Introduction:

If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer (an elder), he desires a noble task.

It is a difficult task:

• Long hours – with great demands on time and energy.
• Great responsibility – to both oversee the church and bring the gospel to a lost world.
• Challenging circumstances – there are many needs in the church and community and we work with volunteers who also have limited time and resources.

• Never ending job – there is always more to do.
• Often called into crisis situations – sheep are messy, smelly and stubborn.
• Spiritual battle – with an unseen foe.

But being a leader in the church is also a noble task:

• We serve the greatest leader who has ever lived – Jesus Christ. Philippians 2:9-11
• We belong to the greatest organization that will outlast all others – the church. Matthew 16:18
• We have the greatest mission the world has ever known – to bring the gospel to the ends of the earth. Matthew 28:18-20
• We have been given unlimited resources through Jesus Christ. Phil. 4:19

There were two types of leaders in the early church – elders and deacons.
Elders are called by two names:
• Presbuteros – Elders
• Episkopos – Overseers
Both are used interchangeably in Acts 20:17 & 28 and Titus 1:5-7

In the New Testament, we find that each church had a plurality of elders. Acts 15:22; 20:17; Titus 1:5 and James 5:14. Pastors are elders and Pastors usually serve as a primary leader among leaders.

So what are we to look for in selecting elders for leadership?

I. Character. I Timothy 3:2-3

1. Above reproach – blameless.
3. Temperate – sober minded, having good judgment.
4. Self-controlled – able to discipline himself.
5. Respectable – having a well ordered life.
6. Hospitable – having an open heart and an open home.
7. Not given to drunkenness – not lingering with the cup.
8. Not violent, but gentle – literally, not a striker.
9. Not quarrelsome – not one who stirs up trouble, but one who is a peacemaker.

These are the character qualities that God wants to see in all of us and especially in those who are spiritual leaders.

II. Ability. 1 Timothy 3:2, 4-5

1. Able to teach
   Some will teach one-on-one, some in small groups and some to the whole church. To do this well we need to be a student of Scripture and a lover of God’s Word.

2. Able to lead.
   How do we know if someone can lead? Look at his family. The church is a family, not a business.

3. Other responsibilities of elders.
   • Model Christ-like behavior – 1 Peter 5:3
   • Maintain doctrinal purity – 1 Timothy 1:3-4
   • Discipline unruly believers – Titus 3:9-11
   • Oversee the material needs of the church – 1 Corinthians 16:1-4
   • Pray for the sick – James 5:13-16
III. Spiritual Maturity.  
I Timothy 3:6
He should not be a new believer. 
The danger is pride. He may become conceited and fall into the trap of the devil. It is better to wait than to appoint someone to leadership too soon.

IV. Reputation.  I Timothy 3:7
He should have a good reputation with outsiders. The words “Above reproach” in verse 2 may refer to believers in the church.

Nothing hurts the reputation of the church more than the bad reputation of its leadership.

How many people have been turned off to the church because of the scandals and abuses by clergy and church leaders?
**Conclusion:**

How do we select elders for leadership in the church?

- It's not by age.
- It's not by success.
- It's not by popularity.

We select leaders based on:

- Their character.
- Their ability to teach and to lead.
- Their spiritual maturity.
- Their reputation, both inside and outside the church.

**Who are our elders?**

- Olin Phillips
- Tom Johnson
- Paul Post
- Jack Lundberg
- Ron Timm
- Dave Tollberg
- Don Button
- Pastor Ron Berget
- Pastor Dan Lundberg
- Pastor Aaron Cavanaugh
- Pastor Ric Stanghelle

**What is our responsibility to them as a congregation?**

- Pray for them.
  1 Timothy 2:1-4
- Respect them.
  1 Timothy 5:17
- Follow their leadership.
  Hebrews 13:17
- Imitate their faith.
  Hebrews 13:7