

what do elders do?

Compiled from Acts 6:4; 20:28-31; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17; Titus 1:6-11; James 5:14-15; 1 Peter 5:1-3

Pray for the church: The elders are to devote themselves to praying for the spiritual health and vitality of the people in the church, and to lift up to God any needs of the people.

Teach the church: The elders are to be involved in teaching the people the Word of God and overseeing other teachers in the congregation, to make sure that the body is well-fed spiritually, so that the people might grow as fully committed and mature followers of Christ.

Lead the church: The elders are to be continually seeking the will of God for the direction of the church by constant prayer, study of the Scriptures, and consideration of the needs and opportunities of the church. They should regularly seek the input and counsel of others in the body, and then should lead in applying biblical principles to specific situations and circumstances.

Care for the church: The elders should demonstrate loving concern for the spiritual well-being of the people in the church. They are to be available to pray with and counsel anyone in the body struggling with spiritual, emotional or physical problems.

Guard the church: The elders are to be constantly on guard against any false teaching or harmful behavior in the church. They must be able to refute false teaching and act decisively against any destructive activity.

Equip the church: The elders are not responsible for all the ministry within the church, but through their ministry (as described above) they are to equip their brothers and sisters in the body to minister to each other and serve each other. The elders should help the people discover their spiritual gifts, provide opportunities for them to use and strengthen their ministry skills, and train new church leaders.

- Not all elders will be equally gifted in every area of responsibility. Some elders will be better leaders than teachers. Some will be excellent at teaching in small groups or one-on-one, but not at teaching in large group settings. This is healthy and one of the reasons why the biblical pattern is a group of leaders pastoring the church. The strengths of the different elders will complement and balance each other. However, all elders should be involved, in some way, in each of these areas.
- Not all elders will pastor as a full-time vocation. Some elders will be supported by the church, particularly those who devote great amounts of time to studying and teaching (see 1 Timothy

5:17-18). However, each elder shares in the responsibility to shepherd the church of God, and no elder is to be elevated above the others.