

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH – WALDOBORO, ME
"FINDING HOPE AND LIFE IN JESUS"

Ministry Description – Elder

Personal Qualifications

1. Dignified (I Tim. 3:2 & 8) – worthy of respect and treating serious matters seriously
2. Hospitable (I Tim. 3:2) – they are to love people and open their homes to others
3. Able to Teach (I Tim 3:2) – He must not only be teachable, but must also be able to communicate Biblical truth to others. ***This is the primary qualification that sets Elders apart from Deacons.***
4. Not addicted to alcohol (I Tim. 3:3)
5. Not materialistic or greedy (I Tim. 3:3)
6. Not contentious (I Tim. 3:3) or pugnacious (Titus 1:7) – literally “not a fighter”. An elder should be a peaceable man who seeks to avoid confrontation wherever possible.
7. Gentle (I Tim. 3:3)
8. Not new converts (I Tim 3:6) – Elders should be spiritually mature.
9. Must have a good reputation both inside & outside the church (I Tim. 3:7).
10. Must not be double tongued (I Tim. 3:8) (i.e. a gossip) – saying different things to different folks.
11. Self-controlled (1 Tim. 3:8 & Titus 1:8) – Elders are not to be addicted to anything that would distract them from their duties (i.e. alcohol, money, materialism).
12. Not self-willed (Titus 1:7) – An elder shouldn’t be self centered, but focused on what’s best for the flock he leads.
13. Not quick tempered (Titus 1:7) – should show patience.
14. Love what is good (Titus 1:8)
15. Just (Titus 1:8) – Elders should always seek to be fair.
16. Devout (Titus 1:8) – Elders are to be holy in their daily lives.
17. Serve willingly, not under compulsion (I Peter 5:2) – Elders must be willing and enthusiastic to serve God and His church.
18. Live as examples to the flock, not lording it over them (I Peter 5:3) – Elders must be servant leaders & examples to others, not dominating, manipulative, or intimidating.

Spiritual Qualifications

1. Live a life that is beyond reproach, i.e. his life is above board and “on the table” (I Tim. 3:2&10)
2. Be the husband of one wife (I Tim. 3:2) (i.e. be a “one woman man”). If married, elders are to have a proven track record of faithfulness to God’s plan in marriage. God’s plan is for faithful and monogamous marriages. Any deviation from this is a grave matter.
3. Be good managers of their own children & households (I Tim. 3:4) – Exemplary is the goal here. An elder’s children & his family affairs should be worthy of emulation. Children of age (who live “under the roof”) must be respectful to their parents, and seeking to follow God themselves.

4. Have clear convictions based on personal knowledge of true biblical doctrine (I Tim. 3:9)

Characteristics

1. Confidentiality – keep sensitive or private information from the public.
2. Courage to take a stand and openly, lovingly, & Biblically confront issues.
3. Unity – Express divergent views, but support decisions once they are made.
4. Partners in Ministry – Co-laborers with the Pastoral Elder in the privilege of doing God’s Work. The Elders are, in essence, the ministry team over all other ministry teams in the church.

***If any of the above things are not true, all of the things below won’t matter much.
One cannot DO the work of God without BEING a man of God!***

Duties

1. Prayer – (Acts 6:1-4) Pray for the Pastoral Elder and other staff, the Deacons, ministry teams, and the vision, direction, & health of the church.
2. Ministry of the Word – (I Tim 5:17, Titus 1:7-9) – Elders are responsible for the teaching and preaching of the church. They are not the only ones allowed to teach or preach, but they are the ones who will be one day held responsible for the purity of teaching and doctrine that comes from the local church they lead – whether from the pulpit, through Sunday School teachers, or through Bible studies. They ensure our teachers are held to a higher standard (James 3:1).
 - a. Studying – In order to teach Scripture well, Elders should all be good students of Scripture, first and foremost.
 - b. Defending (Titus 1:9-11) – The Elders must defend and protect the true and pure doctrine of the church.
 - c. Teaching – Since all Elders are “able to teach”, they should be teaching somewhere, somehow, whether in large or small groups, or even in personal discipleship, they should be teaching the principles of Scripture to others on a regular basis.
3. Shepherding (Acts 20:28-30, I Peter 5:2-4) – Elders will be ultimately held responsible for their leadership, in all its facets, of the local flock God has entrusted to them.
4. Administrating & Decision Making (I Tim. 5:17, I Cor 2:16) – There will be difficult and heart-wrenching decisions that will have to be made by the elders. They can not defer or delegate this responsibility to anyone else – they will have to come to consensus even on the toughest of issues. The administration of many issues will fall at the feet of the Elders.
5. Discipline (2 Tim. 2:17-18, I Tim. 1:20) – Elders are responsible for the purity of the church, and as such, for the discipline and correction of members of the church family, as outlined in Matthew 18 and elsewhere.
6. Responsible for periodic and regular evaluation of the Pastoral Elder (at least annually).
7. Responsible for the Pulpit in the absence of the Pastoral Elder.