

The purpose of this publication is to spread the truth, to sow God's good seed, the Word of God, and to confront religious error for the good of men's souls. Editor: Allen Dvorak

Published weekly by a group of God's people in the Monrovia community and meeting at:
461 Kelly Spring Road - Harvest, AL 35749 Telephone: (256) 325-8585

For additional information about us, visit our website
<http://spreadingtruth.org>

The difficult of quantifying some qualifications is perhaps the reason that some congregations pay little attention to the qualifications outside of the domestic ones. If Brother So-And-So is married and has at least one child who is not an axe murderer, he is allowed to serve, despite the fact that he hasn't taught the Bible to anyone in the last ten years and is only "apt to teach" in the sense that he might teach just about anything about anything!

In other situations, Brother So-And-So would be allowed to serve, not because he is eminently qualified, but due to the fact that Brother Gooder-Than-Most needs someone with whom to serve. If we understand the qualifications to have been revealed by the Holy Spirit, then we should have a pretty good idea what the Lord thinks about such "arrangements."

In the process of considering men to be elders, it is important that I recognize the possibility of spiritual growth in those men. I mean to say that I am looking at who Brother Growing Spiritually is now, rather than evaluating him on the basis of who he was several years ago. It

can be difficult to separate the present from the past, but I need to allow the possibility of growth in character in others. Obviously, many of the qualifications of elders are not achieved overnight, but are instead the result of the process of maturation and that takes time. Being blameless is a requirement for an elder, but it doesn't mean perfection!

The selection of elders is one of those tasks that can, if brethren behave poorly, cause lots of dissension in the congregation. May God help us to be patient and understanding of others, courteous and compassionate!

Bible Challenge Question - Answer

The Lord spoke thus to Jeremiah, a prophet who would witness the last days of the southern kingdom of Judah (Jeremiah 1:18). When God called Jeremiah to be a prophet, He informed him that the people to whom he was sent would fight against him, but Jeremiah was not to be afraid -- God would be with him. Jeremiah had the unenviable task of prophesying the destruction of Jerusalem and a prolonged captivity -- not a popular message by any means!



Volume 10, Number 10

March 5, 2017

Selecting Elders

By Allen Dvorak

One of the most important tasks in which a congregation engages is the selection of its leaders. According to the New Testament, local congregations of God's people are to be guided by a plurality of men who are variously referred to as elders, presbyters, pastors, shepherds, bishops and overseers. Although these English designations are translated from three different Greek words, they all refer to the same men (cf. Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Peter 5:1-2).

The reason for this article is that, as a congregation, we will soon be once again seeking additional elders to serve with the current four elders. As we have done in the past, after the congregation has gone through the selection process and any qualified men are appointed to the eldership, the current elders will also be re-examined for the purpose of determining if they remain qualified. Even as it is important for men to be qualified before serving as elders, it is critical that men already serving remain qualified.

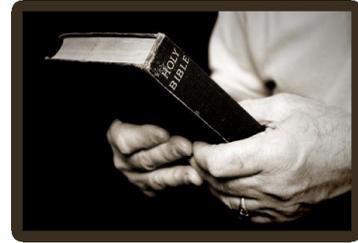
The point of the qualifications for elders is to assure that the men who serve in that role are able to do the work. It is possible for men who were once qualified and began to serve to become unqualified later and thus not be effective leaders of God's people.

In this article I wish to make several observations that I believe to be pertinent to the selection process, particularly with reference to the qualifications of elders that are identified in Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).

As will be suggested in sermon study, the qualifications of elders can be categorized in different ways. Some of the qualifications are harder to quantify than others. For instance, an elder must be "the husband of one wife" and he must have children. It is pretty easy to determine who among the men of the congregation is married and has children! (I should note that I have known Christians who recommended men to be elders who had neither wife nor children -- never

What God Wants In A Shepherd

By Allen Dvorak



Texts: _____ & _____

Four categories of elder qualifications: (list one)

1. G _____ (2) _____
2. D _____ () _____
3. C _____ () _____
4. E _____ () _____

Four things that a shepherd does for the sheep (Psalm ____):

1. F _____ (v. ____)
2. R _____ (v. ____)
3. G _____ (v. ____)
4. P _____ (v. ____)

Nearly all of an elder's work can revolve around his ability to _____.

Jesus distinguished between three individuals (John 10):

1. The _____ who came to _____
2. The _____ who didn't _____
3. The _____ who gave _____

"I am the _____ . The _____ lays down his _____ for the _____."

-- John 10:____; ESV

"God's judgment can seem severe if we don't have a sense of sin."

"There can be a fine line between a sermon and a hostage situation."

-- Both quotes by David Diestelkamp

underestimate the need to state the obvious!). For the vast majority of us, however, it is an easy matter to determine if a man meets the qualification of being married.

Other qualifications, particularly those that deal with character, are not so easy to quantify in the lives of others. For example, an elder must be "hospitable." How does one decide if a particular man in the congregation is hospitable? Is it determined by how many people he entertains in his home each year? Is it determined by how many times he invites ME into his home over some period of time? Other qualifications are similar in that there is perhaps no hard-and-fast standard by which to measure a man and say "yea" or "nay" to him serving as an elder. Is he "respectable" (1 Tim. 3:2)? Is he "sober-minded" (1 Tim. 3:2)? Is he "able to teach" (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9b)? It is certainly true that some men would not appear qualified even in these matters that

involve some judgment on the part of the assayer. The lack of qualification in such cases might be obvious to all, but in other cases, one brother or sister might believe Brother So-And-So to be hospitable, while another brother or sister might not be convinced.

Even those qualifications that appear to be "cut and dried" sometimes generate questions about their application. It is probably obvious if a man has children or not, but do those children have to be believers or merely submissive to their father? In light of the way that the Bible sometimes uses the plural noun "children," is one child enough...or must a man have at least two? If he has more than one child, must all of them be believers or just some of them?

This is not to say that any qualifications are to be dismissed as impossible to measure. God put them in the list and we need to leave them there. He obviously intended for us to use them to determine who is qualified to serve as elders. However, we also need to recognize that the judgment of the individual is involved in the determination of whether or not a particular man meets some of these qualifications. Any matter that involves my judgment suggests that I need to be patient and even submissive to others who do not share my judgment. To always insist on my judgment being followed is a sure sign of arrogance (note: elders are not to be arrogant!).

Bible Challenge Question

The Lord said, "I make you this day a fortified city, an iron pillar, and bronze walls..." To whom was He speaking?

The answer to this question is on the back page.