



REDEEMER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

An Evangelical Presbyterian Church

Qualifications for Ruling Elders

Choosing candidates for the position of Ruling Elder is clearly a very important role of the members of the Nominating Committee. Decisions by the Committee should be bathed in much prayer. Ultimately, Session believes that God will lead the Committee members to make wise choices in selecting candidates for each office.

In choosing potential candidates for the position of Ruling Elder within Redeemer Presbyterian Church, the members of the Nominating Committee should bear in mind the information contained in this document. However, in applying the Qualifications detailed below to any particular individual, the members of the Nominating Committee must remember that we are all sinners saved by God's grace through the death, resurrection, and ascension of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. We are all also on a pathway toward sanctification, as enabled by the Holy Spirit. But, none of us have yet arrived at that final goal. Likely, no candidate perfectly meets the strictest interpretation that might be applied to all of the qualifications listed below. In examining candidates, the members of the Nominating Committee should always do so with great grace and significant discernment.

Scripture defines certain mandatory qualities and characteristics that should not be overlooked when considering the individuals whom the Nominating Committee wishes to present to Session for consideration for the critically important role of Ruling Elder. These stated qualifications are of utmost importance.

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 (*Ruling Elder*), 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.

—*Titus 1:5-9*

¹ The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer (*Ruling Elder*), he desires a noble task. ² Therefore an overseer (*Ruling Elder*) 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.

—1 Timothy 3:1-7

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.

—1 Peter 5:1-3

We may analyze these important Scripture passages as follows:

<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Qualification</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
Titus 1:5-9	Blameless	Unimpeachable integrity
	Husband of one wife	A one-wife kind of man, not a philanderer (doesn't rule out widowers or divorced men)
	Having believing children.....	Children are Christians, not unruly or incorrigible. (Many scholars interpret this requirement to only apply to children who have not yet reached the age of majority and are living within the household of the candidate.)
	Not self-willed	Not arrogantly self-satisfied
	Not quick-tempered	Not prone to anger
	Not addicted to wine	Not overly fond of wine
	Not violent	Not quarrelsome or contentious
	Not a money-lover	Not greedy for money
	Hospitable.....	A stranger-lover, generous to guests
	Lover of good	Loving goodness
	Self-controlled	Sensible, self-controlled, sane, temperate
	Upright	Just, righteous, aligned with right
	Holy	Responsible in fulfilling moral obligations to God and man
	Disciplined	Restrained, under control
	Holding to the Word	Calling others to wholeness through teaching God's Word
	Able to refute objections	Convincing those who speak against the truth

<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Qualification</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
1 Timothy 3:1-7		
	Desires the office	A sense of calling, volunteers
	Temperate	Calm and collected spirit
	Gentle	Equitable, not insisting on own rights
	Manage own household	Good servant-leader at home
	Not a new convert	Not a new Christian, maturing faith
	Good reputation	Good representative of Christ among non believers

<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Qualification</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
1 Peter 5:1-4		
	Willing	Not serving against his or her will
	As God wants	By God's appointment
	Not greedy	Not money motivated .
	Not lording it over others.....	Not dominating, lead not drive
	An example	A pleasure to follow Accountable to the Chief Shepherd
	Motivated	By the crown to be gained

In addition to these very important Scriptural Qualifications of a Ruling Elder, the *Book of Order of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church* also offers these important statements:

9-4 Qualifications of officers

- A. Those that fill these offices should be mature in the faith, should be people of wisdom and discretion, and should have adequate training to equip them for their calling. Elders, especially those called to the office of Teaching Elder, should have an aptitude for teaching.⁵³
- B. A local church should prayerfully search the Scriptures and choose for officers those who are best qualified.

9-8 The office of Ruling Elder

In the Old Testament, the office of Elder was established for the oversight of the Church. In the New Testament, this office is continued. Those who fill this office today for governing the Church are called Ruling Elders. Chosen by the people of a local church,⁶⁰ these Ruling Elders are to watch over the spiritual welfare of that congregation. When appointed to participate in Presbytery or General Assembly, they shall watch over the spiritual welfare and participate diligently in the workings of that portion of the Church to which they are commissioned, recognizing that the Evangelical Presbyterian Church is a connectional church. The Ruling Elder shares authority with the Teaching Elder in all of the courts of the Church, in both rights and duties. It is the first duty of the Ruling Elder to represent the mind of Christ, as that person understands it, in the various courts of the Church.

9-9 The life of the Ruling Elder

According to Scripture, those who bear the office of Ruling Elder should be mature believers, led by the Holy Spirit, who exhibit a manner of life that conforms to the biblical description of an officer in Christ’s Church.⁶¹

9-10 The Ruling Elder and the Responsibility of Order

The authority to govern is exercised jointly by church courts in ascending gradation. Each Ruling Elder, by virtue of ordination, individually exercises the responsibility of order.

- A. Ruling Elders should study and learn the Word. They should become equipped to teach the Word, lead worship and prayer, and may be invited or commissioned to supply the ministry of the Word where none is available.⁶²
- B. Ruling Elders, as Undershepherds,⁶³ should visit the sick, the bereaved, the lonely, the aged, the shut-in, and all those who have a pastoral need. In cases where there is a special need, the Ruling Elder shall be careful to inform the Pastor.
- C. Ruling Elders have a special responsibility to see to the development of the children of the congregation, to inquire after the inactive members, to encourage new members in spiritual development, and to otherwise show care for those whom they serve.
- D. Ruling Elders should be attentive to themselves and church members, guarding against dangers to the faith and to dangers to the moral life of believers. They are also responsible to warn, admonish, and reclaim those who stray. Where it is deemed necessary, such situations should be brought to the attention of the Session for appropriate action in accordance with the *Book of Discipline*.

From a practical standpoint, these qualifications can be observed in those under consideration by examining the following specific behaviors:

Leadership	Teaching	Keeper of commitments
Hospitality	Intercession	Involvement in the life of the
Administration	Faith	Church
Discernment	Selflessness	Encouragement
Wisdom	Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit	

In fulfilling his or her responsibilities to God, the Pastor, their fellow Ruling Elders, and the congregation, a Ruling Elder will:

- Provide for the Spiritual Oversight of the church:
- As a member of Session, serve as the ultimate decision-making body of the congregation, acting as “under-shepherds” to the “flock” that is Redeemer Presbyterian Church.
- Serve as a Faithful Steward over the resources the Lord has entrusted to His Body at Redeemer Presbyterian Church.
- Pray regularly for discernment and direction regarding God’s vision for RPC.

A Ruling Elder will act in such a way as to:

- Regularly attend the Christian Education classes and Worship Services of the Church, giving a priority to the gathering together of believers over other activities of personal interest.
- Attend regular and specially called Session meetings.

- Attend Annual Retreats of the Session, the Church, and the Ministries for which the Ruling Elder has responsibility.
- Give generously of his or her time, talent, and financial resources.
- Occasionally teach, preach, and lead in worship.
- Care for the families and persons of the congregation as needed.
- Pray regularly for the congregation, staff, missionaries, and ministries.

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