

QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELDERS (CON'T):

- **As to Others**
 1. Hospitable—shares his home with others in order to minister to their needs.
 2. Able to teach—able to communicate the Word of God to others in a patient and gentle manner.
 3. Sets aside his own preferences in order to promote unity and care for the needs of others.
 4. Devoted to that which is good or beneficial either in things, deeds, or people.
 5. Gentle-Not a bully or quarrelsome.
 6. Just-wise, fair, impartial, objective, and honest according to the principles of scripture.
 7. Respectable, orderly, balanced—a man whose behavior is good and well balanced.
 8. Has a good reputation among unbelievers because he has a life-style of unquestioned integrity.
- **As to Things**
 1. Free from the love of money—he has his priorities straight.
 2. Free from any form of substance abuse (alcohol, drugs, etc.) or any kind of addiction which might take control of his life or cause weaker Christians to stumble.

Our Responsibility Toward Elders

The Scriptures make it clear that we have an obligation toward elders. These responsibilities may be summarized as follows:

- **We are to obey them.**
- **We are to respect them.**
- **We are to protect them from unfounded charges.**
- **We are to remember them and imitate them.**
- **We are to honor them** (Not just those who are “full-time” but the others as well).
- **We are to recognize them.**

Biblical References

- **Office of Elder:** Acts 20:17,28; Titus 1: 5,7
- **Work of Elders:** 1 Timothy 3:2, 5:17; 1 Peter 5:2-3; Titus 1: 9-14; Hebrews 13:7,17; Acts 11:30,15:2-33, 20:28-29, 21:23; James 5:14
- **Plurality of Elders:** Philippians. 1:1; Titus 1:5; James 5:14
- **Qualifications of Elders:** 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:2-3
- **Our Responsibility Toward Elders:** Hebrews 13:7,17; 1 Timothy 5:1, 7-19; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

MOUNT VERNON CHURCH

200 Mount Vernon Road
Columbus, MS 39702

Phone: 662-328-3042
Website: mtvchurch.com

MOUNT VERNON CHURCH

ELDERS



The Marks of an Elder: Aspiration - Maturity - Leadership

WHY ELDERS: IT IS BIBLICAL

Elder is one of only two church offices mentioned in the New Testament. The other office is that of deacon. The word ‘elder’ emphasizes the maturity of the man, and the dignity of his office, while the term ‘bishop’ or ‘overseer’ refers more to the function of this office.

WHAT DO ELDERS DO:

The New Testament is quite specific concerning the work of elders. They are to teach, to oversee, to give counsel, to handle disputes, to visit and pray for the sick and to protect the integrity of the mission.

HOW MANY ELDERS DO WE NEED: MORE THAN ONE

The uniform practice of the churches in the New Testament was to have a plurality of elders.

WHO SHOULD BE AN ELDER:

Paul says an elder is to be a man who is *above reproach*. His lifestyle is such that no one can legitimately accuse him of conduct which is unbecoming a mature believer. However, this does not mean he is perfect. Generally speaking, an elder is to be a model of Christian maturity and leadership.

ASPIRING TO THE OFFICE OF ELDER

(1 TIMOTHY 3:1):

Paul’s statement about aspiring to the office of overseer may sound strange to many. In plain and simple terms this involves a form of ambition, an aspiration, a drive, a target to shoot at. A man who is called to the ministry has an internal desire so strong that it motivates him toward external pursuit of that goal. One whom God calls does not have a passion for position or rank, but for the work of the ministry itself. His seeking is of a heart which has itself experienced the grace of God, and which longs to see others coming to participate in the heavenly gift.

With all this in mind, let’s note two things about 1 Timothy 3.

First, notice that Paul does not use the term elder in this passage, and that is significant. Acts 20 clearly shows that the words *elder* and *overseer* refer to the same office. Elders are the overseers, for Acts 20 elders are defined as overseers. What’s the difference between the two terms?

(1) The term *elder*, stresses the **dignity** and **position** of this ministry in the church.

(2) On the other hand, *overseer* stresses the **function** and **work** of an elder. In 1 Timothy 3:1, Paul carefully chose to use a word meaning the “office or charge of oversight”. But why? Because this word stresses the ministry **function** and **nature** of this office as a charge from God and not the element of position.

God is not looking for men who are aspiring for position. Jesus made this clear to the disciples. The church needs men who want to serve the body for the glory of God and the blessing of others.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELDERS:

• **As to God and His Word**

1. Shows definite progress in spiritual maturity, not a new convert.
2. Demonstrates a definite commitment to know, love, and walk with God.
3. A student of God’s word, stable in the faith, and sound in doctrine and practice.

• **As to Himself**

1. Aspires to the office of elder (see what it means to aspire).
2. Temperate and prudent—guided by Godly principles.
3. Not quick tempered—emotionally stable and in control of his feelings

• **As to His Family**

1. Husband of one wife—a one woman man.
2. One who manages his own household well—his family follows his Godly leadership.

(see reverse)