



ELDERS TRAINING COURSE

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Once microchurch leaders are leading accredited microchurches and have signed the covenant of Elders, the leader becomes an Elder in Training. They are accepted on probation into the body of elders. They are non-voting members of that body until the completion of their ordination.

ORDINATION REQUIREMENTS

Ordination requires three conditions:

- 1) 12 months of faithfulness to the microchurch they are leading,
- 2) Completion of the Elders Ministry Training course, and
- 3) Final approval by the governing elders.

In addition to completion of the course work, the leader will be evaluated by the Governing Elders to determine if they are demonstrating character consistent with the biblical standard for elders, and that they have faithfully led their microchurch toward the vision that God gave them.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The course will consist of 11 modular classes plus a mandatory final class on sacraments. An Elder in Training can join anytime, and look to graduate 12 months from the date of entry. Successful completion of the course will include attending a minimum of 9 of the 11 classes, completion of all homework assignments and a satisfactory score on all homework assignments upon review. If a class is missed then we offer it online and expect the homework finished within a month and the quiz to be taken. (To clarify, you can miss two classes but must complete all 11.)

If you miss a class you are responsible to email the training director and request the class, quiz and homework assignment and take it without your notes (honor system) within a few days. Homework may be turned in online.

A registration fee of \$35 per trainee will be charged for the class materials.

Minimum requirements

- Attend a minimum of 9 out of 11 modules
- Complete all 11 modules
- Satisfactory grade of all homework assignments

CLASS CREDIT EXPIRATION

Elders in Training is built on several pedagogical axioms, one of which is that learning happens best in the application. We believe learning doesn't happen in it's fullest form in the classroom setting, but in the field when ideas are being tried and tested. All of the homework assignments revolve around taking the ideas of the class and experimenting with them in the microchurch setting. Therefore, we want to take the completion of homework seriously.

Whereas you have 2 excused absences from the course, allowing you to complete the class online, you also have a 3 month grace period for overdue homework. If you have outstanding homework from 2 months ago, the training director will follow up with you to checkin on your progress. Baring any life altering situations, you'll have 1 month to complete the outstanding homework before your class progress will expire and be reset. If you are working through a life altering season of life, you can work with the training director to come up with a plan to complete the course.

SHORT COURSE

As an alternative to ordination, a micro church leader can also choose to take the short course. The following 4 courses must all be completed (and passed, with homework done) in order to have finished:

1. Ecclesiology,
2. Leadership and Authority,
3. Underground Emphasis (a church for the poor),
4. and Underground Polity.

If a leader chooses to take the short course, upon completion the leader then can join the body of elders as a nonvoting member of that leadership community. The fee for the short course is \$20 per person.

COURSE MODULES (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

The course is a mixture of practice, governmental, and theological principles that constitute the core competencies of an elder.

- Ecclesiology Essentials and the Pursuit of Church (a look at church history, the ecclesial minimum and the primitive theology of the Underground)
- Underground Values (what elders need to care about)
- Leadership, Servanthood, and Authority in the Church (understanding our place as leaders in and under Jesus and the dynamic of power)
- Underground Emphasis (a church for the poor)
- Theological Reflection and Serving the Word (developing a rhythm of rest, reflection, and dependence on God so you can live your calling)
- Discipline & Conflict (when and how to discipline)
- Apologetics (being prepared to give an answer for the hope we have)
- Mission and Multiplication as Culture (micro church planting as obedience to the great commission)
- Community Dynamics (conflict, dissent, differences, and the hope for intimacy)
- Evangelism and the Microchurch (reaching out and making disciples from the context of the micro church)
- Underground Polity (the leadership structure and governing procedures of the Underground Church)

GRADUATION & ORDINATION

Upon completion of all requirements we will hold a mandatory final accumulative test and session on Sacraments (performing the sacred duties of biblical elders). This final class will be offered twice a year (TBA in Summer & Winter) and will be followed by planning a day to recognize your ordination in front of the body of believers.

Any questions please contact:

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UNDERGROUND COVENANT OF ELDERS

As a Leader or an Elder in the UNDERGROUND Network I acknowledge that I accept the role of a servant. First, to God, his kingdom and his cause, second, as a servant to my fellow elders and to my local movement as a whole, and third to the people under the care of the micro church I will lead. I, therefore, willingly commit myself to the following things. I realize that I may fail at times to fully keep these commitments, but I think it is important that I purpose in my heart and confirm publicly my desire to keep these covenant commitments as God enables me.

SPIRITUAL COMMITMENTS

1. I endorse whole-heartedly and without reservation the Underground Manifesto, including the Lauzanne Covenant, and the Apostles Creed.
2. I will continue to cultivate a vital spiritual life by:
 - Maintaining a daily prayer life,
 - Spending regular time in God's Word,
 - Maintaining active involvement in Christian community, including regular participation in my micro church
 - Responding obediently to God's discipline in my life, and
 - Purposing to discover, develop, and use my spiritual gifts for the kingdom.
3. I will lead a moral life consistent with the Standard for Elders set out in scripture. If I have a serious moral lapse, I will promptly bring this to the attention of someone in leadership over my ministry, and I will cooperate with their judgment about how this problem may affect my ministry role. I also covenant not to willfully break the law without the support of those in leadership over me.
4. I will maintain a healthy family life, and if single a healthy relational life. If my family or relational life is experiencing serious problems, I will promptly bring this to the attention of someone in leadership over me, and I will cooperate with their judgment about how this problem may affect my ministry role.

UNITY IN THE CHURCHES

1. I will regularly attend my micro church and Crucible gatherings. I will use these meetings to enhance my own outreach efforts, and I will attend these meetings with a servant's attitude (reaching out to new people, helping where needed, etc.).
2. I will be a faithful financial supporter of the UNDERGROUND Network budget, not under compulsion, but willingly. I will seek to model biblical attitudes about giving, including giving generously and joyfully.
3. I agree to never exploit or use my micro church or its members for my own personal, financial, or emotional gain. I agree to serve them and as best I can, placing their needs before my own.
4. I will be a loyal supporter of the leadership of the local movement, and I will be an active advocate of our corporate vision to plant and resource micro churches. I will do my best to help those whom I influence hold the network up with honor and love. If my conscience forbids me to do these things, I will exercise appropriate positive dissent and strive to reach agreement. If agreement is not possible, I will offer to step down from leadership and/or resign from the Body of Elders. If I have complaints, problems, or disagreements with my movement leaders or members, I will seek to resolve these things in a responsible manner by talking with the appropriate person(s). I will not spread disunity or dissension by talking irresponsibly about these matters. If I cannot agree with my leaders, I will follow legitimate avenues of appeal.

5. I will forgive those who wrong me, and I will not tolerate an attitude of bitterness or strife in my own heart. I purpose to conduct myself with humility, compassion, and forbearance toward my brothers and sisters in Christ. As God convicts me to do so, I will seek forgiveness from those whom I have wronged.
6. I understand that I am accountable to the other leaders in my micro church and to the governing Elders. I agree to surrender the office of leader and/or membership on the Body of Elders, if requested to do so by the Governing Elders as the overseers of the churches, and I will also offer to do so if I am unwilling or generally unable to fulfill the responsibilities and commitments of a leaders and/or an Elder. I also agree, if necessary, to submit to biblical church discipline.
7. Above all I will love. Remembering that this characteristic should mark us as Jesus' disciples and remind the world of his message and his cross.

ELDER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. I will accept my responsibility of Serving in the office of Elder or as a leader and representative of my micro church, consistently attending, training and enrichment for leaders and/or the body of Elders. I agree also, when called upon, to offer my voice in helping to make decisions, guiding the Underground with wisdom and fairness.
2. I will cooperate with those who oversee my ministry, which includes reporting in a manner acceptable to them. I will be dependable and accountable to fulfill the responsibilities pertaining to my ministry.

STANDARD FOR ELDERS

Rarely is the bible so clear and practical in delivering to us policy or procedures as it is in the case of choosing elders. God seems to be very serious about elders having certain qualities. For this reason we will try to be as literal as we can be to the ancient standard set by the early church. Drawing directly from two key passages, we discern 7 categories with the standard. Each and all of these categories need to be satisfied in the life of an elder. This standard serves both as qualifications for consideration and appointment of an elder as well as an ongoing expectation for the leaders of the church. 1 Timothy 3 Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

Titus 1

An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. 1. Calling and Desire: A candidate must have the desire to serve through leadership, to understand the role of an elder and to enter into it with conscience and passion. An elder must be called by God to that role. This is discerned in part by the elder, in part by the other elders and in part by the people they will lead. if anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task... 2. Reputation: In general, an elder should have a solid reputation built through honesty, consistency and authentic love for the people around them. This is not to say that the person can not have detractors. But rather that the general opinion of the person, held by those outside the body, affirms the values of the kingdom and brings glory to God. If a person carries a reputation marred by falsehood, conceit, or selfish ambition they can not serve as an elder because they will bring dishonor to the church, the mission, and the good news of the kingdom we are sent to proclaim.

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Now the overseer must be above reproach... an elder must be blameless... Respectable... He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap... The heart of this characteristic is that is no one is bringing charges of blame against them for some wrong doing or immoral behavior. 3. Demonstrated Leadership: In the places where they have been previously trusted with leadership or responsibility, the elder must have demonstrated gracious, whole hearted and effective leadership. The most obvious place to begin is with their own family, yet any area of leadership or responsibility should be examined. a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient...

He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) ... 4. Personal Integrity and Godliness: Elders have to live moral, upright lives. That is not to say that they are perfect, but their sins cannot be the kind that bring the church or the kingdom into disrepute. Elders should live lives that provide an example to the body of faith, life, love, and purity. the husband of but one wife... who is self-controlled... upright, holy and disciplined... not given to drunkenness... not pursuing dishonest gain... not a lover of money... Lack of self-control can lead to sins that bring public shame and dishonor to the church and the good news of the kingdom. Things like drunkenness, adultery, and greed are prime examples of these kinds of sins, however this list is not exhaustive. Any public sin that brings shame to the body is a breach of the leadership mandate of an elder. 5. Maturity: An elder need not be any certain age or gender, however, they must demonstrate that they are mature enough in Christ to lead. An elder need not have the gift of teaching, but they must have enough knowledge and experience to teach the basic

truths of the faith. For this reason an elder must not be a new convert, but someone who has walked with Jesus faithfully and is mature enough to wear the mantle of leadership for the church.

He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it...able to teach...

He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil... There are unique perils associated with giving too much responsibility or honor to someone who is not mature enough to handle it. 6. Hospitality: An elder must embody the core values of the upside down kingdom by setting an example of love and sacrifice for the poor, the hurting and those on the outside. An elder must be known to shelter (spiritually, emotionally, and physically) the needy. Their home should be at the disposal of the body and the kingdom for the sake of the poor and the desperate. Rather he must be hospitable...one who loves what is good...hospitable...7. Humility: While a leader, an elder must be a man or woman who are themselves led and submitted to authority. While teachers, they should demonstrate that they are consummate learners, teachable, and humble in all things. Humility should not be confused with a weak will, but rather a conviction that in all things we are all flawed and that we often miss the mark. Therefore, every individual elder as well as the congress of elders should be characterized by certain character traits which come from a humble heart. Their lives should be characterized by listening, objectivity, servanthood, accountability and regular confession. not overbearing... not quick-tempered... not violent...not violent but gentle...not quarrelsome...temperate...Elders cannot be argumentative or quick tempered, but should be gentle, temperate, and caring in all things. Conceit and self-promotion are deadly to leadership and destroy the fabric of kingdom life. Elders can never live or lead in any other way but humility.