
**Ministry Description:
Elder**

Preamble

The Eldership group will play a vital part in the life of our church. They will, with wisdom, guide us through present challenges and further develop our culture.

Various scripture passages provide counsel on this subject:

*If anyone wants to provide leadership** to the church, good!*

But there are pre-conditions. A leader must be well-thought-of, committed to his wife, cool and collected, accessible and hospitable. He must know what he is talking about, not be overfond of wine, not pushy but gentle, not thin-skinned, not money-hungry. He must handle his own affairs well, attentive to his own children and having their respect. For if someone is unable to handle his own affairs, how can he take care of God's church. He must not be a new believer, lest the possibility go to his head and the Devil trip him up. Outsiders must think well of him, or else the Devil will figure out a way to lure him into his trap.

** Overseer / Elder

1 Tim 3: 1-7 MSG

The position of Elder is held with high esteem in the life of Narara Valley Baptist Church because it carries with it responsibility. At NVBC, the value of both female and male is recognised. Elders provide spiritual direction within the church and also its connected communities.

In order to keep the Eldership role vibrant, the content of this document should be periodically reviewed. Comments and enquiries regarding this content or governance matters should be directed to the Church Leadership Team.

The Role of the Eldership

The role of an Elder is an active one within the Eldership group (4 members plus the Senior Pastor). It is to provide nurture, oversight and direction of the church; that is, to actively 'watch'.

With the grace of God, the group of Elders will:

1. Invest time in their own spiritual growth

2. Actively watch and promptly respond to matters of spiritual health of the church
3. Be a place of support, collaboration and accountability for the leaders who report to the Eldership
4. Discern, cultivate and endorse both vision and strategic direction
5. Identify and develop our future leaders
6. Ensure compliance with legislative and other requirements
7. Provide 'bridging leadership' in the absence of a Senior Pastor

Personal Characteristics

Using the qualities spoken of in the scriptures as a guide, the expressions below have been developed to assist closer consideration and identify some of the particular characteristics being sought. (They are cross-referenced to Attachment 1)

Authenticity:

- Gentleness of Spirit ⁹
- Transparency in practice ¹³
- Able to see and speak reality ¹⁵
- Significant level of personal ownership ³

Maturity:

- Experience of life ⁶
- A balanced outlook ⁴
- The need to engage in growth ¹²
- Exercising mature emotional responsiveness ^{9, 10}

Perspectives:

- Honours the uniqueness of people ¹⁶
- Sound theological understandings ¹⁸
- Knows the sense of truth within teaching ¹⁵
- Sees forgiveness and grace as foundational ¹⁸

Contribution:

- Articulates well ⁷
- Has the ability to challenge ²
- Understands the need for collective thinking ⁸
- Takes initiative in order to bring clarity, change and development¹⁵

It is recognised these characteristics are ideals that provide direction for growth in an individual filling the role.

Role Requirements

Involvement:

The role of an Elder is both proactive and reflective by its very nature and they will make time available to fulfil the responsibilities. Elders will actively attend to the spiritual health of the church, yet at the same time recognise the importance of personal reflective times and of seeking God.

Estimated time commitment:

After the first 6 month settling in period, it is anticipated Elders would meet no less than four times per year. Outside of meetings, it is anticipated Elders would be serving at least 4 hours per month.

Term:

The term of an elder is 3 years. Elders may be re-appointed after a break. Initially elder appointments will conclude in an earlier staggered cycle in order to provide future continuity.

Nominations:

Nominations for Elders may be passed to Debbie Blain by completing a "Suggested Names For Elder/Church Board" form, by March 29th. These will be passed to the nominations selection panel.

Supplementary Information:

The following information is available on the church website - www.nvbc.info/new_leadership_structure.htm . Those without internet access are welcome to contact the church office for a copy of any of the material listed:

- Nomination Form
- Church Leadership Team
- Related Scripture References
- NVBC Organisational/Governance Chart
- Charter (Under construction)

Clarification & Enquiries

For further clarification, contact:

Maurice Wrightson (before 15th March) on: 0418 640 444

Owen McKay (between 15-22 March) on: 0408 446 598

Craig Corkill (after 22nd March) on: 0448 113 381

Appendix 1 - Biblical Criteria

The following criteria for Elders are summarised from 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9:

1. Above reproach – Elders will lead by example and demonstrate a lifestyle free of patterns of sin.
2. If Married - Elders will be devoted to their spouse. They will also demonstrate a healthy family life.
3. Temperate – Elders will be self-controlled, enslaved to nothing, free from excesses.
4. Prudent – Elders will be sober, sensible, wise, balanced in judgement, not given to quick, superficial decisions based on immature thinking.
5. Respectable – Elders will demonstrate a well-ordered life and honourable behaviour.
6. Hospitable – Elders will be unselfish with their personal resources. They will be willing to share blessings with others.
7. Able to Teach – Elders will be able to communicate truth and sound doctrine in a non-argumentative way.
8. Free from addictions – Elders will be free from addictions and willing to limit their liberty for the sake of others.
9. Not pugnacious or quick tempered – Elders will be gentle, patient, and able to exercise self-control in difficult situations.
10. Uncontentious – Elders will not be given to quarrelling or selfish argumentation.
11. Free from the love of money – Elders will not be stingy, greedy, or pre-occupied with amassing material things.
12. Not a new convert – Elders will not be new believers. They will have been Christians for long enough to demonstrate the reality of their conversion and depth of their spirituality.
13. Good reputation with outsiders – Elders will be well-respected by unbelievers and free from hypocrisy.
14. Not self-willed – Elders will not be stubborn, prone to force options on others, or abuse authority. They will be servants.
15. Loving what is good – Elders will desire the will of God in every decision.
16. Just – Elders will desire to be fair and impartial. Their judgement will be based on scriptural principle.
17. Devout – Elders will be devoted Christ followers seeking to be conformed to His image. They will be committed to prayer, worship, the study of Scripture, and the guarding of their own walk.
18. Holding fast to the faith – Elders will be stable in the faith, obedient to the Word of God, continually seeking to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.