

Summary of Qualities in the Life of an Elder

From scripture studies found on the Brooks Avenue web site (www.brooks.org) under Teaching/Media: Archived Classes: Elders. Direct link: https://www.brooks.org/?page_id=2674

Elder, Overseer, Shepherd – Three Terms for the Same Person

- Elder or Presbyter (Greek: *presbuteros*) – Emphasizes the mature character
- Overseers or Bishops (Greek: *episkopos*) – Emphasizes his function
- Shepherd or Pastor (Greek: *poimen*) – Emphasizes his caring spirit

Their source of authority:

Acts 20:28 (NIV, emphasis mine) speaking to the Ephesus elders: “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which **the Holy Spirit has made you overseers**. Be shepherds of the church of God...”

Our response to that authority:

Hebrews 13:17 “**Obey** your leaders and **submit** to their **authority**. They keep watch over you as men who must **give an account**. Obey them so that their work will be a **joy**, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.”

Obey (greek *peitho*) – to be won over. Obedience ... resulting from persuasion.

Submit (greek *hupеiko*) – to yield, to willingly give way.

-Vines Expository Dictionary of NT Words

Implies a humble trust and respect of those the Holy Spirit has authorized as our leaders. It describes a willingness to follow, a desire to listen, and an openness to reason on my part. There is no authoritarian or "lording over" expectation of leaders.

I Timothy 3: 1-7 (NIV)

Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his 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, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full 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 1:6-9 (NIV)

An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer manages God’s household, 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.

I Peter 5:1-4 (NIV)

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, **watching** over them—not because you must, but because you are **willing**, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to **serve**; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being **examples** to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

Qualities NOT qualifications. Not a list to be checked off. No one will perfectly have all these qualities in full measure. We should ALL be growing into the image of Christ.

- **Guided by Holy Spirit**
- Not a new convert – "Seasoned" by wisdom/time.
- Husband of one woman – Not entice-able. A "one-woman kind of man." Committed. Not lustful. Dedicated. Trusted.
- Not addicted to wine; given to drunkenness – Self-controlled. Does not "need" it. Dependable. Steady. Serious. Not focused on seeking an escape.
- Hospitable – Giver of time. Sacrificial. Generous. Sharing. Caring.
- Not violent or quarrelsome. Not quick tempered or prone to anger – Humble. Gentle. Wise. Controlled. Patient. God-trusting.
- Prudent, sensible – Knowledgeable. Experienced. Seasoned. Wise. Listener. Thoughtful.
- **Able to teach** – Does not say gifted or talented.
- Able to convict, expose, refute – Knows God's Word and how to use it. Bold but gentle. Has strong convictions yet humble. Protective.
- Children under control – Can also be trusted to lead family of God. Wisdom gained through experience.
- Children who believe/trust; not accused of wildness or rebellion – Able to lead others to Christ. Able to help them to mature behaviors.
- Not greedy for money. Free from love of money – Godly life focus. Godly work-ethic.
- **Above reproach – Over-arching and all-embracing quality. Un-accusable. High integrity. Solid reputation both in and out of the church.**
- **Not arrogant or self-willed. Not conceited – Deeply aware of own need for God's grace. Not interested in eldership for position, but to serve. Learned not to take one's self too seriously.**
- **Willing to serve in this role – aspiring/desiring to be used by God in whatever role He places us. Willing to step out on faith, even while feeling inadequate to the task He calls us to, with awe inspired fear & trembling.**
- **Sees shepherding as a "noble task" – meeting a deep need in the Lord's church. Using one's gifts to help and protect others in the faith.**

Questions – please email the elders (elders@brooks.org) or talk to us by phone or in person.