

A SHORT STUDY ON ELDERS

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I. Introduction

A. As you know, the elders have decided that our congregation would benefit from having one or more additional elders, so we soon will be asked to recommend men who are suited to serve in that capacity. Toward that end, the elders thought it would be beneficial to have some lessons designed to remind us of the kind of men who are eligible to be elders.

B. I plan to take a fairly traditional approach to the subject. By that I mean I intend to go through the specific qualifications for elders and flesh them out a bit. I hope that this will help us to recognize the kind of men who should be considered for the office of elder.

C. Before getting to the qualifications, however, I want to say something about the role of elders. I think that is important not only for the potential elders in the group but also for those doing the nominating. It's important for the latter because knowing what elders are to do may provide some insight into the meaning of the qualifications.

D. But before I address the role of elders, I should say something about the selection process itself.

II. Selection Process

A. We do not have any specific instructions on the mechanics of the selection process for elders, on how congregations, especially those with existing elders, are to choose men to serve as elders.

1. In Acts 14:23 the Apostle Paul and Barnabas "selected" or "appointed" elders in various congregations they had planted. The word that is used there (*cheirotoneō*) can mean selecting those who are to serve or installing into office (ordaining) those who had been selected in some undescribed way. Even if one could be sure that Paul and Barnabas had done the selecting themselves, the fact Paul is an apostle would limit the relevance of that example.

2. In Tit. 1:5 Paul tells Titus, his personal agent or emissary, to "appoint" elders in every town of Crete. The word used here (*kathistēmi*) is used in Acts 6:3 for the appointment of the seven servants who had been selected by the community, so this verse does not specify the selection process of those Titus was to appoint.

3. 1 Tim. 5:22 (Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands) implies that Timothy had a similar role in appointing elders. The context suggests Paul is referring to the replacement of a sinning elder. Though Timothy is told not to be hasty in appointing an elder, presumably to allow time for the sins or good deeds of a candidate to surface (vv. 24-25), that need not mean that Timothy was the only one involved in selecting the new elder. The command not to appoint a new elder too quickly could be an instruction to him not to allow the entire process that culminates in the appointment by Timothy to be rushed. Moreover, as Paul's agent or emissary Timothy was an extension of the apostle, so there is some question about how this particular assignment to him applies to the modern church.

B. Despite this dearth of specific instructions on the mechanics of the selection process, there are some principles and other teachings in Scripture that seem relevant to that process.

1. Given that elders, as we'll see in a moment, have responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the congregation and given that the installation of new elders can affect the congregation's spiritual welfare and the elders' ability to discharge their duty, one can infer that elders need to have a significant role in the selection process.

a. It may be tempting for elders to abstain from the process as a sign of humility or assurance that they're not unduly controlling, but it would be an abdication of their shepherding responsibility to do so.

b. As J. B. Myers wrote in his little book *The Church and Its Elders* (Ft. Worth, TX: Star Bible, 1981), 92, "There is no reason for the elders to abandon their leadership role just because the church is selecting additional elders."

2. On the other hand, there are examples of congregational participation in the process by which certain men are put in various leadership roles or positions.

a. In Acts 1:12-26 the 120 disciples had a hand in selecting Matthias as an apostle to replace Judas. They put forward two men and prayed for God's choice, and then God selected Matthias through the casting of lots.

b. In Acts 6:1-6 the disciples were instructed about the qualifications of men needed to serve in the daily distribution of food and then chose seven they believed met those requirements. The apostles appointed those men to that duty, which implies that they concurred in the congregation's choices (certainly they would not rubber-stamp a selection they judged unqualified).

c. In Acts 13:1-3 the congregation expressed its concurrence with the Spirit's prophetic selection of Paul and Barnabas to mission work by laying their hands on them and sending them off.

d. In Acts 15:22 the apostles, elders, and the whole church concurred in the decision to choose men from among them to carry to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas, the letter setting forth the decision the apostles and elders (15:6), through the Holy Spirit (15:28), had reached at the Jerusalem Council.

3. Another principle relating to the selection and appointment of elders, to which I've already alluded, is that the candidates need to be known by the members for a sufficient length of time that their character, as reflected in their sins and good works, can be known (1 Tim. 5:22-25).

C. There are different ways in which churches have chosen to give effect to the principles of elder involvement and congregational participation in the selection of new elders. As explained in the insert in last week's bulletin, the elders at Mesa have chosen to solicit nominations of men from the members. Those nominations will be received during the two-week period from July 11 through July 25.

D. There is no place in this process for politics or lobbying for specific individuals to be nominated. This isn't like a homeowner's association where you launch a political campaign to get "your man" on the board so he can influence policy in the direction you like. That is disruptive and ultimately harmful. Nominate on the basis of spiritual qualifications not as part of a plan to push some pet issue.

III. Role of Elders

A. The churches in the N.T. were governed by a plurality of local elders. It is true, of course, that the apostles, as inspired emissaries of Christ, exercised governing authority throughout the church, but we have no apostles (or prophets) today. "Elder" is the leadership position within each local church that God intended to be permanent.

B. Three specific Greek terms refer to this one leadership position: *presbuteros* (translated elder), *episkopos* (translated overseer or bishop), and *poimēn* (translated shepherd or pastor).

1. The interrelationship between these terms is clear from several passages.

a. In Acts 20:17 Paul sends for the "elders" of the church in Ephesus. In 20:28 he reminds them that they are "overseers" and commands them "to shepherd" (verb *poimainō*) the church of God.

b. In Tit. 1:5 Paul tells Titus to appoint "elders" in every city, and in 1:7 these elders are called "overseers."

c. In 1 Pet. 5:1 Peter addresses the "elders," and in 5:2 he tells them "to shepherd" (verb *poimainō*) and "to oversee" (verb *episkopeō*)¹ God's flock.

¹The command "watch over" or "oversee" is omitted from certain manuscripts, but it is probably original.

2. But each term carries a different nuance of the office.²

a. The position of elders within Judaism (Num. 11:16-24; Deut. 21:19-20; 1 Ki. 21:8-11), from which the early church derived the name, involved deciding disputes, interpreting the Law, administering discipline, preserving the traditions of the people (Deut. 32:7), and serving as examples.

b. Overseer or bishop emphasizes the role of managing the group's affairs, guarding it, and directing its activities.

c. The work of shepherds in looking after sheep involves protecting them, leading them to water and pasture, caring for their injuries, and seeking them when lost. Ezekiel 34 gives a powerful description of how shepherds should *not* act.

C. The position of elder is a task (1 Tim. 3:1; Eph. 4:11-12) that is entrusted to certain men by God (Tit. 1:7; Acts 20:28) through the faithful selection of qualified men. In brief, elders are responsible for the spiritual welfare of the congregation.

1. Acts 20:28 (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.

2. Eph. 4:11-12 (ESV) – And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,¹² **to equip the saints for the work of ministry**, for building up the body of Christ, . . .

3. 1 Thess. 5:12 (ESV) – We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and **are over you in the Lord and admonish you**, . . .

4. 1 Tim. 3:5 (ESV) – for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he **care for God's church**?

5. 1 Tim. 5:17 (ESV) – Let the elders who **rule well** be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.

6. Tit. 1:9 (ESV) – 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.

7. Heb. 13:17 (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.

² See Everett Ferguson, *The Church of Christ: A Biblical Ecclesiology for Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 319-323.

8. 1 Pet. 5:2 (ESV) – **shepherd the flock of God** that is among you, **exercising oversight**, . . .

D. Fulfillment of this task necessarily involves the elders in teaching (Acts 20:32; 1 Tim. 3:2, 5:17; 2 Tim. 3:16; Tit. 1:9) and modeling (Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:7; 1 Pet. 5:3) the word of God.

E. Jesus is called "the great shepherd of the sheep" in Heb. 13:20 and "the chief Shepherd" in 1 Pet. 5:4. In 1 Pet. 2:25 he is called "the Shepherd and Overseer of [our] souls." Jesus is the one under whom all Christians live their lives and under whom all elders serve in caring for his flock. That is why serving as an elder is a noble task (1 Tim. 3:1); it involves the care and nurture of the people of God.

F. Those who are under the oversight of elders are to obey the word of the Lord that is presented by them, respect them for their work, support them, and cooperate with them (see, 1 Thess. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:7, 17). God has made the elders responsible for the spiritual welfare of the congregation, and they will give an account for how they handle that responsibility (Heb. 13:17). James 3:1 is a sobering admonition to all who would teach: "Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, because you know that we will receive a stricter judgment."³

G. As Peter says in 1 Pet. 5:3, the elders are to carry out their task not by being domineering over those in their charge but by being examples to the flock.

IV. Specific Qualifications

A. The qualifications for elders are found in 1 Tim. 3:1-7, Tit. 1:5-9, and 1 Pet. 5:1-3. Regarding these lists, Everett Ferguson wisely comments in *The Church of Christ: A Biblical Ecclesiology for Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 324:

Two opposite tendencies, both incorrect, have been exhibited toward these lists of qualifications. One is to set the standards so high that virtually no one can meet them and so not appoint men to the work. The other is to minimize the requirements with the attitude of choosing the best available even if unqualified. Both approaches have the consequence of ignoring or setting aside the instructions and thus not taking seriously the biblical standards for congregational leadership.

B. If you know men in the congregation who you think may meet the following qualifications, you should submit their names for consideration for that office.

C. I'll spend the remainder of this class and the next fleshing out the specific qualifications of elders.

³ Whereas Jas. 3:1 is a warning to the spiritually immature about the seriousness of teaching, Heb. 5:12 is a rebuke of the immature for not progressing in the faith so as to be able to teach.

1. Above reproach -- 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6, 7* (*anepilēptos & aneglētos*)

Because being an overseer is such a significant task, one who serves in that capacity must live an exemplary life. In Paul's words, they must be "above reproach." That, of course, does not mean sinless, or else there could be no elders. It means the man is not open to valid attack or criticism in terms of his Christian life; he is morally careful and responsible. More specifically, his life is characterized by the virtues or qualities Paul goes on to list.

2. Husband of one wife -- 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6

a. This is probably the most controversial of the qualifications.

The phrase literally is "a husband [or man] of one wife [or woman]" (*mias gunaikos andra*), but those words are open to various interpretations. I'll address briefly the more common ones and let you know where I come down on the question.

(1) A few think Paul is saying that an elder cannot be a polygamist, that he must be the husband of only one wife rather than multiple wives. Though I think polygamy is indirectly excluded by what Paul is saying, it is doubtful that he is expressly addressing polygamy here. By this time, monogamy was the generally accepted norm in Greco-Roman and Jewish cultures, and there is no evidence that polygamy was an issue in Christian communities. So it seems unlikely Paul would be focusing on that. Moreover, in 1 Tim. 5:9 Paul requires widows who are to be enrolled "on the list" (presumably a list of church support) to be "a wife [or woman] of one husband [or man]," using the identical phrase except for the gender reversal. The phrase there cannot be intended to exclude women who had multiple husbands (polyandry) because that practice was unknown in that culture.

(2) Some think the phrase is a way of saying that an elder must be married, that he must have a wife. Certainly Paul assumes an elder will be married and that he will have a family, but I don't think he is mandating that here. He does not say an elder must be married or must have "a" wife; the emphasis is on his being a husband [or man] of "one" wife [or woman], as the word "one" leads the phrase in the Greek text. In addition, if this understanding of the phrase (that it means "he must be married") is applied to its counterpart in 1 Tim. 5:9 it leaves Paul uttering the tautology that only widows who had been married could be put on the list: a widow by definition had been married.

(3) Some think Paul is here excluding from serving as an elder anyone who remarried after a spouse's death, whereas others think he is excluding only those who remarried after a divorce.

* Different Greek words that have this meaning in common.

(a) Excluding a man from serving because of remarriage after being widowed would be strange given that remarriage in such cases clearly is permitted (Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Cor. 7:8-9, 39-40) and is affirmatively encouraged in 1 Cor. 7:8-9 (dealing with widowers and widows) and in 1 Tim. 5:14 (dealing with younger widows). Why would it then be disqualifying? Moreover, in the parallel in 1 Tim. 5:9 the effect would be that Paul in 5:14 is urging the younger widows to do what would exclude them from eligibility for "the list" in the event the new husband were to die.

(b) Excluding a man from serving because of a remarriage after a divorce that left him free to remarry would be strange for the same reason. If the remarriage is permissible it is not a reflection of poor character or a lack of faith when a man avails himself of that right. A man who impermissibly remarried would be in a different light, but I don't think Paul's focus is on remarriage.

(4) With a majority of scholars, I think the requirement is that the man be faithful to his wife, that he not have broken faith with her, which understanding is reflected in NEB and TNIV.

(a) Just as one can express the phrase "a diamond of one karat" as "a one-karat diamond" one can express the phrase "a man of one woman" as "a one-woman man" (or "a husband of one wife" as "a one-wife husband"). The requirement deals with the man's character, the type of person he is, rather than his status.

(b) George Knight in *Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 158-159, quotes the following from C. H. Dodd: "The natural meaning of *mias gunaikos aner* is surely, as Theodore [of Mopsuestia] says, 'a man who having contracted a monogamous marriage is faithful to his marriage vows,' excluding alike polygamy, concubinage and promiscuous indulgence" [cite omitted]. Knight then adds, "'Promiscuous indulgence' would encompass Jesus' words on wrongful divorce and remarriage in Mt. 5:32; 19:9."

3. Self-controlled -- 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8* (*nēphalios & egkratēs*)

a. An elder must be a man who is self controlled, disciplined. He is not someone who is hostage to his emotions and impulses. In 1 Cor. 9:25 Paul uses the verb form (*egkrateuomai*) of the noun in Tit. 1:8 (*egkratēs*) in stating (ESV): "Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. ²⁶ So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified."

* Different Greek words that have this meaning in common.

b. This is to be a quality of all Christians, but it is essential for those who are to be leaders in the Christian community.

4. Sensible -- 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8

An elder must be sensible, meaning reasonable, prudent, and thoughtful. We might say he must have his head on straight. This is related to self control. The sensible person is someone who carefully considers things for the purpose of taking responsible action.

5. Respectable -- 1 Tim. 3:2

An elder must live a well-behaved or virtuous life so as to be regarded as respectable by others. His life is to be one worthy of respect.

6. Hospitable -- 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8

Hospitality is required of all believers (e.g., Rom. 12:13, 16:23; Heb. 13:2; 1 Pet. 4:9), but it is an essential characteristic for elders. William Mounce states in *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 174, "Overseers must be the type of people who will gladly welcome people into their homes. As Knight asserts, 'He who must teach others and take care of and exercise oversight over them must be open and loving to them' (159)."

7. Skillful in teaching (sound doctrine) -- 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:9

a. The requirement "skillful in teaching" (see BDAG, 240) in 1 Tim. 3:2 is put more fully in Tit. 1:9. Paul tells Titus there that an elder (ESV) "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."

b. An elder must know Christian doctrine and hold to it firmly so that he can teach it to the flock and rebuke those who threaten the flock with false doctrine. In these days, long after completion of the canon, we might say that an elder must be "a man of the Book."

c. 1 Tim. 5:17 can be translated "Let the elders who have led well be considered worthy of double honor, **especially** those who labor in preaching and teaching" or "Let the elders who have led well be considered worthy of double honor, **that is**, those who labor in preaching and teaching." In the latter rendering leading well *means* laboring in preaching and teaching, but either way it highlights the importance of this aspect of an elder's role. The word "labor" implies vigorous effort.

d. This doesn't mean an elder has to be a Bible scholar, and the teaching can be done in more personal settings than a classroom, but elders necessarily are able to teach and are involved in doing so in caring for the flock. As Terry prefers to

express it, an elder must be an "effective teacher," meaning that those he teaches are able to learn what they need to know. If a man cannot communicate God's word, he should not be considered as an elder.

8. Not given to drunkenness -- 1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7

a. An elder cannot be given to drunkenness. That doesn't mean, of course, that Christians who are not elders are free to get drunk. Drunkenness is sinful (Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:18; 1 Pet. 4:3). It means that this cannot be an elder's area of weakness.

b. This does not mean an elder must abstain completely from drinking alcoholic beverages. The requirement deals with drunkenness, the abuse of alcoholic beverages.

9. Not violent (but gentle) -- 1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7 ("gentle" expressed only in 1 Tim. 3:3)

An elder is not one who resorts to physical force or threats of physical force to get his way. He is not a bully. On the contrary, he is gentle in his dealing with others.

10. Not contentious / quick-tempered -- 1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7

Similarly, an elder cannot be a contentious, quick tempered person. He is not combative, a person looking for an argument or conflict. As John Stott puts it in *Guard the Truth: The Message of 1 Timothy & Titus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 97, "His patience may be sorely tried by demanding and aggravating people, but like his Master he will seek to be gentle, never crushing a bruised reed or snuffing out a wick that is burning low."

11. Not loving money / greedy for money -- 1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7 (see also, 1 Pet. 5:2)

An elder cannot be a lover of money, someone who is greedy for money. If money is too important to him, he will wind up serving it rather than Christ (see Mat. 6:24). All Christians are to keep their lives free of the love of money and be content with what they have (Heb. 13:5), but this is essential for one who would serve as an elder.

12. Managing household well -- 1 Tim. 3:4

a. An elder must manage his own household well, which includes seeing that his children obey him with proper respect (1 Tim. 3:4), or as put in Tit. 1:6, that they are not open to the charge of being "wild and disobedient" (TNIV). The reason is that one who is unable to manage his own family properly cannot be expected to care

properly for God's church (1 Tim. 3:5). If he cannot generate obedience and respect in his own children, he is unlikely to be able to generate it in God's children.

b. Paul seems to assume here that an elder will be married and have children. Some think this means an elder must have more than one child, but that strikes me as a hyper-literal reading.

(1) If someone asked a group of which I was a part "How many of you have children?" I would raise my hand even though I have only one child. I would assume that the question covered those with one or more children even though framed in the plural.

(2) In 1 Tim. 5:4 Paul says, "But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God." Certainly that does not mean that the only child of a widow has no obligation to care for her, that a child must have siblings to come under the command. This is supported by v. 8 which says that if *anyone* does not provide for his own, especially his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

c. In Tit. 1:6 Paul says that a man chosen to serve as an elder must have "faithful" (*pistos*) children. This is traditionally understood to mean that he must have "believing" children, meaning Christian children. Though Paul does not include this requirement in his instructions to Timothy, it may be implicit in the requirement that the elder have his children under control (1 Tim. 3:4).⁴ Their being under his control may extend to their following him in the faith. That means that to serve as an elder one must have at least one child who has been baptized into Christ (and presumably no adult children who have moved out of the house and have never been baptized into Christ).

d. I do not believe that rebellion or apostasy by children after they leave a man's household bars the man from serving as an elder.

(1) The requirement in 1 Tim. 3:4 of having obedient and respectful children is part of the more general requirement that he manage *his own household* well. When a child moves out he establishes a separate household. He is no longer a part of the father's household; he has moved out from under the father's immediate rule.

(2) Though it is generally true, proverbially true, that a child trained in godly ways will continue to walk in that path (Prov. 22:6), the proverb is not intended as an absolute promise or guarantee that no child trained in God's wisdom will ever abandon that path. Humans are creatures of free will. As Ezekiel 18 makes clear, there is no guarantee that a son will follow in his father's footsteps with regard to

⁴ It is possible to understand "faithful" in this context to mean that the children are submissive or obedient to their father, as a servant or steward is regarded as *pistos* when he carries out the requests of his master. The requirement then is substantively identical to the requirement given in 1 Tim. 3:4.

righteousness; the son of a righteous man may turn out to be unrighteous, and the son of an unrighteous man may turn out to be righteous.

(3) The fact Samuel's sons, who were down in Beersheba, did not walk in his ways but took bribes and perverted justice (1 Sam. 8:1-3) did not cause God to remove him as Israel's leader. Eli, on the other hand, was culpable for tolerating (1 Sam. 2:29, 3:13) and benefiting from (1 Sam. 2:29) the blasphemous conduct in which his sons engaged as priests (1 Sam. 2:12-17, 3:13). He apparently had the power to remove his sons as priests, thereby preventing their blasphemous conduct, but chose to honor them above the Lord (1 Sam. 2:29) by allowing them to remain in their prestigious office. Note also that, unlike Samuel's sons, Eli's sons were living in their father's town (household?) and serving with him as priests.

(4) But as Wayne Jackson points out:

[I]t could be the case that an elder's grown child, living on his own, could be guilty of such notorious and flagrant conduct, that it might not be expedient for the elder to continue in his role, due to inordinate attention to this problem—even though he is not responsible for the wayward child's conduct. His attention might be seriously distracted; his influence could be muted. This need not be the case necessarily, but it could be.⁵

13. Not a recent convert -- 1 Tim. 3:6

a. An elder cannot be a recent convert. No doubt a recent convert does not know enough about the faith to function as an elder, but that is not how Paul explains the requirement in 1 Tim. 3:6. He says an elder cannot be a recent convert "lest, having become conceited, he fall into the condemnation of the devil."

b. I think the point is that one who receives too much responsibility too soon is more likely to become conceited, like the false teachers at Ephesus (1 Tim. 6:4). An inflated ego leads readily to condemnation because a prideful person, a "know-it-all," relishes cutting his own trail and refuses to accept correction.

14. Has a good reputation with those outside (the church) -- 1 Tim. 3:7

a. An elder must not only be "above reproach" within the community of faith, he also must have a good reputation with those outside the church. Paul adds the reason, "lest he fall into disgrace and the trap of the devil."

b. One who has a bad reputation among outsiders can easily fall into disgrace (or "incur slander" - Kelly) either because "unsympathetic outsiders will put the most unfavorable interpretation on his slightest word or deed" (Kelly) or because they will be motivated to expose the particulars of the bad reputation. For the church or its leaders to be disgraced is to fall into the devil's trap.

⁵ <http://www.christiancourier.com/articles/331-elder-qualifications-what-about-his-adult-children>

15. Not arrogant -- Tit. 1:7

An elder cannot be a man who is arrogant, who thinks too highly of himself. Stott writes (p. 177): "Leadership roles bring prestige and power, and leaders are tempted to misuse these in order to get their own way and pander to their own vanity. Then they do not readily listen to either criticism or advice. Instead, they tend to lord it over other people, and to become headstrong and autocratic."

16. A lover of goodness -- Tit. 1:8

An elder is to be one who loves good people and good things. To use Paul's words in Phil. 4:8, he has an affinity for whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, and for whatever is commendable, excellent, and worthy of praise.

17. Righteous -- Tit. 1:8

An elder is one who lives righteously, in accordance with the will of God. This, of course, does not mean he is sinless; it means he is someone who is serious about discipleship, someone who is striving to practice righteousness.

18. Devout -- Tit. 1:8

An elder is devout or pious, meaning he is serious about the practice of his faith. He is a man of prayer, study, worship, and fellowship.

19. Desires the task -- 1 Pet. 5:2

a. In 1 Pet. 5:2 Peter commands the elders to shepherd the flock "not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you." I think the implication is that one should not accept the responsibility to serve as an elder if one can do so only grudgingly. That kind of service would not be pleasing to God, just as contributing money under compulsion would not please him (2 Cor. 9:7). One is to serve willingly believing that this is the role in which God would have one serve.

b. As Thomas Schreiner states in *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 234, "Those who serve only because they feel they must will lose their joy, and the church will suffer as a consequence."