

## Elder Nomination Guide & Interview Questions

**Nominee's Name:**

**Key Passages:**

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

Titus 1:5-9. "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—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. 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, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. 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."

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Thank you for helping Iron Works Church identify our next set of officers! As you think through who to nominate for the office of elder, a helpful way to weigh potential candidates is to evaluate their character, competency, and calling. We encourage you to sit down with the man you would like to nominate and to work through the following questions together. Then using the [nomination form](#), let your session know why you think this candidate would make a good elder given what you have learned. Remember, no man is perfect, but you should see God's Spirit at work in a future elder developing this kind of character, competency, and calling.

Please remember a man must be a communing member at Iron Works Church to be nominated. And he can only be nominated by other communing members of our church. Also just because a man is nominated does not necessarily mean that he will actually become a ruling elder. In addition to being nominated, he must be trained and vetted by the session and ultimately elected to office by the congregation.

### *I. Character*

A man's character is critical in determining if he can serve as an elder in Christ's church. What do you know about this man's personal walk with the Lord? Is he in God's word daily? Would you describe him as a man dedicated to prayer?

**Christlike example**

Elders lead by example. Shepherd the church "not by lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:3). Read through 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1



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Peter 5:1-4. How does this man's character and lifestyle line up with the Biblical requirements and expectations?

How has he demonstrated a Christlike model to those around him? Is he a spiritual pacesetter? Would you want other Christians learning from his example?

How does he lead his household?

### **Prayer**

Elders should take up the apostolic shepherding mantle and say, "We will devote ourselves to prayer and to the preaching ministry" (Acts 6: 4). Elders are powerless in themselves to mature anyone in Christ; only the Holy Spirit can do that through God's Word. The sooner an elder realizes this, the sooner he will hit his knees and plead for a continual work of grace among church members, as well as in his own life.

How would you describe this man's prayer life? Is he "devoted to prayer?" Does he lead others in prayer?

## *II. Competency*

Having considered your nominee's character, now think through his competency to serve as an elder. Here are some categories to ask him about.

### **Teamwork**

The Teaching and Ruling Elders comprise the church's leadership team, known formally as the "Session." This reflects the Biblical model of leadership by a plurality of elders (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5).

How do you think this man would fit on the church Session, working closely with a group of men?

How has this man dealt with conflict within a group or team setting?

How would this man handle conflict and disagreement amongst members of the Session?

### **Shepherding**

"I exhort the elders among you: shepherd God's flock" (1 Peter 5:2; see also John 21:15-16 and Acts 20:28). Elders serve the Good Shepherd by providing his local flocks with spiritual care and oversight. Elders feed, lead, protect, and nurture church members like shepherds do with sheep.

Do you think this man can be an effective shepherd for God's sheep? In what ways have you seen him demonstrate shepherding ability?

### **Teaching**



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For an elder to be “an able teacher” (1 Timothy 3:2), he must be a man who loves God’s word. He must “hold to the faithful message as taught, so that he will be able to encourage with sound teaching and refute those who contradict it” (Titus 1:9).

Does this man know and love God’s word? How do you see this in his life?

Would you describe this man as an “able teacher?” What are some specific ways he has demonstrated this ability?

Is this man growing as an effective communicator? Does he work at conveying God’s Word with both tenderness and conviction, depending on the context?

### **Leading**

Just as shepherds lead their flocks, so elders lead local congregations. The biblical writers also call elders “overseers,” a title that highlights their role as leaders (Acts 20:28, 1 Timothy 3:1, Titus 1:5, 7). Hebrews instructs Christians to “obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account” (Hebrews 13:17).

How would you describe this man’s leadership ability?

When he sees challenges or difficulties, does he face them proactively and courageously? Is he willing to lovingly provide correction when he sees sin in someone’s life? How has he demonstrated this?

How does he handle conflict? List some specific examples.

### *III. Calling*

A man may have the right character and competency and still not be called to be an elder. Here are a couple more categories to think through and ask a potential nominee about.

### **Willingness to serve**

There are often many qualified candidates who for some reason or another aren’t willing to serve as an elder. Before nominating someone, ask him if he would be willing to explore serving as an elder and undergo officer training as a way of discerning God’s call on his life. And if not, press him on why. If you think he’d make a good elder, he should hear your reasons and maybe he will reconsider serving as an elder.

### **Doctrinal & missional alignment**

Elders in our church need to be able to subscribe to the Westminster Standards in good faith. Is this man generally on board with what we believe as a church? And if not, is he willing to explore the distinctives of our church’s Reformed tradition and work through those questions during officer training? (Everyone who agrees to be nominated goes through training with the session who will vet his doctrinal beliefs before he becomes an officer.)

Does this man agree with what he knows of the mission of our church? Do you see him involved in the areas that matter to our church like home group, prayer meetings, service teams?



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## Time & energy

The job of an elder requires a significant investment of time and energy. The Session meets live on a weekly basis. Elders are responsible for routinely developing and leading liturgies for Sunday morning worship. Evening and weekend work is sometimes required. The session sends delegates to quarterly Presbytery meetings which are on evenings or Saturday mornings. At least once per year the Session conducts a two day offsite retreat. An elder needs to be active and visible in the life of the church and its members.

Is this man able to make the time commitment required of an elder?

Does this man have the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual energy required to be an effective elder?

Are this man's wife and children supportive of him potentially serving as an elder? Do they also understand the time and energy that will be required of him?

Is this man aware of the spiritual warfare that exists in the church and especially with the church leaders?

## Resources:

[Book of Church Order](#): See chapter 8 on "The Elder."

## Podcasts:

- "Working with Fellow Elders" [part 1](#) and [part 2](#) from the Every Day Pastor podcast

## Articles:

- "[Elders for the Church](#)" by Phil Newton
- "[A Job Description for Lay Elders](#)" by Jeramie Rinne. Please note, in our denomination we don't have "lay elders" but "ruling elders." But this article still helpfully works through the biblical requirements for eldership.
- "[Understanding the Role of Elders in the Local Church](#)" by Alistair Begg

## Books:

- [The Shepherd Leader](#) by Tim Witmer
- [Gospel Eldership](#) by Robert Thune

