





# ⑨ QUESTIONS ABOUT

# ELDER

AS WE AIM TO APPOINT  
QUALIFIED BROTHERS





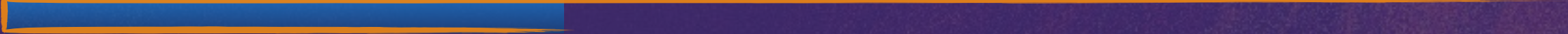
“The voice of the Chicago Cubs!”





**PRAYERFULLY,  
HUMBLY THINK  
ON GOD'S WORD  
TOGETHER.**





# GENERAL

QUESTIONS ABOUT  
APPOINTING ELDERS



ELDERSHIP



QUESTIONS

**Do churches  
need elders?**



ELDERSHIP



QUESTIONS

# Do churches need elders?

Paul told Titus to “set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders” (Tit. 1:5 NKJV). A church without elders lacked part of God’s design.



ELDERSHIP



QUESTIONS

# Do churches need elders?

A church can still please Christ when none are qualified YET to serve as elders, but that must be a goal we strive for, and as men become qualified, they must be appointed for us to obediently conform to God's pattern.



ELDERSHIP



QUESTIONS

**Are the qualifications  
binding on us?**



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QUESTIONS

# Are the qualifications binding on us?

When Paul wrote Timothy what an elder “must” be (1 Tim. 3:2), and he “directed” Titus to appoint elders, so these were not optional opinions from Paul.



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QUESTIONS

# Are the qualifications binding on us?

The two lists — while harmonious in their description of a mature Christian leader's character — are different.



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QUESTIONS

# Are the qualifications binding on us?

Together, they give us an authoritative portrait of the kinds of men we should seek as elders.



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QUESTIONS

**Is it best to bind the  
strictest interpretation?**



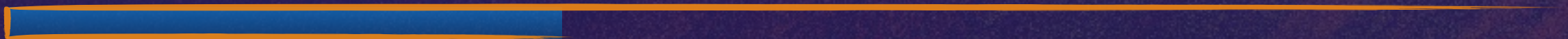
# Is it best to bind the strictest interpretation?

Faithfulness is our goal. To allow Jesus to make the call, we strive to interpret the Lord's directives accurately, not binding more than he binds or loosing anything he has bound (Matt. 16:19; 1 Cor. 4:6).



QUESTIONS ABOUT  
A POTENTIAL ELDER'S

CHILDREN





ELDERSHIP



QUESTIONS

**Must an elder  
have children?**



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QUESTIONS

# **Must an elder have children?**

**Both Titus and Timothy are told to look at the elders' children as one indication of their readiness to lead God's church (1 Tim. 3:4-5; Tit. 1:6-7).**



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QUESTIONS

**Must an elder have  
multiple children?**



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QUESTIONS

# Must an elder have multiple children?

In Hebrew, Greek, and English, the plural “children” is used to describe those with ANY number of kids (e.g. Gen. 21:7; notice how Deut. 25:5 is cited in Matt. 22:24).



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QUESTIONS

# Must an elder have multiple children?

Those who see a need for multiple children sometimes argue that since the church is more than one person, an elder needs more than one kid. My perspective is that this inserts a reason not given in the text, based on a potential benefit we might see for multiple children.



# Must an elder have multiple children?

Another argument I've considered is that it's inconsistent to require a plurality of elders but not of children. But we have texts specifying plurality in concrete groups of elders (e.g. Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 4:14). This text is not about a specific person, but different possible people he could evaluate.



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QUESTIONS

# Must an elder have multiple children?

Imagine asking a new friend, "do you have kids?" They tell you "no," but later you find out they have a child. Would it seem they misunderstood the natural meaning of what you asked?



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QUESTIONS

# **Must an elder have multiple children?**

**I believe the most natural reading of the text would include any number of children.**



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QUESTIONS

**Must an elder's  
children be Christians?**



# Must an elder's children be Christians?

In the original language, *pistos* can mean:

1. “trustworthy” (1 Tim. 1:12,15; 3:1,11; 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:2,11,13; Tit. 1:9; 3:8)
2. or “believing” (1 Tim. 4:3,9,10,12,16; 6:2).



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QUESTIONS

# **Must an elder's children be Christians?**

**This is a hard question to answer definitively, because there are such strong arguments in favor of each option.**



# Must an elder's children be Christians?

If it is taken as “trustworthy” it describes children of good, reliable character, not necessarily Christians. Many instances in Timothy & Titus use it this way. In favor of this view is the shortness of time between the conversion and appointment of elders in the Asian churches.



# Must an elder's children be Christians?

However, since there is no qualifier for who the child is faithful to, I find it more likely that Paul and Titus would use this word (“believing/faithful”) to refer to people with faith in Christ. Therefore it’s my belief that an elder should have children who have become believers.



# Must an elder's children be Christians?

Though the potential elder does not control this outcome, making it a complicated qualification, when a congregation sees a believing child it demonstrates a father's leadership bringing "them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).



OTHER ISSUES I'VE HEARD  
OCCASIONALLY CONCERNING

SPECIFIC  
QUALIFICATIONS

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ELDERSHIP



QUESTIONS

**What if a man's wife  
died and he remarried?**



# What if a man's wife died and he remarried?

A widower “is released from the law of marriage” (Rom. 7:1-3). If faithful to a wife he has Scripturally remarried, he would aptly be called “a one woman man” or “the husband of one wife” (Tit. 1:6).



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QUESTIONS

**How long must they  
have been Christians?**



# How long must they have been Christians?

Timothy was told not to appoint a “recent convert” as an elder (1 Tim. 3:6). But the elders Paul and Barnabas appointed on their first missionary journey (Acts 14:23) could not have been Christians long. However, those selected may have been servants of the true God for some time as faithful Jews, before conversion.



# How long must they have been Christians?

So there's no formula and is a relative qualification, but needless to say, the rest of the character qualifications say quite a bit about the spiritual maturity, ability to teach, and overall influence of the individual — all of which requires an established believer.



ELDERSHIP



QUESTIONS

**Is “desiring the office”  
a qualification?**



# Is “desiring the office” a qualification?

*Before starting the qualification list, Paul highlights a “trustworthy” saying, that “if anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task” (1 Tim. 3:1). It is noble and — though it's difficult — God wants elders to do it “with joy and not with groaning” (Heb. 13:17). No one should take the job out of compulsion, but voluntarily (1 Pet. 5:2-3).*



# Is “desiring the office” a qualification?

That said, “desiring the office” is not in the qualification lists, so saying it that way can be a bit misleading. Just because someone is hesitant to take the role, doesn't mean they're unworthy of it. Rather, many of the best elders I've spoken to understood what this office means and took it on with a sense of sober responsibility rather than excited eagerness. They were willing to serve their Lord by helping lead his people.



# Is “desiring the office” a qualification?

A Practical Suggestion: If you think someone would be great for the job, I encourage you to express your confidence and support to that person. It can make a difference, to know they have support, others want to be under their leadership, and they won't weaken their friendships if they accept the position.



# THE GOOD SHEPHERD INVITES

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