

Prayer Guide for Elder Ordination



Praying for God's Shepherds and
the Shepherding of God's Flock



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The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.

1 Timothy 3:1 (ESV)

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: shepherd the flock of God that is among you.

1 Peter 5:1-2a (ESV)

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.”

John 21:15-17 (ESV)

Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.

Acts 20:28 (ESV)

Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God.
Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

Hebrews 13:7 (ESV)

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over
your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this
with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to
you.

Hebrews 13:17 (ESV)

The Purpose of This Guide

This guide on praying for the elder ordination process has been put together by the Elders at The Hills Church to help guide our body on what to pray for during this season of selecting additional elders to lead our body. It is intended to help unify our body in what we are praying for during this time.

In Acts 14:23, Luke wrote, “And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” (ESV) In the early church fasting and praying was associated to the appointment of elders. As a body we want to continue to follow in this pattern. So over the next 2+ months as we nominate, examine, affirm, and ultimately ordain new elders, we want to pray earnestly that the Holy Spirit will guide us to godly men who will “keep watch over our souls.” (Heb 13:17)

May our God work in us as a body during this time and use our prayer and fasting to guide us to ordain men to help shepherd our body for His great glory and our great good!

The Elders of The Hills Church, San Antonio
Soli Deo gloria

What is an elder?

An elder is ***one who serves the body of Christ by shepherding the body*** through the oversight of the church and the care of souls and by providing godly wisdom and a godly example that can be followed.

What does an Elder do?

The most fundamental thing an elder does:
an elder serves through godly shepherding.

Five points of emphasis in what an elder does

1. **Shepherds** the body
2. **Oversees** the church
3. **Cares** for souls
4. Provides **godly wisdom**
5. Lives a **godly example**

Shepherds the body

- **John 21:16** – Jesus said to Peter a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend [shepherd] my sheep.”
- **Acts 20:28** – Pay careful attention...to all the flock
- **Ephesians 4:11** – [Christ] gave...the shepherds and teachers
- **Titus 1:7** – ...an overseer [is] God’s steward
- **1 Peter 5:2** – [as a fellow elder]...shepherd the flock of God that is among you

Oversees the church

- **Acts 20:28** – ...the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers
- **1 Timothy 3:1** – If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.
- **Titus 1:5,7** – ...appoint elders in every town...overseer(s)
- **1 Peter 5:2** – ...shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight

Cares for souls

- **Acts 20:28** – ...the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to care for the church of God
- **Heb 13:17** – ...your leaders...are keeping watch over your souls

Provides godly wisdom

- **John 21:15,17** – ... Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” ... Jesus said to Peter, “Feed my sheep.”
- **Acts 20:20** – I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house
- **Acts 20:25** – I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom of God
- **Acts 20:27** – I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God
- **Ephesians 4:11** – [Christ] gave...the shepherds and teachers
- **1 Tim 3:2** – ...an overseer must be...able to teach
- **Titus 1:9** – [An elder/overseer] 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.
- **Hebrews 13:7** – Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God.

Lives a godly example

- **Acts 20:28** – Pay careful attention to yourselves
- **1 Timothy 4:12** – ...set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.
- **Hebrews 13:7** – Remember your leaders...Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.
- **1 Peter 5:3** – [shepherd the flock of God that is among you]...being examples to the flock

Qualifications of an Elder

There are three overarching areas that must be considered when considering if a man is qualified to be an elder: **desire, character, and ability.**

Desire

The man must desire to shepherd God's people for godly reasons. He must be willing, eager, and joyful to do it.

- **1 Timothy 3:1** – The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.
- **Hebrews 13:17** – ... Let [your leaders] do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.
- **1 Peter 5:2** – shepherd the flock of God that is among you... exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly...eagerly

Character

Character is core to being a qualified elder. It must be proven character, evidence throughout the elder's life (personal, home, church, work) and overtime. His life should be an example of what any Christian should be, and his leadership should embody the way Christ leads.

- **Above reproach**
(1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6,7)
- **Husband of one wife**
(1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6)
- **Sober-minded** (1 Tim 3:2)
- **Self-controlled**
(1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8)
- **Respectable** (1 Tim 3:2)
- **Hospitable**
(1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8)
- **Not a drunkard**
(1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- **Gentle, not violent**
(1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7; 2 Tim 2:25)
- **Not quarrelsome**
(1 Tim 3:3; 2 Tim 2:24)

- **Not a lover of money/greedy for gain** (1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet 5:2)
- **Manage his own household well** (1 Tim 3:4-5)
- **Keeping his children submissive in a dignified way** (1 Tim 3:4)
- **Children are faithful and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination** (Titus 1:6)
- **Not a recent convert** (1 Tim 3:6)
- **Patient** (2 Tim 2:25)
- **Well thought of by outsiders** (1 Tim 3:7)
- **Humble, not arrogant** (Titus 1:7; 1 Pet 5:5; Matt 10:25-28; Mark 10:42-45)
- **Not quick-tempered** (Titus 1:7)
- **A lover of good** (Titus 1:8)
- **Upright** (Titus 1:8)
- **Holy** (Titus 1:8)
- **Disciplined** (Titus 1:8)
- **Be an example to the flock** (1 Pet 5:3; Heb 13:7)
- **Kind** (2 Tim 2:24)

Ability

The elder is an under-shepherd. He is not the owner of the flock. He is the steward of the flock. The flock is Christ's flock and belongs to God. Therefore, he must shepherd the flock of God in the way that the Chief Shepherd and Overseer would shepherd the flock, not just any way the elder/pastor wants to. ***The way that elders are to lead is through teaching and overseeing in a spirit of gentleness and humility.***

- **Matthew 20:25-28** – But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your

slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

- **Mark 10:42-45** – And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
- **Luke 22:25-27** – And he said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves.
- **1 Timothy 3:2** – ...an overseer must be...able to teach
- **1 Timothy 5:17** – Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.
- **Titus 1:9** – [An elder/overseer] 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.
- **Hebrews 13:17** – ...your leaders...are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account.
- **1 Peter 2:25** – For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.
- **1 Peter 5:2** – ...shepherd the flock of God that is among you...as God would have you...
- **1 Peter 5:4** – [Jesus is] the chief Shepherd

- **1 Peter 5:5** – Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

Elder Ordination Process

The elder ordination process of our church follows four phases: nomination, examination, affirmation, and ordination.



As a congregationally governed church, the congregation must be actively engaged in this process. The congregation led by the elders provides nominations of men to be considered for being elders. The elders take the responsibility to examine the nominees and present the nominees to the body for a public examination before the body. The body, then, votes to express its understanding of God's will to affirm the nominees. Finally, the elders ordain those nominees that have been affirmed by the body.

Week 1: Nominations

Scriptural Passages for Guidance: 1 Pet 5:1-5; 1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9

Focus

In the first week, we want to focus our prayer upon the **nominations**.



Four Groups to Pray For

1. **The Church** – To nominate the right men
2. **The Candidates** – To be willing and able to serve
3. **The Elders** – To lead with discernment
4. **The Candidates' Wives** – To prepare to support their husbands

Three Areas of Prayer for the Candidates

- **Desire** – the desire to be elders
- **Character** – the godly character to be an elder
- **Ability** – the ability to teach sound doctrine and oversee the church in godly ways

Week 2: Nominations & Examination

Scriptural Passages for Guidance: 1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; Heb 13:7, 17

Focus

In this second week, we want to pray that the Holy Spirit would work in the lives of our current Elders and in the men who have been nominated to wisely discern who should move forward in the examination process.

Four Groups to Pray For

1. **The Church** – To actively seek to maintain the unity of the body throughout the selection and examination process
2. **The Candidates** – To humbly and wisely discern if they are truly willing, qualified, and ready to serve as elders
3. **The Elders** – To wisely and soberly discern which men who should move forward in the examination process
4. **The Candidates' Wives** – To help guide their husbands to a godly decision if he should continue in the examination process

Week 3: Candidates & Questionnaire

Scriptural Passages for Guidance: Psa 133; 2 Cor 4:2; Jam 1:5; Eph 4:1-3; 1 Pet 3:8

Focus

- Continue to pray that the Holy Spirit would work in the lives of our current Elders and in the men who have been nominated to wisely discern who should move forward in the examination process.
- Pray for the candidates and their wives as they begin the process of completing the examination questionnaire.
- Pray that the candidate and their wives would honestly assess their own character, strengths, weaknesses, and possible besetting sins. (2 Cor 4:2)
- Pray that the candidates would have clarity in responding to theological questions particularly those that require explanation and nuance in answering. (2 Cor 4:2; Jam 1:5)
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead our church to ordain elders who are eager and committed to maintain unity and peace within the church. Pray for their wives to be committed to the same. (Psa 133; Eph 4:3; 1 Pet 3:8)
- Pray for men that will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord in every area of their lives. (Eph 4:1)
- Pray for men who will lead “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another [with other elders and with each member of the body] in love.” (Eph 4:2)

Week 4: Candidates & Questionnaire

Week 5: Examination – Candidates & Elders

Week 6: Examination – Candidates & Elders

Week 7: Examination – Candidates & Deacons

Week 8: Examination – Candidates & the Church

Week 9: Affirmation

Week 10: Ordination

Scriptural Passages related to Elders

Matt 20:25-28; Mark 10:42-45; Luke 22:25-27; John 21:15-17; Acts 6:1-6; 20:17-38; Eph 4:11-16; 1 Tim 3:1-7; 5:17-20; 2 Tim 2:24-25; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet 5:1-5; Heb 13:7, 17

Other Helpful Resources

The following are additional resources you may find helpful in understanding elders.

- ***Workers for Your Joy* by David Mathis**
(Free download at <https://www.desiringgod.org/books/workers-for-your-joy>)
- ***The Oversight of Souls* by Ray Van Neste**
- ***Church Elders* by Jeramie Rinne**
- ***Finding Faithful Elders and Deacons* by Abiti Anybwire**
- ***The Path to Being a Pastor* by Bobby Jamieson**

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