

Redeemer Leadership (Part 5)

Choosing Officers & Discerning a Call to Leadership

HOW DO YOU KNOW?

HEART

- Has God given you a heart for his kingdom?
- Do you dream about the growth and beauty his people?
- What are some possible sinful reasons why you are seeking the office?

FAMILY & FRIENDS

- How have you shepherded/served them?
- Do they have any issues with you being an officer?

REPUTATION

- What would people say if asked about your heart, work & family?
- What are you known for within our community?
- If you told a co-worker that you were nominated, what would they think? (we plan to ask them)

BEHAVIOR:

- Do you have any besetting sins that will bring shame on Christ or His Church?
- Is there an area that you need to confess and be delivered in by God's grace?
- If so, who knows and who needs to know as you pursue this calling?

DOCTRINE

- Do you love the Word and want to apply it to shepherding or service?
- Are you compelled by the mystery of Christ and his love for you?
- Do you have any major beliefs that you are at odds with Redeemer?
- Do you agree with the westminster confession of faith with its catechisms as being your comprehensive stance in theology? This doesn't mean you don't have differences with the confession but if you do have differences that strike at the heart of the confession you must make that known (of your own volition) to the other elders.
 - o To be a member of Redeemer requires the basic tenants of Christianity. First circle doctrines are within the 5 membership vows.
 - o To be an officer requires adherence to our doctrinal standards at a much higher level.
 - Example of first circle: Death & Resurrection of Jesus. Apostles creed. Authority of scripture.
 - second circle: Sacraments, only men as elders
 - third circle: Calvinism, covenant theology, end times views
 - If you hold office in a PCA church you are required to predominantly agree with our theological standards in the westminster confession of faith. Doesn't mean you don't have questions or that you don't wrestle with particular issues (we encourage theological wrestling with scripture and practice), but any officer at Redeemer will be tested over their theology and how it lines up with our theological heritage.

EXTERNAL CALLING

- What ministry activities have you been involved in at Redeemer and outside of our church that point to your desire to use your gifts and serve God's people?
- Can others in the church say they have seen your gifts and service to the church?
- Are you presently in friendships that require accountability?
- Are you meeting with people who know you well, regularly?
- What would they say about your candidacy for this office?
- Has anyone in the leadership or at the lay level at Redeemer suggested to you that you should consider being an elder or deacon?

INTERNAL CALLING

- What makes you think that the Lord may be putting this call on your heart?
- What scripture can you point to that resonates with your openness and possible calling to this office?
 - Ex: The prophet Samuel? how did he know he wasn't crazy? External and internal call working together.

PRAYER AND COMMUNITY:

- Try to spend a few hours uninterrupted alone in prayer. Pray through some key passages about discerning God's call:
1 Timothy 3 | Psalm 37:5 | Isaiah 30:21 | Jeremiah 1:1-10
- Spend some time writing about your emotions and thoughts concerning this office and any concerns you may have as well.
- Ask several close friends, prayer/life group, mentor, family, etc. to join with you in prayer as you seek the Lord's direction regarding this decision.

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- Remember, ultimately you are not responsible for discerning your call, the elders and the church are. This can free you to pursue the question with vigor.

We hope to formally begin this process in January 2022. It will start with a letter to the congregation from Pastor Matt.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to a deeper dive into the process.

According to our Book of Church Order, the privilege and responsibility for choosing elders and deacons lies in the hands of the congregation. Though vetted, trained, examined, and ordained by our present elders, church members nominate and elect their leaders. You will choose those from whom we will receive love, service, and encouragement. You will choose those to whom we will owe our respect, prayers, and submission.

This document will help you think and pray through this responsibility. It will remind you that elders shepherd the local church by praying, preaching and teaching, and visioning and guiding the direction of our community; they hold the same authority as pastors. Deacons serve the elders and the congregation and are called to care for the physical and financial needs of the church and raise up others to serve around them.

The following pages deal with the process of ordination and the qualifications for elders and deacons, but they are not exhaustive. If you find that you still have questions about how to fully participate in this process, please email us at elders@welcometoredeemer.com.

Please pray for those who you nominate as they will be doing a lot of soul-searching to discern their own calling during this time. And pray for us: that we would honor the Lord and serve the church well as we vet, train, and examine the people who will be our future leaders.

For His Church,

Matt Odum, on behalf of the Elders of Redeemer

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS & DEACONS

The Bible specifically gives us qualifications in three places: I Peter 5, Titus 1:6-9, and I Timothy 3:1-13 (below). These passages set a high bar for leadership in Christ's church—requiring an obvious love of God and His Church while maintaining a visible and authentic humility found in their reliance on Christ. As you read them, you can see that **godliness is more important than giftedness** and **character is more important than a competence**. Jesus' church is led by weak people made strong in grace, not spiritual superheroes without problems. You are looking for elders and deacons who are convinced that Christ is our only source for true and lasting healing and hope.

Here are some questions to ask as you consider nominating someone:

- v Has God given them a heart for his kingdom?
- v How have they shepherded/served their family and friends?
- v What would people say about them and their heart/work/family/behavior?
- v What are they known for within our community?
- v How well do they repent of their sin and turn to Christ for forgiveness and healing?
- v How well have they guided you to do the same?
- v Do they have any recurring sins that will hinder them from serving Christ or His Church? v Do they love the Word and want to apply it to shepherding or service?
- v Are they compelled by the mystery of Christ and his love for His church?
- v Have they loved the mission and vision of Redeemer, the church to which they are called?
- v Will they be good team players, humble enough to consent and strong enough to lead?

Elders

You are looking for a person who is first and foremost serious about applying the truths of God's Word to his own heart and life. They are growing in grace and mercy for themselves and others. Elders guide, shepherd, and love others with God's Word. These people need to have instincts toward Scripture as the guide and rule of life, and they need to be gifted in applying the Scriptures to our lives. Look for people that God uses to help others understand what He has for them in Christ Jesus. Elders are those who you want to watch over you and your family. They are those who will be glad to be with you at the hospital or just for a meal.

Deacons

Deacons lead by helping us apply the Gospel to our life and ministry. Like elders, deacons are to be first and foremost serious about applying the Gospel to themselves, but they are also the ones in our midst who are most practical about serving others. They are folks with a heart for others and a willingness to sacrifice time, talent, and treasure to make Christ visible both inside and outside of our church. They are people you know can help you and others find Christ's practical healing in our lives —always concerned about how Christ's kingdom expands in deed as well as word.

An Analysis of the Scripture: (*Deacon qualifications are italicized*)

Their family

Dignified child rearing Children are believers *Good manager of children*
Manage household well Husband of one wife

Their reputation

Blameless

Not domineering Respectable
Not greedy for gain Holy

Not quarrelsome
Not accused of rebellion Trustworthy
Good reputation with non- Christians

Their heart

Willing/eager to serve Great examples
Not overbearing
Not arrogant

Not quick tempered Hospitable
Lover of good
Not a lover of money Gentle

Shepherd
Not violent
Not fond of dishonest gain Sober-minded

Their Gifting

Able to Teach
To instruct and rebuke

Their behavior

Above Reproach Not a drunkard Self-controlled Disciplined Upright
Dignified

Not addicted to wine Not double-tongued

Their Doctrine

Not a recent convert Hold firmly to the word *Hold to mystery of faith*

Why Only Male Elders?

Let us first say that we understand that individuals in our church find this topic very difficult. We do not underestimate the ways in which gender and authority have been misused to dominate congregation members. We also do not underestimate the beauty and goodness of men and women.

Our denomination believes the Scriptures below limit elders to men. Though with varying degrees of certainty and comfortability, the elders of Redeemer are comfortable submitting to this historic teaching of the Church.

Our denomination also believes the same for deacons. In submission to our denomination, the women who serve as deacons at Redeemer are not ordained but commissioned—as ordination places us out of accord with our denomination.

This topic is rife with misunderstanding, but we are more than willing to engage with gentleness and compassion. Redeemer held a class in October of 2021 that was recorded for more detail which can be found on our podcast entitled “Women in Leadership.”

I Peter 5:1-3 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, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you, not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

Titus 1:5-9 ESV

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.

I Timothy 3:2-13 ESV

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. Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. Their wives^{*} likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. For those who serve well as deacons gain a

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good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

* Some of the controversy around women serving as deacons revolves around the translation of this word. It can either mean “women” or “wives .

Possible Timeline* for the **PROCESS** of **ORDAINING OFFICERS*

Beginning in January of 2022, we hope to start the nominating process wherein each member of the congregation can put people up to enter the nominating process (possibly through a google form). A minimum of 3 nominations from different family units AND from those outside of the candidates’ immediate family are required for a nominee to enter the process of assessing their call to the office. In order to nominate someone you should have a sound knowledge of this person and want to follow them as they serve and lead.

Elders will enter the training process from February through the middle of summer. Deacons will be trained from Fall to the end of 2022. This is an important time to pray for your nominees as they will be in the middle of trying to discern their sense of call to serve as an officer.

In the late summer, the elder nominees will move toward a gracious but grueling period of examinations. The elders of Redeemer will ask the nominees about their Christian experience and character, their reliance on Christ, their knowledge of Scripture, doctrine, and church government, their understanding of the duties of their office, and their willingness to lead our Church.

In late summer the elders will present to you a slate of elder candidates 30 days before a congregational vote. Those 30 days are a time to a) get to know the officer nominees you don’t know so that you can make an informed decision and/or b) bring to these candidates any concerns you might have about them taking the office.

Lord willing, sometime in September/October we will ordain Redeemer’s new class of elders. In the fall we will take the deacon nominees through the same process, presenting them to you in the early part of 2023.