

## ELDER RESPONSIBILITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Elders serve an important volunteer role at Engedi as they provide wise counsel, accountability, and crisis support. Strong character, spiritual maturity and high-level leadership experience are essential qualities of members of the elder board. This document offers an overview of elder responsibilities and qualifications.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Wise counsel:** The elder board provides spiritual guidance and wise counsel to the Lead Pastor as he leads the staff in meeting elder-approved goals.
- **Accountability and Encouragement.** The elder board provides accountability by approving the annual budget and goals, conducting the lead pastor's annual review, and providing ongoing feedback. The elder board encourages the Lead Pastor and staff, regularly praying for them and offering words of appreciation.
- **Crisis support.** The elder board is called upon during times of crisis as needed.

### QUALIFICATIONS

An Elder candidate will:

- Be regularly reading his/her Bible and praying.
- Be engaged in at least one friendship with a non-Christian.
- Be involved in an Engedi CABLE Group.
- Be actively serving at Engedi.
- Be able to point to places he/she is showing compassion to the poor and vulnerable.
- Not be currently serving as an Engedi staff member and not the spouse of a staff member.
- Be tithing to Engedi.
- Be regularly participating in Worship Nights.

### TIME COMMITMENT

- **Length of Service:** The elder term is a 3-year commitment beginning in June. An elder may serve up to 2 consecutive terms. After which, a minimum of a 1-year break from the board is required before the elder is once again qualified for nomination and consideration for additional terms.
- **Elder Meetings:** Meetings are on the 2nd & 4th Wednesdays of the month from 7–9:30 pm. Some months may only have one meeting, and on rare occasions, there may be additional meetings for urgent situations.
- **Worship Engagement:** Elders may be asked to pray with attendees or serve other capacities in the worship service periodically.
- **Relational Investment:** Elders and their spouses are asked to participate in social gatherings, which take place once or twice a year.
- **Community Care:** Elders may be asked to assist with community care needs such as meeting with individuals with spiritual questions, those in crisis, or assisting with troubled marriages, etc.

- Preparation Time: Before meeting times, elders may be asked to read articles or books, study Scripture, or research topics.

#### OFFICERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Chairperson. The chair of the board works with the Lead Pastor to set the agenda for meetings, manage communications among the board, and is often the spokesperson for the board.
- Vice-chairperson. The vice-chair of the board assists the chair with various tasks and provides additional support and wisdom to the Lead Pastor.
- Secretary. The secretary records minutes for elder meetings, documents decisions made by the board through email, and manages elder documents.
- Treasurer. The treasurer attends bi-monthly finance team meetings and relays pertinent information back to the board.

#### BIBLICAL QUALIFICATIONS

##### Contextual considerations

I Timothy 3:1-7 applies to either men or women (I Timothy 2:8; 3:2, 4-7). The qualifications are essential, not optional. The list of qualifications provides a standard for leaders that must be met (I Timothy 3:2, 4, 7). It is not a list of suggestions from which standards can be selected.

##### Biblical character qualifications ( Note: Biblical qualifications are italicized.)

###### A. **Personal Life** (Do the candidate's internals square with his/her externals?)

- ***Above reproach*** (I Timothy 3:2) – Not perfection, but not flaw in his/her conduct that would be grounds for any kind of accusation. Blameless. A good reputation among believers.
- ***Faithful to his/her spouse*** (I Timothy 3:2) – Prohibits polygamy and sexual promiscuity. Affections centered exclusively for one's spouse. Unquestioned morality with regard to relationships with other men/women (I Timothy 3:4-5; I Corinthians 9:24-27).
- ***Temperate*** (I Timothy 3:2) Paul had in mind the self-control necessary for effective ministry (I Timothy 3:11, Titus 2:2). Also clarity of mind and soberness or the opposite of any kind of fuzziness. Sober judgement is highly valued in individual and public life – free from emotional extremism, balanced not rash.
- ***Self-controlled*** (I Timothy 3:2) – Of sound mind; demonstrates wisdom and discretion. Wisdom suggests more than biblical knowledge. It is the application of knowledge to the practicalities of life. Exercising balanced judgement and avoiding legalism and moral laxity. Having a firm grip on the real world and the ability to draw on the Word and experience to make decisions.

- **Respectable** (I Timothy 3:2) – Well-mannered; behaving in an honorable way. A person who has gained the respect of those around him/her and will continue to earn their respect as he/she leads.
- **Hospitable** (I Timothy 3:2) – A person friendly to strangers and others, with an open heart and an open home. The church is a family and therefore needs to keep its doors and hearts open to the joys, sorrows, needs and celebrations of others. Not to meet the needs of everyone but to lead the congregation in this responsibility.
- **Able to teach** (I Timothy 3:2) – Ability to handle the Scripture – to understand and communicate the truth to others and to be able to refute those who mishandle it (Titus 1:9). Not necessarily publicly and to large groups; some may do this informally and in more private settings. The Scriptures are central to ministry (I Timothy 1:3-11, 4-6; 6:3-5).
- **Not given to drunkenness** (I Timothy 3:3) – The phrase suggests not under the control of alcohol. Over-drinking can cloud the mind and blunt the senses – conditions that hinder good leadership and the ability to shepherd. Drunkenness (or other modern substance abuse) also suggests some underlying need that is being avoided or that one is numbing oneself to reality. Drunkenness violates God’s will (Romans 13:12; I Corinthians 5:11; 8:9, 10:31-33, Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:18, I Peter 4:1-5). God wants clear thinking, alert, discerning individuals who are capable of making sound decisions.
- **Not quarrelsome** (I Timothy 3:3) – Not one who consistently responds to criticism with defensiveness or anger – verbally or physically. Able to take the heat without spreading the flames. One must remember Ephesians 6:12, “for our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the world forces of this darkness...”
- **Gentle** (I Timothy 3:3) – The term means yielding or forbearing. To pardon human failings, to look to the law-giver, not to the law; to the intention, not to the action; settled in love rather than settled in law (II Timothy 2:24).
- **Peaceable** (I Timothy 3:3) – Not quarrelsome. Able to get along with and accept the views of others. One who will produce harmony rather than discord. One who will create and preserve relationships necessary for building a unified church. One who is slow on the trigger and listens to others, cooperates, builds people up instead of tearing them down.
- **Free from the love of money** (I Timothy 3:3) – Money is not evil, nor is it wrong to have a lot of it. Yet it is a violation of God’s will when one loves it. A mature Christian is free, not from money but from the love of money. One who maintains a healthy detachment and can therefore be a model of generosity and maintain simplicity of lifestyle. Recognizes that all one has belongs to God and therefore must be looked after faithfully.

B. **Domestic Life** (Would his/her family select him/her?)

- ***One who manages his household well*** (I Timothy 3:4-5) – One who manages his/her own household well, keeping their children under control with all dignity. The focus is the home, not the business, because the church is a family, not a business. It doesn't matter if a person succeeds at everything in life; if he/she is not leading their family well, they are disqualified from leading the church. A word of caution: no one is going to be perfect. We must look for the general tenor in the home that includes respect, love, order, attentiveness, involvement, support, communication, spiritual development, open discussions regarding Christ and study of the Word. Would not necessarily rule out unmarried men or women, although some would say the safest interpretation would be that the individual be married and have children old enough to show respect.

C. **Spiritual Life** (Do the believers affirm his/her maturity?)

- ***Not a new convert*** (I Timothy 3:6) – The role of Elder calls for roots, perception, experience and wisdom. Someone seasoned by life's triumphs, failures, joys and disappointments. Enthusiasm, Bible knowledge, godly traits are necessary but not sufficient in that it is so easy to fall victim to pride or discouragement. Only the growing pain of maturity produces a stable and humble heart.

D. **Public Life** (Would the broader community affirm this person's character?)

- ***A good reputation with those outside the church*** (I Timothy 3:7) – Reputation matters. Is the person friendly? How do they handle conflict? How do they treat the dry cleaner, waitress, business associate, customer, sales help or grocery checker?

Note: The additional qualifications of (I Timothy 2:12; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-4) are not included in the above list.

E. **Leadership Experience**

- While the spiritual character of elders is primary and non-negotiable, it is also wise for elders to possess meaningful leadership experience.

Scripture calls leaders to be faithful stewards of what has been entrusted to them (1 Corinthians 4:2). In a church of our size and scope, such stewardship requires both spiritual maturity and demonstrated leadership capacity (Exodus 18:21-23, Matthew 25:14-30).

Engedi Church is a large and complex ministry. We steward dozens of staff across multiple departments, oversee a multi-million-dollar budget, manage multiple properties and campuses, and pursue multi-year strategic initiatives designed to advance our mission with unity and clarity. Faithful governance in such an environment requires both spiritual discernment and organizational wisdom.

Therefore, it is important for elders to bring demonstrated high-level leadership experience. Such experience equips them to think strategically, ask discerning questions, understand organizational dynamics, and help ensure wise stewardship of the resources entrusted to our church.

In this way, elders are better positioned to shepherd the flock faithfully while also providing mature, wise counsel to a growing and multifaceted ministry.