

What is the ministry of ELDERS?

Shepherds of the Flock

Elders shepherd, oversee, lead, and care for the local church. Eternal's Elders are ministers of the Word and facilitators of church vision.

What is the ministry of DEACONS?

A lay officer appointed to assist a minister, especially in practical care and help

Eternal's Deacons are brothers and sisters who come alongside people to help them practice the Gospel in their everyday lives and/or help meet communal needs.

In the Bible, we see four functional roles of the position of Deacon: Help, Hospitality, Stewardship and Property

[To nominate someone, you must be a member of Eternal Church for at least 1 year. The person being nominated must also be a member of Eternal Church for at least 1 year.]

Additional Biblical Information

ELDERS

What's the difference between the offices of elder and deacon?

Philippians 1:1 *This letter is from Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus. I am writing to all of God's holy people in Philippi who belong to Christ Jesus, including the elders and deacons.*

Both elders and deacons are chosen as leaders in a local church. So these are two distinct offices.

Acts 6:2–4 *So the Twelve called a meeting of all the believers. They said, "We apostles should spend our time teaching the word of God, not running a food program. And so, brothers, select seven men who are well respected and are full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will give them this responsibility. Then we apostles can spend our time in prayer and teaching the word."*

The first deacons were chosen to administer the "food program," which would free the apostles to focus on teaching God's Word. These days, the office of "elder" has two categories: teaching elders (pastors) and ruling elders (lay people). Their main

responsibility is to oversee the operation of the church and to “shepherd” its members. Deacons have more of a serving role.

Why should someone want to be an elder or a deacon?

Ephesians 4:11–13 Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

1 Timothy 4:14 Do not neglect the spiritual gift you received through the prophecy spoken over you when the elders of the church laid their hands on you.

All believers are given spiritual gifts by the Holy Spirit, and we should exercise those gifts in the Body of Christ, both the universal Church and local church.

Why does the Bible have so much emphasis on elders?

Titus 1:5 I left you on the island of Crete so you could complete our work there and appoint elders in each town as I instructed you.

Local churches need spiritual leaders, godly and gifted individuals who will lead, teach, and care for the other believers in a local congregation.

How can I know if I should be an elder?

Acts 20:28 “So guard yourselves and God’s people. Feed and shepherd God’s flock—his church, purchased with his own blood—over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as elders.”

The most important indication that someone should be an elder is if that person has been called by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 12:6–8 In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

1 Peter 4:10–11 God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.

We should also seriously consider being an elder if we have the necessary spiritual gifts. God wants us to use our spiritual gifts for his glory and to build up the Church.

How should elders relate and respond to church members?

1 Peter 5:1–4 And now, a word to you who are elders in the churches. I, too, am an elder and a witness to the sufferings of Christ. And I, too, will share in his glory when he is revealed to the whole world. As a fellow elder, I appeal to you: Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. Don’t lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example. And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor.

Elders should set a good example of faith in Christ and leading out of love for Christ and his people, not out of a sense of obligation or duty. And while leading a church, they should lead with loving care, not lording it over members because of their exalted position.

How should I relate and respond to elders in my church?

1 Peter 5:5. In the same way, you younger men must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you, serve each other in humility, for “God opposes the proud but favors the humble.”

Often church elders will be older because of their life experience and spiritual maturity. Regardless of age, members should “accept the authority of the elders, with humility.

1 Timothy 5:17–20. Elders who do their work well should be respected and paid well, especially those who work hard at both preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, “You must not muzzle an ox to keep it from eating as it treads out the grain.” And in another place, “Those who work deserve their pay!” Do not listen to an accusation against an elder unless it is confirmed by two or three witnesses. Those who sin should be reprimanded in front of the whole church; this will serve as a strong warning to others.

Teaching elders—pastors—should be “respected and paid well.” All elder—teaching and ruling—should be assumed innocent of any charge against them until proven guilty.

What are the qualifications of an elder?

1 Timothy 3:1–7 *This is a trustworthy saying: “If someone aspires to be an elder, he desires an honorable position.” So an elder must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be able to teach. He must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He must be gentle, not quarrelsome, and not love money. He must manage his own family well, having children who respect and obey him. For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God’s church? An elder must not be a new believer, because he might become proud, and the devil would cause him to fall. Also, people outside the church must speak well of him so that he will not be disgraced and fall into the devil’s trap.*

Certainly, elders should be those with the necessary spiritual gifts. This passage lists several other qualifications, which can be summarized by the line, “whose life is above reproach.”

What are the qualifications of a deacon?

1 Timothy 3:8–13 *In the same way, deacons must be well respected and have integrity. They must not be heavy drinkers or dishonest with money. They must be committed to the mystery of the faith now revealed and must live with a clear conscience. Before they are appointed as deacons, let them be closely examined. If they pass the test, then let them serve as deacons. In the same way, their wives must be respected and must not slander others. They must exercise self-control and be faithful in everything they do. A deacon must be faithful to his wife, and he must manage his children and household well. Those who do well as deacons will be rewarded with respect from others and will have increased confidence in their faith in Christ Jesus.*

The spiritual and moral qualifications for a deacon are similar to those of an elder. “Deacons must be well respected and have integrity.”

Can I be an elder if I have had some past moral failure?

Galatians 1:13–16 *You know what I was like when I followed the Jewish religion—how I violently persecuted God’s church. I did my best to destroy it. I was far ahead of my fellow Jews in my zeal for the traditions of my ancestors. But even before I was born, God chose me and called me by his marvelous grace. Then it pleased him to reveal his Son to me so that I would proclaim the Good News about Jesus to the Gentiles. When this happened, I did not rush out to consult with any human being.*

1 Timothy 1:15–16. *This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”—and I am the worst of them all. But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great*

patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in him and receive eternal life.

God's grace is real—no one deserves his favor—and his forgiveness is complete. A person's past sins and mistakes should not disqualify that person for a church office. Consider the great Apostle Paul who, in his own words, was the 'worst' sinner of all.