all things, infinitely perfect, holy, eternally existent in three co-equal persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. For example, God is gracious, merciful, compassionate, abounding in steadfast love and is the righteous Judge of all people. [Gen 1:1; Deut 6:4; Ps 18:30; 103:8; 119:156; 86:15; 25:10; 9:7-8; Is 6:3; Matt 28:19; John 1:1-3; 15:26; Eph 4:6; Col 1:16; 2:19; I Tim 2:5; Heb 9:14]

JESUS CHRIST

The Lord Jesus Christ is truly God and truly Man, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and is sinlessly perfect. He died sacrificially as our substitute, suffering God's punishment for our sin. He rose bodily from the dead and ascended to His Father's right hand, where He now ministers as our Great High Priest. [Luke 1:26-35; Rom 5:19; 1 Cor 15:1-19; 2 Cor 5:21; Eph 1:20; 1 Tim 2:5-6, 3:16; Heb 4:14-16; 1 Peter 2:22, 24; 1 John 2:1, 3:5]

HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is personal and fully God, possessing all the distinctively divine attributes. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment.

At conversion He:

- baptizes (joins) the believer into the body of Christ
- indwells him personally and permanently
- seals him, guaranteeing his eternal security
- sets him apart to a holy life
- enables him to live a godly life
- endows him with spiritual abilities (i.e., gifts) that benefit the church

[Rom 8:9-11; 1 Cor 12:6-13, 28-31, 6:19; Gal 5:15, 22-23; Eph 1:13-14, 2:20, 4:30]

BIBLE

The Bible (Old & New Testaments) is verbally inspired by God and without error in the original documents. It is entirely reliable and is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. The grand theme of Scripture (the written Word) is God's glory revealed through Jesus Christ (the Living Word) [Luke 24:27; John 1:1,14, 5:39; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21]

MANKIND

Mankind was created by God in His image, and as such, has the capacity for fellowship with God. Mankind, though, has rebelled and is sinful by nature and practice. The result of this condition is separation from God that leaves mankind deserving a lost eternity in hell. [Gen 1:27; 2:16-17, Ps 51:5; Is 53:6; 59:2, Jer 17:9, Rom 3:23, 5:12; Rev 20:15]

SALVATION

Mankind needs to be saved from the consequence of his sin and restored into a living relationship with God, which is impossible for a person to accomplish by works or religious observances. This, rather, is accomplished by the death and resurrection of Christ and is viewed as a gift of God by grace. Any person who, in faith, acknowledges his or her sinful condition and trusts in Christ's finished work is, at the moment of conversion, forgiven and saved from the consequences of sin, brought into a new relationship with God (eternal life), and made secure in this salvation and relationship forever.

[John 3:3, 16, 36; 10:27-29; Rom 3:28, 10:9, 10, 13; Eph 2:8-9; Tit 3:5; Heb 9:11-14; 1 Pet 1:18-19; 1 John 5:11-13]

THE CHURCH

The *universal* Church is not an organization but a living organism known as the body of Christ. It is composed of all true believers in Jesus Christ, regardless of where they meet. The *local* church is a gathering of believers in a locality who meet in corporate testimony to the Lordship of Christ and to the oneness of the body of Christ. They gather for fellowship, teaching of God's Word, worship at the Lord's Supper and prayer. They also evangelize those who are outside of Christ with a view to making new disciples. Government and discipline are the responsibility of the local church. [Matt 28:18-20, 18:15-17; John 4:23, 17:21; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor 5:1-6:4, 11:23-26; Eph 1:22-23, 4:11-16; Phil 1:1; Col 1:18]

There are two very particular commands that Christ left the Church to practice throughout the years:

- Baptism of believers by immersion in water as an outward public testimony of an inward conversion. (Baptism is not a means of or an aid to salvation.) [Matt 28:19; Acts 2:41, 8; 12, 8:35-39; Rom 6:3-6; Col 2:12]
- The Lord's Supper for believers, which is a remembrance of the Lord in His death for us. [Matt 26:26-29; Luke 22:15-22; Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7; 1 Cor 10:16-17, 11:23-26]

SATAN

God originally created a large number of spiritual beings (angels) for His service. One of these beings, Satan, led many others (now called demons) in rebellion against God. While their ultimate judgment and condemnation is certain, they currently seek to hinder the purpose of God by influencing believers to sin. The indwelling Holy Spirit, though, is greater than Satan or his demons and is able to help the believer resist sin. [Job 1:6-2:10; Matt 4:1-11, 25:41; 2 Cor 11:13-15; 1 John 4:3-4; Rev 20:1-3, 10; see also Is 14:3-23, Ezek 28:12-19]

APPENDIX 3: SUMMARY OF BIBLICAL ELDERSHIP

We believe the Bible teaches that a team of biblically qualified elders is to lead the local church—men who are equal in authority, serving as under-shepherds to the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

[Note: This is a brief summary statement of what the Bible teaches about elders. For an exposition showing the biblical basis for this, see the "What Is Biblical Eldership?"¹ section of the Biblical Eldership Resources website.]

PLURALITY

God's Word speaks of elders in the plural who share in the overall governance of the church.

SHARED ELDERSHIP

Although elders may function differently according to their gifting, all are needed to provide overall responsibility and authority to lead the church.

BIBLICALLY QUALIFIED

Scripture lays out explicit teaching on elder qualification (or characteristics) for those who shepherd the local church.

MALE LEADERSHIP

Elders are to be males, as taught in Scripture. While women may serve in many roles in the church, God has ordained that men, and not women, are to serve in the overall governing and teaching roles.

THE OFFICE & WORK

The office of elder is to be distinguished from the spiritual gift of pastor or pastor-teacher (which an elder may or may not have). Any who serve with the gift of pastor or pastor-teacher do so under the authority of the elders. Further, the work of elder is to be distinguished also from the work of deacon.

THE VOCATIONAL ELDER

The elder who rules, teaches or preaches well is worthy of financial support (i.e. "double honor," see 1 Tim. 5:17-18), so that he may serve the church more fully. Such an individual serves under the authority of the elders as a whole and does not supplant but supplements the elders' pastoral ministry.

TERMINOLOGY

The biblical terms elder, overseer, bishop and the contemporary terms shepherd-elder and pastor-elder all refer to the same individuals.

¹ <http://biblicaleldership.com/what-biblical-eldership-0>

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APPENDIX 4: ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONS

Adapted from "Man in the Mirror" by Patrick Morley

INTRODUCTION

When meeting with your mentor or accountability partner, each gives permission to the other to ask any of the following questions. In order for this to be valuable, both individuals must be committed to honesty, trust and confidentiality. Without these, there is no accountability. But with them, this time of questions can be tremendously helpful in a person's daily life and growth.

We recommend that at the first accountability meeting you both verbally commit to the following:

- Giving the other person permission to ask any of the questions below, without taking offense.
- Responding with honest answers, not ducking the admission of your failures or giving superficial answers.
- Not lying when you answer.
- Asking key questions of the other person—not being afraid to ask the hard questions.
- Probing when you hear answers that seem inadequate or evasive.
- Being willing to confess your sins, failures and deceptions.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

Select from the following list a subset of questions each week to ask the other man. Obviously you will not be able to cover all of these each time. The goal is cover them all over time. But there will be some that focus in on specific areas of struggle.

Starting Off:

- How has God blessed you this week? (What went right?)
- What problem consumed your thoughts this week? (What went wrong?)

Spiritual:

- Have you read God's Word daily? (How long? Why not?)
- Describe your prayers (for yourself, for others, praise, confession, gratitude).
- How is your relationship with Christ changing?
- How have you been tempted this week? How did you respond?
- Do you have any unconfessed sin in your life? Are you walking in the Spirit?
- Did you worship in church this week? (Was your faith in Jesus strengthened? Was He honored?)
- Have you shared your faith? In what ways? How can you improve?

Home Life:

- How is it going with your wife? (Attitudes, time, irritations, disappointments, progress, her relationship with Christ)
- How is it going with the kids? (Quantity and quality of time, values and beliefs, education, spiritual welfare)
- How are your finances doing? (Debts, sharing, saving, stewardship)

Work Life:

- How are things going on the job? (Career progress, relationships, temptations, workload, stress, problems)
- What problem consumed your thoughts this week? (What went wrong?)

Critical Concerns:

- Do you feel in the center of God's will? Do you sense His peace?
- What are you wrestling with in your thought life? Is your moral and ethical behavior what it should be?
- What have you done for someone else this week? (The poor, encouragement, service)
- Are your priorities in the right order? How are you doing in your personal high-risk area?
- Is the "visible" you and the "real" you consistent in this relationship?

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APPENDIX 5: READ THROUGH THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR

INTRODUCTION

Why not make this the year you start to read through the Bible? You can do it! Here are the benefits:

- God promises a blessing to those who read His word (Rev 1:3).
- You'll get to know better the One who created you and loves you.
- The Lord will enjoy meeting with you as you read His Word.
- You'll start to fit the big picture together and see patterns of truth you have never known before.
- Your mental health will improve (according to Dr. Paul Meyer, psychologist).
- The discipline you exercise in reading the Bible daily will transfer over into other areas of life.

"But the Bible is so big," you say. "I could just never do it!" Well, not at one sitting, that's for sure—but if you divide it up and read a portion each day, you will be amazed that you really can do it.

Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You. (Ps 119:9)

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path (Ps 119:105)

A PLAN

Here is a plan that is simple, straightforward and balanced, and you can set the pace to finish in one or two years (or more). You read from three different sections of the Bible each day:

One selection from the Old Testament

Divide the total number of pages in your OT by the number of days in one year or two (depending on your goal). This will tell you roughly how many pages to read each day. If your OT has 1087 pages, that means you would read about three pages per day in order to finish in one year (you always want to round up). This is approximate because you should always read to the nearest chapter break. You can even miss a few days now and then, and still finish in one year.

One selection from the New Testament

Divide the number of pages in your NT by the number of days in one year or two, to determine how many pages to read each day.

One chapter from Psalms or Proverbs

Start with Psalm 1 and go all the way through Proverbs 31. When you finish, go through them again. This will mean you will cover these books twice in one year. You might want to break Psalm 119 over a few days because of its length!

UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU READ

It is one thing to read a section of Scripture, but it is quite another to understand what you read! Three mental "crowbars" can be helpful for uncovering spiritual truth from a Bible passage. These are in the form of three questions you ask yourself when you read a section of Scripture:

- What does it say about God?
- What does it say about humans (us)?
- What does it say about the relationship between humans and God?

You may not get answers to all three questions, but these should help you discover something new from God's Word. You will soon begin to understand what Paul said to Timothy that "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16).

A FEW HELPFUL HINTS:

- Pick the same time to read each day when you will be alert. For some the best time is the morning, before their mind is clogged up with other things. For others, the evening is a more alert time.
- Choose a place where you will not be easily distracted.
- Don't get hung up on the genealogies and lengthy lists (especially in the OT). Feel free to just skim over them if you like. The same goes for sections where details bog you down. The goal is to keep moving for the broad sweep of Scripture.
- Many days the reading is interesting. But it's OK if sometimes you "don't get anything out of a passage." God may use the truth from that day's reading at another time in your life. That's days reading may become clear in the next day's reading or later. Keep up a steady pace.
- Read from a modern translation, if possible. Even if you majored in English literature, the old King James Version can be a hard to understand in part.
- If you have read through the Bible before, try a different version this time. Different translations may reveal things in a new way that may reveal things you may not catch because of previous familiarity.
- Don't sweat it if you miss a day occasionally. This plan has some cushion in it. So when you miss, you don't have to double up the next day; just pick up where you left off. (Of course if you do that too frequently, you won't finish in one year!)
- If helpful, find someone who will hold you accountable.
- You might find it helpful to take a few brief notes when you read. A pencil or pen can be a mental "crowbar" in forcing you to think a bit more concretely about what you are reading—and it can help keep you awake!
- You could even break up your reading through the day, if you like: OT in the morning, NT at lunch and Psalms/Proverbs in the evenings.
- If you don't quite make it by your target date, that's OK. Just keep reading at the same pace until you are finished.
- Don't forget to mark down on the back page of your Bible the date you start. And then when you finish, mark that date down as well (ta-da!)—then go out and celebrate!
- Enjoy God and His Word. Why not make this the year you finally do it?

MY PLAN

When will I read: _____ (time of day) Where will I read: _____

How much will I read each day: _____ (#pages OT – divide number of pages in your OT by 360)

_____ (#pages NT – divide number of pages in your NT by 360)

_____ (#chapters from Psalms/Proverbs)

ALTERNATE PLAN FOR READING THROUGH THE BIBLE IN A YEAR:

APPENDIX 6: UNDERSTANDING ROMANS

INTRODUCTION

We have heard men say, “No one ever prepared me to be an elder.” On the theological and biblical side, a good place to begin preparation is with the book of Romans. It has been said, “If you get Romans right, you get the rest of the Bible right.” Romans is the most systematic presentation of the gospel in the New Testament. If a man is to instruct in sound doctrine and refute the false teachers (Titus 1:9), he must know Romans well.

Take the initiative and find someone who could mentor you doctrinally and practically for shepherding God’s people. Don’t be passive—be proactive. You can ask one person or several people to be your mentor. One person can mentor you doctrinally. Another can mentor you in pastoral care. And another can mentor you in how to teach and preach effectively. Have a mentor for different aspects of your life, like being a good father and husband. You will find that people will be very happy if you ask them to teach you all they know about a subject they are very familiar with.

“What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” (2 Tim 2:2)

STEP 1: READ

Print out the entire book of Romans on regular paper.

- Punch three-ring holes in the pages, and place them in a three-ring binder.
- Be sure to have multiple colored highlighters and pens.
- Read and meditate through the entire book. Get a good feel for it.
- Highlight ideas and verses that grab your attention.
- Mark up your notes by connecting thoughts and verses as the Spirit leads you in your reading.

If you prefer using a digital Bible:

- Use one that allows you to highlight and make notes.
- Use only a device that gives you enough note space to work with (like a desktop or laptop computer).
- Avoid using a smart phone, which does not allow for extensive markups and note taking.
- Use a good digital Bible software app. Some popular ones with good markup capacity are Lumina Bible¹, Wordsearch² and Logos³.

Notes:

- Keep the binder always on hand so that you can read Romans as often and as many times as possible.
- Purpose to read Romans daily initially.
- Use different colored highlighters for: red for foundational theological terms; green for emphasis on Christ; blue for promises. Use yellow for any other words or concepts that grab your attention.

STEP 2: OUTLINE

- Outline the book as you see it on a separate sheet of paper.
- Don't use someone else's outline at this point.
- Think of your preparation in terms of teaching this book to another person.

¹ www.Lumina.Bible.org. This Bible app is free, formerly NetBible.org.

² www.WordSearchBible.com. A reasonably priced app with very good capabilities.

³ www.Logos.com. A very expensive software app, but with various comprehensive libraries of resources.

Notes:

- The outline should follow the broad flow of thought of the entire book. Don't focus on details.
- The purpose of this is to understand the main concepts and their flow.
- For example:
 - Romans 1:16-32 – title of the main idea of this passage
 - Romans 2:1-16 – title of the main idea of this passage
- Group passages into sections, giving a title to each section.
- As you study the book, you will be constantly revising the outline as you come to greater understanding of the book.

STEP 3: STUDY**Use a good commentary and study the book again.**

- You may use the study notes in a good study bible, like MacArthur's Study Bible.
- Other resources include:
 - Dr. Thomas Constable's very simple [Notes on Romans](http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/romans.pdf)¹
 - Martyn Lloyd-Jones' work on justification and atonement, [Romans: An Exposition of Chapters 3.20-4.25 Atonement and Justification \(Romans Series\)](https://carm.org/a)
 - Douglas J. Moo's [Encountering the Book of Romans: A Theological Survey](https://carm.org/a)

Notes

- Study with accountability – having a mentor or a peer group is essential to good learning. It will sustain the discipline of learning and will prevent you from picking up errors in your learning.
- Study with discipline – have a plan. Include a timeline, schedule and milestones.

STEP 4: TEACH

- Teach the book to your mentor, guide, leader or elder, or to each other.
- Explain the outline and thoughts on the passages under their outline points.

STEP 5: DEFINITIONS

Determine good definitions of the big theological words of Romans. For example:

<i>Righteousness</i>	<i>Propitiation</i>	<i>Forbearance</i>	<i>Sin</i>
<i>Trespasses</i>	<i>Justification</i>	<i>Reconciled</i>	<i>Condemnation</i>
<i>Baptism of Spirit</i>	<i>Sanctification</i>	<i>Intercession</i>	<i>Foreknowledge of God</i>
<i>Calling of God</i>	<i>Predestination</i>	<i>Glorified</i>	

Notes

- Write your definitions out on a separate piece of paper.
- Wayne Grudem in his [Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine](https://carm.org/a) has an excellent chart where he provides definitions for all the big theological terms.
- You can also access the [CARM Dictionary of Theology](https://carm.org/a) (Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry)².

STEP 6: APPLICATION

After the heavy theology of Romans, spend time on the practical application of the gospel in Romans 12-16.

Answer questions like:

- How do I apply the truths from the epistle to the Romans to my daily living?
- What can I teach my family? My small group Bible study? My congregation?

¹ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/romans.pdf>

² <https://carm.org/a>

APPENDIX 7: UNDERSTANDING HEBREWS

INTRODUCTION

Being an elder-shepherd of God's people is more than a theological or organizational work. It also involves leading people to a greater knowledge of and devotion to our Lord Jesus, who is the head of the church. Paul summarized it well: "We are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ." The book of Hebrews lays out the theme of an exalted Christ from the beginning:

[God] in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. (Heb 1:2–3a)

While we see Christ throughout the Scripture, even in the Old Testament, the book of Hebrews pointedly presents him exalted and superior to all else. An elder does well to know this letter as he must not forget the goal of our eternal life is to know Jesus Christ.

This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.
(John 17:3)

STEP 1: READ

Print out the entire book of Hebrews on regular paper.

- Punch three-ring holes in the pages, and place them in a three-ring binder.
- Be sure to have multiple colored highlighters and pens.
- Read and meditate through the entire book. Get a good feel for it.
- Highlight ideas and verses that grab your attention.
- Mark up your notes by connecting thoughts and verses as the Spirit leads you in your reading.

If you prefer using a digital Bible:

- Use one that allows you to highlight and make notes.
- Use only a device that gives you enough note space to work with (like a desktop or laptop computer).
- Avoid using a smart phone, which does not allow for extensive markups and note taking.
- Use a good digital bible software app. Some popular ones with good markup capacity are Lumina Bible¹, Wordsearch² and Logos³.

Notes:

- Keep the binder always on hand so that you can read Hebrews as often and as many times as possible.
- Purpose to read Hebrews daily initially.
- Use different colored highlighters, for example, red for foundational theological terms, green for emphasis on Christ, blue for promises. Use yellow for any other words or concepts that grab your attention.

STEP 2: OUTLINE

- Outline the book as you see it on a separate sheet of paper.
- Don't use someone else's outline at this point.
- Think of your preparation in terms of teaching this book to another person.

¹ www.Lumina.Bible.org. This bible app is free, formerly NetBible.org.

² www.WordSearchBible.com. A reasonably priced app with very good capabilities.

³ www.Logos.com. A very expensive software app, but with various comprehensive libraries of resources.

Notes:

- The outline should follow the broad flow of thought of the entire book.
- Don't focus on details.
- The purpose of this is to understand the main concepts and their flow.
- For example:
 - Hebrews 1:1-3 – title of the main idea of this passage
 - Hebrews 1:4-14 – title of the main idea of this passage

STEP 3: STUDY**Use a simple commentary and study the book again.**

- You may use the study notes in MacArthur's Study Bible.
- See Dr. Thomas Constable's very simple [Notes on Hebrews](http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/hebrews.pdf)¹.

Notes

- Study with accountability – having a mentor or a peer group is essential to good learning. It will sustain the discipline of learning and will prevent you from picking up errors in your learning.
- Study with discipline – have a plan. Include timeline, schedule, and milestones.

STEP 4: TEACH

- Teach the book to your mentor, guide, leader or elder, or to each other.
- Explain to the outline and thoughts on the passages under their outline points.

STEP 5: DEFINITIONS**Have good understanding of the major themes of Hebrews. For example:**

Superiority of Christ over angels, Moses, Abraham, sacrificial system, priesthood.

Unique, one-time-only sacrifice of Christ

Believer's eternal security

Warning passages

STEP 6: APPLICATION

After the heavy theology of Hebrews, spend some time on the practical application of Christ's superiority over everything else.

Answer questions like:

- How do I apply the truths from the epistle to the Hebrews to my daily living?
- What can I teach my family? My small group Bible study? My congregation?

¹ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/hebrews.pdf>

APPENDIX 8: BIBLICAL ELDERSHIP STUDY

INTRODUCTION

Alexander Strauch's Biblical Eldership (textbook) and Biblical Eldership Study Guide (workbook) will provide the primary approach to the study of God's Word on this subject. Each participant should have his own copy. While the workbook is geared toward one-on-one mentoring, you can also adapt it to group study.

This is an intensive study and should not be rushed. The sequential order of the study will follow the 12 chapters of the Study Guide (which are keyed to specific readings in the textbook). This can be done at a pace of one chapter per week (an aggressive pace) or one chapter every other week (which will take one-half year to complete).

The study can be done in a group setting (with a designated facilitator) or one on one. The mentor or designated facilitator will lead the discussion, selecting which questions and issues to focus the discussion on. We suggest the discussion leader use the Biblical Eldership Mentor's Guide, which is identical to the study guide but provides answers to all the questions as well as helpful ideas for discussion.

Each participant should have his own textbook and workbook.

MEETING FORMAT

- ***90 minutes in length***
- ***15 minutes of prayer***

We suggest praying on your knees. This teaches the men the importance of humble prayer. The length of time depends on the number of men involved.

Pray for each other, God's work in each other's individual lives, personal needs, and concerns of the church.

In order to use this time effectively, we recommend not spending much time requesting prayer (or at least keep requests to a minimum)—simply start praying. The burdens for prayer will surface as the men pray.

- ***Five minutes of memory verse review***

Memorizing scripture is not only beneficial for "shepherds" who need to be "apt" to teach, but also sets a good pattern of life and an example for the congregation.

- ***65 minutes of review/interaction***

Each meeting will involve discussing one chapter in the BE workbook. The facilitator's role is to guide the group through the questions and encourage interaction as the group members share their answers, insights and clarifications. One method to encourage participation is to go around the circle and ask each man in turn to read a question and give the answer he has written down. Then ask if anyone has anything to add to the first man's answer. It is important that each man get used to verbally participating. At times the facilitator may need to help the men navigate disagreements – that is OK. Good men sometimes disagree, and it is growing experience for men to learn how to disagree well, in a godly way.

The group will probably not have time to discuss every question in the workbook, so the facilitator needs to be selective, giving attention to those issues for which this group of men requires extra time for discussion.

Finish with a five-minute preview of the next chapter in the workbook. Then close in prayer.

HOMEWORK

The assigned reading in the “textbook” should be done first. This can be found at the beginning of each chapter in the study guide. (The arrangement of the textbook is different from that of the study guide, so your selected readings will at times be scattered throughout the textbook.)

The questions in the study guide chapter should be completed by each man on his own, in writing, before the next session. We recommend they not leave this to the night before, but begin early in the interval between sessions. This has the following benefits:

- By working on the material ahead of time, the individuals in the group will have had adequate time to ponder the questions deeply.
- A pen or pencil is a marvelous “mental crowbar” that forces people to think! It is an antidote to lazy study habits.
- The discipline of writing down the answers will encourage men to summarize and crystalize their thoughts concretely. Elders need to be able to think things through and then to communicate their findings concretely. So this homework is an exercise in developing clear thinking.
- Time will not be wasted during the monthly meetings while men try to “figure out” or remember their answers. They will already have wrestled with the issues, and the written answers will refresh their memories.
- Observing (even at a distance) their workbooks during the discussion times will help you determine who is taking this training seriously, by whether they have done the work.
- Seeing other men’s answers written out will encourage a camaraderie and sense of accountability for each of the men.

We cannot stress enough the importance of the homework—this is core to the learning process:

- The meetings serve as accountability and framework for progressing through the material, and give opportunity to learn from one another and from the wisdom and experience of the facilitators. But the bulk of the learning comes from the individual’s personal wrestling with the material.
- This part of the shepherd training is mostly cognitive. God can use this material, however, as a spiritual tool to bring about not only much self-inspection, but also a challenge to godly manhood to which spiritually-minded men will aspire.

The first session:

- The first session is really a pre-session and does not count toward the 12 sessions. This will serve as an introduction to the study.
- Begin with prayer as described above.
- The facilitator should ask an initial question, like “What do you hope to get out of this study?”
- Hand out the books and give an overview of the topics of the study.
- Go through the first part of the lesson in the study guide together. Obviously, the participants will not have read the assigned pages in the textbook, but the purpose here is to simply get them into the study itself. Read each question and have them take a moment to write their answer in the study guide. Then discuss their answers. Do a few questions so they can get the feel for what is involved and expected. Emphasize that they write their answers. They will complete the rest of the lesson on their own before the next session.

APPENDIX 9: ELDER TRAINING ROTATIONS

Ministry area	Specific areas	Tasks	Mentor
Personal Life			
Leading			
Teaching			
Protecting			
Elder Relationships			

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APPENDIX 10: CONGREGATIONAL FEEDBACK LETTER

To the body of believers at [Church name]:

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this evaluation form for _____. Your feedback and input to this process will be immeasurably helpful as we seek to recognize the Lord's will in considering him as an elder. Here are a few things to keep in mind about this process:

- This process gives the body a chance to supply feedback to the elders after having observed the candidate serve on a provisional basis.
- If you return a hard copy, the forms should be placed in a sealed envelope marked "Confidential" given to the church office or an elder.
- An electronic evaluation form will be sent to the body. Email electronic copies to _____.
- The due date is in three weeks – _____.
- Husbands and wives may submit a joint evaluation, though an evaluation from each is appreciated.
- Please give frank and honest feedback. Lovingly candid (negative) feedback has been used by the Lord to sharpen a man and make him a better leader. Please trust the process.
- There is a "do not disclose to the candidate" option at the end of the evaluation form. If you select that option, you will be asked to visit with the elders to talk about your reservations. This is unusual but it has happened.
- Be sure to sign the evaluation as unsigned forms are not considered.

The elders of _____

(this page intentionally left blank)

APPENDIX 11: CONGREGATION FEEDBACK FORM

Congregational member's name: _____ Elder Candidate _____

This form is an aid in evaluating the candidate for the office of elder and should be considered as an opportunity to communicate with the elders as well as for the potential elder's growth. In no way should this form be a substitute for sharing concerns you may have with the candidate face to face, since these will be collected, read, and in turn passed on to him for his review. In the spirit of Matthew 18, Ephesians 4:25, and other passages, we believe that honest evaluation lovingly communicated is the responsibility we all share for and with each other in the body of Christ. See the "Spiritual Maturity: Based on the Elders' Qualifications" workbook for definitions.

CHARACTER QUALIFICATIONS

(For each characteristic below, indicate whether you feel the candidate is qualified). 1-Yes qualified, 3-Don't know, 5-Not qualified. If you give a rating of a 5, please state your reasons why below or talk with an elder about your concern.

CHARACTERISTIC	YOUR RESPONSE
DESIRE	
Spirit-Motivated	
Godly Desire	
Eager to Serve	
Not Reluctant	
INTEGRITY	
Above Reproach	
Good Reputation	
Respectable	
Devout	
Upright	
WORD	
Faithful to the Word	
Able to Teach	
Exhort Sound Doctrine	
Refute Error	

FAMILY	
One-Woman Man	
Children Behaved	
Manages Household	
PERSONAL	
Lover of Good	
Prudent/Sensible	
Self-Controlled	
Temperate	
Not a New Convert	
Not a Drunkard	
Not Greedy	
Lover of Good	
RELATIONAL	
Hospitable	
Gentle	
Not Lording	
Not Quarrelsome	
Not Quick-Tempered	
Not Self-Willed	
Not Violent	

LEADERSHIP AND SHEPHERDING ABILITY

Listed below are some of the principles of biblical leadership. Circle your rating below.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1 - Superior | Has shown an outstanding gift in this function of leadership. |
| 2 - Above average | Has shown an ability somewhat or sometimes above that for this area of leadership. |
| 3 - Satisfactory | Meets the biblical standards set forth for service. |
| 4 - Needs improvement | Needs to grow in this area of ministry. |
| 5 - Unsatisfactory | His ability in this particular aspect of leadership is substantially below that expected in the New Testament. |

A rating of 1 or 2 means that the candidate meets the Scriptural standard expected of an elder. Most candidates will fall in the category 2 which indicates that they do have qualifications to function as an elder. If your rating is either a 3, 4, or 5 please state your specific reason in the space provided below or on the back. If you do not feel you have enough experience of or observation of the candidate for any given characteristic, then leave the response space blank.

LEADERSHIP ABILITIES	
Leadership by service: ". . . but let him who is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as the servant" (Luke 22:26)	
Wisdom: "... full of wisdom" (Acts 6:3)	
Proven reliability: ". . . and let these first be tested" (1 Tim 3:10)	
Administrative ability: ". . . whom we may put in charge of this task" (Acts 6:3)	
SHEPHERDING ABILITIES	
Knowing the flock: In order to function as a shepherd, he must know the needs, hopes, fears, of the sheep (John 10:14, Heb. 13:17).	
Ability to be known by the flock: One must be known by the flock as well as know the flock, if he is to lead by example (John 10:3, 4, 14; the passages in which Paul exhorts his readers to follow his example: 1 Cor. 11:1, Phil. 3:17, 1 Thess. 1:6, etc.; Heb. 13:7; 1 Pet. 5:3).	
Ability to lead the flock: An elder must be a leader (John 10:3, 4; Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:7; 1 Pet. 5:1ff).	
Ability to discipline and correct: An elder should exhibit the ability to deal with error in doctrine or practice (Acts 15:2ff; 20:28f; Titus 1:9, 10).	
Ability to counsel and give advice: From the life of Paul and by inference from the New Testament, a shepherd should be able to give spiritual counsel (Acts 21:17ff).	
Ability to teach the Scriptures: This does not demand the gift of stimulating communication of truth, but the ability to turn to the Scriptures and deal with doctrinal and practical concerns, at least on a one-to-one basis (1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17, Titus 1:9).	
Ability and desire to visit the sick (James 5:14).	

YOUR OBSERVATIONS

OVERALL SUITABILITY

Usually a potential leader will already be serving the body of Christ using his spiritual gift(s). What in your opinion is his spiritual gift(s)?

Give specific examples of ministry that you have observed.

Are there other factors of which you feel we should be aware?

It is most helpful if you provide the personal insights called for on this page after completing the checklists. Use extra page, if required.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE CANDIDATE

In light of biblical principles and my observations of the candidate's character qualifications, leadership abilities and shepherding abilities, I believe that he could serve as an elder. (Please check one.)

Absolutely Confident	
Convinced	
Neutral	
Doubtful	
Strongly Opposed	

PLEASE SIGN THIS FORM (UNSIGNED EVALUATIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED).

We invite husband and wife to fill out separate forms. If they choose to complete the evaluation together, both the husband and wife should sign the form.

☐ I (we) prefer to keep the aforesaid information confidential from the candidate and agree to discuss my (our) concerns with the elders.

PRINT YOUR NAME HERE: _____

SIGN YOUR NAME HERE: _____ (date)

Please return by _____ to the church office in an envelope marked "Confidential"
or return electronically to _____

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