

Position Paper On The Biblical Role And Responsibility Of A Elder

OVERVIEW

Lead by the Holy Spirit and convinced by careful study of the word of God, the Elders of Crossroads Community Church have sought to define the role and responsibility of an Elder. This paper does not address the personal character qualifications as found in I Timothy, Titus, and I Peter for the life and behavior of an Elder. However, once a man is recognized as Biblically qualified based on his character, he must then be ready to embrace his Biblical responsibility. Therefore, this paper focuses on the Biblical "responsibilities" of an Elder, so he remains undistracted from his calling.

The following are the Greek words as used in the New Testament to describe an Elder, which help give direction in regards to the role of an Elder

"Elder or Pastor" presbuteros Titus 1:5

The Greek word "presbuteros" speaks of the "office" of Elder, the appointed leaders of the New Testament Church.

"Bishop or Overseer" episkopos 1 Tim. 3:1

The Greek word episkopos, often translated "bishop" or "overseer," means "one who looks upon, considers, has regard for, is concerned for, or cares for something or someone."

"Shepherd" poimaino Eph. 4:11

The Greek word poimaino/poiman, often translated "shepherd" means "one who feeds, leads and guides with tender care and nurturing."

Careful study of these words in their context quickly produces Biblical roles that can be grouped into three categories. From each category the practical responsibility of the Elder at Crossroads is then defined. The categories are as follows:

- I. Role of Seeking Sanctification – Men of Prayer and the Word
- II. Role of Sacrificial Service –Men who Shepherd, Lead, and Counsel
- III. Role of Steady Stewardship – Men who are Stewards, Managers, and Overseers

I. ROLE OF SEEKING SANCTIFICATION

A. Men of Prayer

Acts 6:1-4

Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. 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. "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. "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

James 5:13-15

Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises. 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; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

Based on the above role as described in scripture the responsibility of an Elder is to:

1. Maintain an active personal prayer life.
2. Establish consistent corporate prayer time within the church body and the leadership.
3. Be available to the church body to pray for and over people and issues.

B. Men of the Word

Acts 6:1-4

Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. 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. "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. "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

II Timothy 2:15

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

Titus 1:9

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.

Based on the above role as described in scripture the responsibility of an Elder is to:

1. Preach and teach the authority of Scripture and its impact upon the life of a Christ follower.
2. Maintain an active personal time of worship and study of the Scriptures.
3. Establish a consistent study of the Word as leaders inside the church.
4. Live a life that is consistent with the Scriptures and demonstrates the truth of God's word.
5. Promote a high view of the Word of God and protect the pulpit time and content.

II. ROLE OF SACRIFICIAL SERVANTHOOD

A. Men who Shepherd

I Peter 5:2

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;

Based on the above role as described in scripture the responsibility of an Elder is to:

1. Provide protection to the flock through consistent teaching of the Word, body accountability, church discipline, and involvement in body building ministries.
2. Actively serve in or lead a ministry within Crossroads.
3. Provide ongoing Pastoral encouragement through partnering with Pastors and Directors in ministry.

B. Men who Lead

I Thess 5:12

But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction,

II Timothy 2:2

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.

Exodus 18:21

Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens.

I Peter 5:2

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;

Based on the above role as described in scripture the responsibility of an Elder is to:

1. Maintain a disciplining ministry of other men within Crossroads.
2. Lead by example in seeking to fulfill the mission of Crossroads, Know, Grow, Go.
4. Provide oversight and give leadership to cornerstone ministries within Crossroads.
3. Regularly attend and participate in Elder meetings and functions.

C. Men who Provide Doctrinal Counseling

Acts 15:4-6

When they arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. But some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed stood up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses." The apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter.

Titus 1:9

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 2:1

But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine.

II Timothy 2:15

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

Acts 21:17-26

After we arrived in Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. After he had greeted them, he began to relate one by one the things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. And when they heard it they began glorifying God; and they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law; and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. "What, then, is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. "Therefore do this that we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; take them and purify yourself along with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads; and all will know that there is nothing to the things which they have been told about you, but that you yourself also walk orderly, keeping the Law. "But concerning the Gentiles who have believed, we wrote, having decided that they should abstain from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication." Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purifying himself along with them, went into the temple giving notice of the completion of the days of purification, until the sacrifice was offered for each one of them.

Based on the above role as described in scripture the responsibility of an Elder is to:

1. Maintain an active study of the Scriptures and a teaching role.
2. Maintain Biblical integrity of all public teaching at Crossroads that includes Children's Sunday school to the pulpit ministry.
3. Maintain a personal and corporate study of theological issues, beliefs, ministry trends and doctrines.
4. Be available to ministry staff and church body for encouragement, counsel, and admonishment.
5. Search and study the Scriptures to establish Crossroads position on various ministry issues. i.e. Divorce, Remarriage, etc.
6. Come alongside those in need of Biblical counsel and encouragement and those providing this to those inside Crossroads.

III. ROLE OF STEADY STEWARDSHIP

Understanding that scripture is silent on many stewardship actions, the Board considered general Biblical principles, scriptural wisdom, and the life of the Crossroads fellowship to guide in creating the stewardship structure.

A. Men who are Stewards, Managers, and Overseers

Titus 1:7

For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain,

1 Timothy 3:4-5

He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)

1 Timothy 5:17

The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.

1 Peter 5:2

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;

Based on the above role as described in scripture the responsibility of an Elder is to:

1. Give direction and oversight in fulfilling the roles as stated in the church bylaws and OPM.
2. Establish a delegation of responsibility and accountability for Ministry Staff to fulfill administrative needs.
3. Provide wisdom and counsel in financial, property, and physical resources issues.