

The Elder in the Church

The Term "Elder"

PRESBUTEROS - elder, an old man, a leader in the church. The term is used:

1. of the elder of two persons ([Luke 15:25](#), or more, [John 8:9](#)).
2. of a person advanced in age ([Acts 2:17](#); in [Heb. 11:2](#)).
3. of the forefathers in Israel ([Matt. 15:2](#); [Mark 7:3,5](#)).
4. of members of the Sanhedrin ([Matt. 16:21](#); [26:47](#)).
5. of those who managed public affairs in the various cities ([Luke 7:3](#)).

Of those who were the heads or leaders of the tribes and families, as of the seventy who helped Moses ([Num. 11:16](#); [Deut. 27:1](#)). This included:

1. acting as judges in apprehending murderers ([Deut. 19:12](#)).
2. conducting inquests ([Deut. 21:2](#)).
3. settling matrimonial disputes ([Deut. 22:15](#); [25:7](#)).
4. If theirs was a city of refuge they also heard pleas for asylum ([Joshua 20:4](#)).

Of those qualified by the Holy Spirit who exercised spiritual care and oversight of the local congregation.

EPISKOPOI - overseers, bishops;

Titus equates bishop and elder in [Titus 1:5-9](#).

Regarding the Office: The office of Elder is a divinely appointed office as defined in the Pastoral Epistles.

1. Elders are apparently appointed by the laying on of hands ([1 Tim. 4:14](#); [2 Tim. 1:6](#)).
2. Should receive double honor in the church ([1 Tim. 5:17](#)).
3. The pastor is an elder ([1 Peter 5:1-3](#)).
4. The pastor is an elder who preaches and/or teaches ([1 Tim. 5:17](#)).
5. The pastor (elder) is to equip the body of Christ ([Eph. 4:11-13](#)).
6. Must be a man ([1 Tim. 2:9-13](#)); all uses of "elder" are in the masculine except for [1 Tim. 5:2](#) where it means older women.

The Responsibilities of Elders in the NT Church:

1. **Must shepherd the flock ([1 Peter 5:2](#)).**
2. **Must voluntarily exercise oversight upon the flock ([1 Peter 5:2](#)).**
3. **Must live as examples to the flock ([1 Peter 5:3](#)).**
4. **Anoint and pray for the sick ([James 5:14](#)).**
5. **They have the tasks of teaching ([1 Tim. 5:17](#); [Titus 1:5,9](#)).**
6. **They have the tasks of acting as judges ([Acts 15:2,6,22-29](#); [16:4](#)).**

Qualifications for an elder

1. **Must be above reproach ([Titus 1:6](#); [1 Tim. 3:2](#)).**
2. **Husband of one wife ([Titus 1:6](#); [1 Tim. 3:2](#)).**
3. **Household must be in order with children who believe ([Titus 1:6](#) ;[1 Tim. 3:4](#)).**
4. **Not a new convert ([1 Tim. 3:6](#)).**
5. **Self controlled and temperate ([Titus 1:7](#); [1 Tim. 3:2](#)).**
6. **Honorable, hospitable, seeking good ([Titus 1:7](#)).**
7. **Have a good reputation ([1 Tim. 3:7](#)).**
8. **Not addicted to wine ([1 Tim. 3:3](#)).**
9. **Not greedy ([1 Tim. 3:3](#)).**
10. **Able to exhort (teach) sound doctrine ([Titus 1:9](#); [1 Tim. 3:2](#)).**
11. **Able to refute false teaching ([Titus 1:9](#)).**

<http://www.carm.org/christianity/miscellaneous-topics/elder-church>