

# ELDER & DEACON

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE BELIEVE



**LIFE  
COMMUNITY  
MINISTRIES**

# THE OFFICE OF ELDER

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE BELIEVE



## Biblical Basis

In Acts 14:23 we find the title Elder, which literally means an older one. One who is recognised as senior in understanding, experience and character. In 1 Tim 3:2 We find the title Overseer, sometimes translated superintendent or Bishop. These terms should be understood as different names for the same office. A good way for us to understand the role of an Elder is to think of him as a Father of the local church family. As churches were established in the book of Acts we see that Elders were appointed to oversee each congregation. See Acts 14:23. In 1 Timothy 5:17 we read “Let the Elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honour...” This idea of ‘ruling’ is not dictatorial but as a father who settles disputes and makes decisions on behalf of the family. Rule implies the idea of a guardian or protector rather than a king or dictator.

## Qualification for Elders

Paul makes it clear that Elders are to be people that are known for their good character, have proven their ability to lead well and are able to teach the word of God to his people. They should demonstrate that they are able to lead well by how they have led their own household. Eldership is to be honoured and not entered into lightly.

## **Elders in Life Community Churches**

There is no evidence of women Elders in the New Testament Church. There is debate in churches weather this means we should not have women elders today or weather this was due to the culture of the day. On weighing up the different arguments we have taken the decision the each Life Community Church should decide for themselves if they will allow women to serve as Elders.

**1 Timothy 3:2-7 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.**



# THE OFFICE OF DEACON

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**Hebrews 6:10 For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do.**

## **Biblical Basis**

In Acts 6:1-6 we find that the 12 apostles were being drawn into disputes and practical needs in the church that were distracting from the ministry Jesus had called them to. To help deal with this problem the apostles instructed the church to choose men from among their number that would be appointed to handle these needs. Most people accept that these men appointed in the Jerusalem church were the forerunners of what would later be called Deacons. In 1 Timothy 3:8-13, Paul instructs Timothy of what the qualification for a Deacon should be.

**1 Timothy 3:8-13. Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. Their wives likewise (or women likewise) must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.**

## **Qualification for Deacons**

Paul makes it clear that Deacons are to be both people of good moral standing and those that are committed to serving Christ, "holding to the mystery of the Faith". The appointing of Deacons should be done carefully and prayerfully and the individual should be observed first to see that they are suitable.

## **Deacons in Life Community Churches**

Life community churches have teams of Deacons that serve the church alongside the Elders. The deacons are given responsibility for much of the running of the church including various ministries, administering the church finances and providing practical care for members of the congregation.

The assistance that the deacons provide frees the Elders to focus more of their attention to prayer and the study of God's word. This partnership between the Elders and Deacons helps with the smooth running of the church.

