

Qualifications for an Elder of McLean Bible Church

1. Must be an active member of MBC; i.e., evidenced by servant leadership, such as with a small group or ministry serving team
2. Must whole-heartedly support the core values of MBC and agree with the doctrinal position of MBC as stated in the "What We Teach" booklet
3. Must possess the biblical qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9, 1 Peter 5:1-4, and Acts 20:28. (See attached verses)

Biblical Qualifications for Elder

1 Timothy 3:1-7

1 Timothy 3:1 - "If a man aspires to the office of overseer"

A man should desire earnestly this type of spiritual leadership, not with fleshly desire for power and/or prestige, but with a God-given desire to be a servant to both the Lord and the flock. No man should ever be pressured in any way to assume such divine service.

1 Timothy 3:2-3 - "Above reproach"

This is the basic qualification for a man of spiritual leadership. The Greek word here means "unassailable," "unable to be reproached." This is a man whose life can be examined with a fine-toothed comb and still come out without any embarrassing blemishes in his present character and behavior. The particulars of verses 2 and 3 are simply examples of this depth of character in action.

"Husband of one wife" (v. 2) - i.e., "not a polygamist." This was a problem in the ancient world, especially among the Greeks and Romans. This cannot mean "only married once," for then a widower could never serve in spiritual leadership, and Scripture is patently clear that a widow(er) may

remarry with no spiritual penalty whatsoever (Rom. 7:1-3, 1 Cor. 7:39). This also does not mean that a man must be married. What Paul means here is that this must be a man of unquestioned morality, who is true and faithful to one wife in attitude, word, and action.

"Temperate" (v. 2) - The Greek word implies a man who is "circumspect," "clear-headed," "self-controlled." This is a person who lives deeply his convictions with a moral and spiritual earnestness. He is not given to excesses in wine or spirit (loss of temper, outbursts of anger), but is well-balanced, calm and steady.

"Respectable" (v. 2) - This is a man of inner moral excellence and virtue; a man of honor and respectability. His eyes, his words and his actions convey nothing but purity and ethical uprightness.

"Hospitable" (v. 2) - The Greek word literally means a "friend to strangers." This is a man (and family) whose home is available to minister to the needs of the saints in all things from lodging to social gatherings.

"Able to teach" (v. 2) - The Elder should be gifted by God to instruct in the truths of the Word of God. This does not mean that all Elders do so to the same extent, for there are always some who are uniquely gifted in this area (1 Tim. 5:17). However, a man of spiritual leadership should know and be able at whatever public level God calls him to communicate spiritual truth.

"Not one who lingers beside his wine" (v.3) - The Bible carries numerous strong warning about wine (as representative of alcoholic beverages) and its effects. Here, spiritual leaders are told to be extremely circumspect in this regard, if not in fact to practice total abstinence out of personal deference.

"(not) pugnacious but gentle, uncontentious" (v.3) - This man must be a man characterized by a gentle and loving spirit. He is not to be a man who tends toward conflict and fighting, whether literal or verbal. He is not to be argumentative and quarrelsome in his dealing with people, but gentle, kind and approachable (cf. 2 Tim. 2:24-25).

"free from the love of money" (v.3) - The accumulation of earthly treasure must not be his chief goal in life. He must be a man who has treasure in heaven as his foremost goal in life.

1 Timothy 3:4, 5 - "He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity, for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?"

This man (assuming he is married) must be gifted with the ability to oversee, to manage, to preside. Thus, if he cannot marshal the spiritual resources of God to preside over his own children with dignity and spiritual dynamic, how in the world can he preside over the church of Jesus Christ? He must demonstrate firmness and yet love; fairness and yet compassion. A man's family will reveal much about his true ability to lead in spiritual matters.

1 Timothy 3:6 - "not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation of the devil."

A man may meet all the above qualifications and yet still not be ready to serve in spiritual leadership because of a recent conversion experience. A neophyte may have tremendous spiritual capabilities and zeal, but will lack the maturity and depth that it takes to meet the demanding requirements of spiritual leadership. Also, such quick elevation of position could more easily cause pride in his heart and result in the type of condemnation pronounced by God on the devil for spiritual conceit. Since how long one must be a believer to no longer be a "novice" is not stated, the assembly must use its own discretion to make sure that a beginner is not chosen to be an Elder (1 Tim. 3:10a; 5:22a).

1 Timothy 3:7 - "And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

Finally, this man must be above reproach also in the eyes of unbelievers. His reputation in the neighborhood and community must be as honorable as it is in church. Paul adds this since it is often these people who see such a man in his most unguarded and pressure-filled moments, and thus a good reputation with them ensures that it is his true character that the church has seen, and not a facade. His business associates and neighbors must see him as a man of character, ethical uprightness and moral purity. Otherwise, to appoint such a man as an Elder will be to say to the world that the church accepts and condones ungodly conduct, and would thereby bring reproach to Christ and give Satan a great opportunity to slander Christ and His Church.

Titus 1:6-9

⁶ An Elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. ⁷ Since an

overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain.⁸ Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.⁹ He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

1 Peter 5:1-4

¹ To the Elders among you, I appeal as a fellow Elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed:² Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve;³ not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.⁴ And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

Acts 20:28

²⁸ Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.