

Philosophy of Leadership

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A church is only as strong as its leadership. If the leadership falters, the people will falter. The sheep will never rise above the spiritual maturity and spiritual piety of the leadership. Biblically, there are numerous elements required to obey the mandate for leadership in the local church.

1. Leadership in the Church must be men.

The Scriptures reveal that the leadership in the local church is to be led and governed by men (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). The leader is to be the “husband of one wife” (lit. *A one woman man*). Those who lead in the church, those who preach in the church, those who teach in the church, and shepherd in the church must be men (1 Tim 2:12).

2. Leadership in the Church must be a plurality of men.

There is a resounding consensus in the New Testament that the leadership of the local assembly of believers is to be a *plurality* of men—not a one-man show. Paul tells Timothy to “appoint elders” in every city (Titus 1:5). Even Moses was commanded to select “able men” (Ex 18:21) to lead the people of Israel. Paul appointed elders as he went from city to city (Acts 14:23). Thus, in the local church, a plurality of men in leadership can ensure accountability, honesty, integrity, support, encouragement, and mutual submission.

3. Leadership in the Church should be elder led.

This means that most of the decisions in the local Church can—and should—be made by the leadership team. This ensures that the decisions in the local Church are spiritual decisions that have been made by a group of Godly, biblically-minded men as opposed to a congregational vote where there may be many believers and non-believers together voting on how to run and order Christ’s Church (1 Tim 5:17; Titus 1:5; 1 Pet 5:1).

4. Leadership in the Church must be biblically qualified.

There are numerous Scriptures in the New Testament that clearly spell out who is qualified to be an elder and what kind of life he must exemplify. He must first desire to be an elder (1 Tim 3:1); no man should be forced into the office of elder. Second, he must demonstrate spiritual qualities in his life and in his character. Such qualities include a man who is “above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), and not a new convert, so that he will not become

conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil (1 Tim 3:2-7). The elder will not be perfect in these qualifications but he must certainly be demonstrating a consistent pattern of holiness in his character, his marriage, his home, his work, and in the world.

5. Leadership in the Church must be spiritual shepherds.

Being an elder requires one to be a spiritual shepherd and guardian over the souls of sheep (1 Pet 5:1-5; Heb 13:17). An elder must be a spiritual man. He must be a man of the Word, a man of integrity, a man who believes and loves the gospel, a man who can articulate the gospel and exhort people to believe and be saved from divine wrath. He must be willing to care for people, to counsel them from God's Word, to apply God's Word to various life-situations, and to rebuke people who stumble into sin. Thus, an elder must be a spiritual shepherd who has sanctified Christ as LORD in his own heart and life.