

GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH

Elders – Overseers of God’s Flock

The following describes **the role of elders** and the process by which they are selected in our church. Since we are a Bible-based church we look to the Scriptures. Peter wrote, “To the elders among you...**shepherd** God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers...”¹

Peter tells us **what an elder is to do**. Then he goes on to tell us **what an elder is to be**.

“...not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but **being examples** to the flock.”

What is an elder to do? He is to **follow the example of the Good Shepherd**. He is to study and emulate the ways of the Lord in leading His flock.

What is an elder to be? He is to **provide an example for God’s flock to follow**. Paul combined the two when he invited the Corinthians, “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.”²

So it makes sense that when Paul lists the qualifications for an elder that he insists not so much on gifts and skills as he does character. (See I Timothy 3:1ff)

How is an elder to be selected?

When it comes to the selection of elders, we make every attempt to submit to God’s Word. While the Bible does not say anything about how many elders a church should appoint, how long their terms should be, or exactly who should select them, it does say what *kind* of people elders should be.

Scripture provides local churches with freedom to develop a process that best serves their particular needs and situations when selecting elders. Because the first elders were appointed by the founding apostles of the church,³ it is best to call on existing spiritual leadership in the church to bear part of the responsibility for elder selection. Nominations are solicited to fill additional or replacement positions on the elder board each year.

At Grace Community Church the current Elder Board, in conjunction with an appointed nominating committee, recommends the slate of prospective elders to the membership for affirmation by a majority vote of the congregation (75%). Prayerful care is taken to ensure that only those who qualify scripturally are selected as nominees. Because a requirement for elders includes having a good reputation, the role of the congregation is critical.

What is the role of the congregation in this process?

First, pray that God will lead the elders in the selection process.

Second, submit names of men you feel qualify to serve as elders. You may even recommend yourself for consideration if you desire and qualify to serve. Simply use the forms provided. Also read the portion of the GCC Bylaws that fully explain this process.

1 I Peter 5:1ff NIV

2 I Corinthians 11:1 NIV

3 Acts 14:21

Third, please take time to read the following passages concerning qualification for elders.

I Timothy 3:1-7

Titus 1:6-9

I Peter 5:1-4

You may wish to read some commentary on these verses. A brief commentary has been incorporated in our Constitution. (ARTICLE VI, Section 3.)

Fourth, preview the nominees before the actual vote takes place. Names of nominees are posted publicly for members to preview at least 21 days prior to elections in April. During this time, if you have reason to believe any of the nominees do not meet the qualifications (as listed in step 3), then you are responsible before God to take the following Biblical steps:⁴

1. **Go directly to the nominee in question, and explain to him why you feel he does not qualify. Do not go to anyone else. This is just between the two of you.**
2. **If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, then go a second time to the nominee in question, taking one or two elders with you.**
3. **If the matter is still not satisfactorily resolved, then you will be asked to present your concerns to the entire Elder Board.**

Your careful review of the slate of names presented is important. Silence on the part of the congregation affirms the Elder Board's presentation of the nominees as credible candidates for the office.

Fifth, confirm the nominees for elder positions by casting your vote. Only those who are members of GCC are eligible to vote. A 75% affirmative majority vote is required for all new *and* continuing candidates to hold the position of elder for one year. An elder may serve up to six years in succession with an evaluation and re-appointment on an annual basis. When an elder is elected, it is the Biblical responsibility of each person who attends GCC to submit to his leadership insofar as it is not inconsistent with scripture.⁵

To whom are these elders accountable?

The writer of Hebrews says of elders, “their work is to watch over your souls, and God will judge them on how well they do this.”⁵ Peter adds, “And when the Head Shepherd comes, your reward will be a never-ending share in His glory and honor.”⁶

As men are accountable to God for the spiritual oversight of GCC, the Elders also submit themselves to an annual evaluation, to the annual review, and vote of the membership.

4 Matthew 18:15ff

5 Hebrews 13:17 TLB

5 Hebrews 13:17 TLB

6 I Peter 5:4