

Revive Presbyterian Church of Silicon Valley Elder Candidacy

Important Bible passages on the qualifications and role of an elder:

Focus on the elder qualifications please, but you can see that there is strong overlap for the qualifications of the deacon too. We will raise up deacons later after we establish our elders.

I Timothy 3:1-14

Qualifications for Overseers

3:1 The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. **2** Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, **3** not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. **4** He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, **5** for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? **6** He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. **7** Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

Qualifications for Deacons

8 Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. **9** They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. **10** And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. **11** Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. **12** Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. **13** For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

Titus 1:5-9

Qualifications for Elders

5 This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— **6** if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. **7** For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, **8** but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. **9** He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

I Peter 5:1-5

Shepherd the Flock of God

5:1 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: **2** shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; **3** not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. **4** And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. **5** Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

The church laws of our denomination, the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), are written down in the **Book of Church Order** (BCO). The following are key passages from the BCO concerning elders and how they are selected. Please read through them to be informed and to faithfully and prayerfully consider whom to nominate as a candidate:

From Chapter 8, “The Elder”

8-1. This office is one of dignity and usefulness. The man who fills it has in Scripture different titles expressive of his various duties. As he has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed bishop or pastor. As it is his duty to be spiritually fruitful, dignified, and prudent, an example to the flock, and to govern well in the house and Kingdom of Christ, he is termed presbyter or elder. As he expounds the Word, and by sound doctrine both exhorts and convinces the gainsayer, he is termed teacher. These titles do not indicate different grades of office, but all describe one and the same office.

8-2. He that fills this office should possess a competency of human learning and be blameless in life, sound in the faith and apt to teach. He should exhibit a sobriety and holiness of life becoming the Gospel. He should rule his own house well and should have a good report of them that are outside the Church.

8-3. It belongs to those in the office of elder, both severally and jointly, to watch diligently over the flock committed to his charge, that no corruption of doctrine or of morals enter therein. They must exercise government and discipline, and take oversight not only of the spiritual interests of the particular church, but also the Church generally when called thereunto. They should visit the people at their homes, especially the sick. They should instruct the ignorant, comfort the mourner, nourish and guard the children of the Church. They should set a worthy example to the flock entrusted to their care by their zeal to evangelize the unconverted, make disciples, and demonstrate hospitality. All those duties which private Christians are bound to discharge by the law of love are especially incumbent upon them by divine vocation, and are to be discharged as official duties. They should pray with and for the people, being careful and diligent in seeking the fruit of the preached Word among the flock.

8-4. As the Lord has given different gifts to men and has committed to some special gifts and callings, the Church is authorized to call and appoint some to labor as teaching elders in such works as may be needful to the Church. When a teaching elder is called to such needful work, it shall be incumbent upon him to make full proof of his ministry by disseminating the Gospel for the edification of the Church. He shall make a report to the Presbytery at least once each year.

8-5. When a man is called to labor as a teaching elder, it belongs to his order, in addition to those functions he shares with all other elders, to feed the flock by reading, expounding and preaching the Word of God and to administer the Sacraments. As he is sent to declare the will of God to sinners, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God through Christ, he is termed ambassador. As he bears glad tidings of salvation to the ignorant and perishing, he is termed evangelist. As he stands to proclaim the Gospel, he is termed preacher. As he dispenses the manifold grace of God, and the ordinances instituted by Christ, he is termed steward of the mysteries of God.

8-8. As there were in the Church under the law, elders of the people for the government thereof, so in the Gospel Church, Christ has furnished others besides ministers of the Word with gifts and commission to govern when called thereunto, who are called ruling elders.

8-9. Elders being of one class of office, ruling elders possess the same authority and eligibility to office in the courts of the Church as teaching elders. They should, moreover, cultivate zealously their own aptness to teach the Bible and should improve every opportunity of doing so.

What to expect:

After Sunday October 18, 2020, all those who have been nominated to become elder candidates will be vetted by the pastors.

- 1) Does a nominated man qualify according to the Bible's standards?
- 2) If he is married, his wife will be consulted to see if she agrees with and blesses her husband's candidacy to the eldership.
- 3) He will be asked to prayerfully consider and agree to an extended period of training, learning, and examination by the members of Revive's Temporary Session, which is comprised of qualified and approved leaders from the Northern California Presbytery of the PCA (the group of regional PCA churches to which Revive belongs).

Then we will have our group of elder candidates. *Please remember that they are not yet elders, and they have not yet undergone a confidence vote. They are candidates to potentially become elders.*

They will undergo a training and discernment process that will last until next **fall 2021**. Through this process we trust that the Holy Spirit will lead and guide them and the pastors/elders overseeing their training as to whether they themselves are ready and can commit to the

tremendous responsibility to share in the leading of God's church and the shepherding of His people.

In a year from now we hope to present to you men who the pastors deem worthy of electing and then ordaining as Revive's first elders. The Temporary Session will give you testimonies and recommendations regarding them, and then we will proceed to a confidence vote to elect the elders according to the laws of our denomination as seen below.

On a glorious day following the election, the candidates and our church will take covenantal vows, and elders (both teaching and ruling elders) will lay hands upon them in prayer. They will thus be ordained and installed, and we will officially have our own church's elders with our own Revive Session. On that day Revive will become a fully particularized church in the Presbyterian Church in America.

Electing elders according to the BCO:

Chapter 24, "Election, Ordination and Installation of Ruling Elders and Deacons"

24-1. Every church shall elect persons to the offices of ruling elder and deacon in the following manner: At such times as determined by the Session, communicant members of the congregation may submit names to the Session, keeping in mind that each prospective officer should be an active male member who meets the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. After the close of the nomination period nominees for the office of ruling elder and/or deacon shall receive instruction in the qualifications and work of the office. Each nominee shall then be examined in:

- a. his Christian experience, especially his personal character and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9),
- b. his knowledge of Bible content,
- c. his knowledge of the system of doctrine, government, discipline contained in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America (BCO Preface III, The Constitution Defined),
- d. the duties of the office to which he has been nominated, and
- e. his willingness to give assent to the questions required for ordination. (BCO 24-6)

If there are candidates eligible for the election, the Session shall report to the congregation those eligible, giving at least thirty (30) days prior notice of the time and place of a congregational meeting for elections. If one-fourth (1/4) of the persons entitled to vote shall at any time request the Session to call a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing additional officers, it shall be the duty of the Session to call such a meeting on the above procedure. The number of officers to be elected shall be determined by the congregation after hearing the Session's recommendation.

24-2. The pastor is, by virtue of his office, moderator of congregational meetings. If there is no pastor, the Session shall appoint one of their number to call the meeting to order and to preside

until the congregation shall elect their presiding officer, who may be a minister or ruling elder of the Presbyterian Church in America or any male member of that particular church.

24-3. All communing members in good and regular standing, but no others, are entitled to vote in the election of church officers in the churches to which they respectively belong. A majority vote of those present is required for election.

24-4. The voters being convened, the moderator shall explain the purpose of the meeting and then put the question:

Are you now ready to proceed to the election of additional ruling elders (or deacons) from the slate presented?

If they declare themselves ready, the election may proceed by private ballot without nomination. In every case a majority of all the voters present shall be required to elect.

24-5. On the election of a ruling elder or deacon, if it appears that a large minority of the voters are averse to a candidate, and cannot be induced to concur in the choice, the moderator shall endeavor to dissuade the majority from prosecuting it further; but if the electors are nearly or quite unanimous, or if the majority insist upon their right to choose their officers, the election shall stand.