

SELECTION PROCESS FOR THE OFFICE OF ELDER AT RED BRIDGE CHURCH OF CHRIST

THE OFFICE OF ELDER

The main criteria for selecting elders, for determining their responsibilities, and for evaluating their qualifications, come from several passages in the New Testament, including I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. We believe these listings of qualifications are meant to be a guide for determining a man's character and way of life rather than to be a checklist, which if matched, guarantees qualification. We also believe the elders should comprise a compatible, functional group with each one being willing to submit to the will of the other elders as is appropriate for the good of the congregation.

Our expectations for elders are naturally geared to our view of the office itself. Since we perceive elders as being spiritual leaders and shepherds more than CEO's or administrators, the qualifications we seek will be shaped accordingly.

The Bible does not give an extensive listing of the duties of the eldership nor a specific selection process that we can use today. We take this to mean that there is freedom to determine the specifics of these general areas as seems best for the good of the congregation and that changes in these specifics may need to be made as new situations and needs present themselves. The following procedures for elder selection have been worked out with much prayer and a reliance upon God's word and His spirit; any changes are to be made by the eldership only after similar consideration.

The eldership is perceived as an office held by mature Christian men who exhibit a living faith, prayer life, and devotion to God; who have a godly character and a good reputation within the church, his family, his community, his workplace, etc.; and who possess wisdom and understanding that is based on an adequate knowledge of the Bible. The congregation seeks such men who, over time, have exhibited these basic characteristics in their lives of dedicated service to Christ and His church. The way for the congregation to designate and select such men is outlined in the Selection Process that follows.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

A. New Elders

New elders are to be sought no less than every two years. An Elder Selection Committee will be formed with a plurality of members selected from the congregation. This committee shall have a chairperson selected by the eldership and shall be made up of both men and women representing a cross-section of the membership. Each member of the congregation will be asked to submit the names of men whom they feel are qualified for consideration. The Committee will identify potential candidates by tabulating those who are nominated by the most members. The number of names to be considered may vary from time to time depending on the size of the congregation and the perceived number of new elders needed.

The Committee members will contact those men to determine if they desire to serve; those willing to serve must agree to submit to a background check (police records, history of bankruptcies, etc.). When the background checks have been completed, the Committee, as a group, will interview each potential candidate and his wife. After each interview, the Committee will meet again to determine whether the potential candidate should be recommended to the eldership.

After all interviews are completed, a final list of approved potential candidates will be submitted by the Committee to the eldership. The eldership will review this list, and if questions arise, they may confer with the Committee. The eldership reserves the right to remove any person's name from the list whom they believe is not qualified to serve as an elder. However, when these procedures are followed, it is expected that this will rarely be necessary.

The final list of approved candidates will then be put before the congregation. A minimum of one week will be allowed for the congregation to express any concerns or questions which they may have of the candidates.

At the designated time each member will be asked to turn in ballots indicating their decision for each candidate; the selections are "YES", "NO", and "DECLINE". The ballots will be tabulated by the Committee. To be affirmed, each candidate must receive "YES" decisions from no less than 80% of the decisions cast for that particular candidate ("DECLINES" are not included in the calculation). After the tabulation the results will be announced to the congregation. All candidates who are thus affirmed will be presented as elders to the congregation in a suitable ceremony, preferably on the Sunday following the submission of ballots.

B. Presently Serving and Returning Elders

After a new elder is affirmed by the congregation, he will serve four years, then must be reaffirmed by the congregation if he desires to continue serving as an elder. He and his wife will go before the Elder Selection Committee and the same procedures will apply for his reaffirmation as are used in the affirmation of a new elder, with the exception of a repeated background check. **Note: It is imperative that reaffirmations occur each year, unless there are fewer than four elders. With elders serving four years before being reaffirmed, by mathematical necessity 25% (on average) of the eldership will be due reaffirmation each year.**

C. Additional Considerations

Any elder who has served eight consecutive years shall be required to take a one-year sabbatical before continuing to serve as an elder. After completing the sabbatical he will be reaffirmed in the same way as an elder completing four years of service.

If for any reason an elder desires to seek reaffirmation by the congregation before completing four years of service, he has the right to do so. He may then serve four more years following reaffirmation unless a sabbatical would have been required following his present term. In no case shall an elder serve more than eight consecutive years without taking a one-year sabbatical.

If for any reason an elder feels that it is in the best interest of the congregation that he resign from the eldership, he may do so at any time. If at a later date he desires to serve again as an elder, he must go through the same steps as for any elder who is being reaffirmed.

If in a given year several candidates are affirmed and become elders, their four years of service will naturally be completed at the same time. If this results in an unusually large percentage of the eldership needing reaffirmation at the same time, a “staggered” schedule shall be utilized wherein one or more of these elders will be reaffirmed after three years and/or one or more reaffirmed after five years, as required to assure a more balanced number of reaffirmations each year. It will be up to the eldership to determine when such modifications to the schedule are needed, and to schedule the process accordingly.

September 15, 2008