

# Elders

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 07 June 2026

Preacher: Stephen Murray

[ 0 : 00 ] If you've got a Bible with you, you can go to the New Testament, to the book of 1 Timothy chapter 3.!

1 Timothy chapter 3, we're going to read just the first seven verses. The Apostle Paul writes this letter to a young pastor named Timothy in the church in Ephesus.

He says this in verse 1 of chapter 3. Here is a trustworthy saying. Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task.

Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.

He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?

[ 1 : 18 ] He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

This is the word of the Lord. Let's pray. Let's ask for God's help as we study this together. Gracious God, won't you have mercy on us as we come to your word?

Lord, won't you allow us to see into scripture this morning, to see your truth, and to be built up and equipped by your truth, to know you, to love you, to serve you.

Won't you show us your son Jesus and his love for us, and change us by what we see. We ask this all by the help of the Holy Spirit and for Christ's glory.

Amen. So we've come naturally to the end of a section of the book of Acts, and I'm going to be traveling to the U.S. I'm going to be preaching in three different churches over the next three weeks in the U.S.

[ 2 : 23 ] We're going to have three of our church planters. I think three of our church planters, yes. Three of our church planters are going to be here with us over the next three weeks preaching. And so it's kind of a natural place to end. Plus then we thought before I go, I wanted to, as old as we wanted to get this nomination process open.

So we opened that, and it'll run, like I said, for the next two weeks or the next three Sundays. This Sunday, the next two Sundays, you've got a chance to make those nominations. And then I thought, well, what a better thing to do then to actually talk about the subject and to preach so you go into this entire process knowing what it is that you're doing.

So today I want to talk about miserable, old, grumpy men. Talk about elders. That's, I think, in some ways the kind of vision maybe we have in our head when we hear that phrase, elders.

When we think traditionally of church elders, old men who growl at noisy children and give budget speeches. Maybe if you were in a certain denominational tradition, they were also the people who came around to your house and knocked on your door to ask you for your monthly tithe.

I know in some South African traditions you even had a special room in the house that was available for the elders when the elders came around to visit you. Today I want us to think biblically, though, about elders.

[ 3 : 43 ] Who are elders? What are they? What do they do? What's required of elders? Who should be an elder? And are they supposed to be grumpy old men? Is that part of the job description? Now there's some debate in churches about which offices still continue in the church today.

Because if you read your New Testament, you're going to see a lot of different titles for leaders. So you're going to read about apostles. You're going to read about prophets, pastors, bishops or

overseers.

That term is the one in the same term. Teachers. Evangelists. Deacons. And then even just the generic term leader. Now the question is, for all of us today, is well, is the church supposed to have all of those different offices in place today?

For example, are we still supposed to have apostles? Are we still supposed to have prophets? Now what I'm not going to do this morning is I'm not going to dive into the debates about the continuation or the lack thereof of the office of apostle or prophet.

There are nuanced, complicated discussions to be had there. That's sort of beyond the scope of where we're going. But I do want to say this. The two officers, and by office I mean individuals who hold some sort of public authority position within the church, ordained and appointed by the church.

[ 5 : 07 ] The two officers that get the clearest treatment about their sort of ongoing validity in the life of the local church are the officers of elder and deacon. So when Paul writes the pastoral epistles, that's 1 and 2 Timothy and the book of Titus, they call those the pastoral epistles.

Those books, more than any other letters in the New Testament, give us insight into the structure and the governance of local churches. In those books, he takes extended periods of time to delineate and describe those two particular officers, elder and deacon.

He never does that for apostles. He never does it for prophets or for evangelists. But he gives a lot of time and attention to the requirements for elders and for deacons. That's important.

When he addresses local churches, for example, when he addresses the church in Philippi, he opens his letter this way. He says, Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus.

Here's who he's writing to. To God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi together with the elders and the deacons. And he groups those two together. You find very similar grouping of the language elders and deacons in some of the very early 2nd century documents that we have just after the end of the writing of the New Testament.

[ 6 : 26 ] And so I think we're on pretty safe ground when we say that the two officers, the two ordinary and perpetual officers, as in they keep on going, the two ordinary and perpetual officers that should be in place in any local church today are those of elder and deacon.

You can debate about all the other ones, but we know we're supposed to have elders and deacons. Healthy biblical churches have elders and deacons. Now we'll come back to deacons probably later in the year when we need to nominate some deacons.

But today we're going to talk about elders. Why talk about elders? Besides the obvious fact that we need to elect some, but why else talk about elders? Well, you get to know more about the function of elders in the New Testament.

How they should function in Scripture and in the life of a church. You get to set your expectations as congregation members of how you should relate to elders.

How they should be relating to you. You get an understanding of what you should be looking for. This is obviously very pertinent to today in terms of what you're going to be nominating for when you nominate elders.

[ 7 : 35 ] And you get an understanding, I think, of what healthy leadership looks like. When you should be concerned about the leadership in front of you and raise concerns of when you should be happy with the leadership in front of you.

Perhaps most importantly, I think, and this is a big thing for us and maybe we don't speak about this enough. You get an understanding of what you should be praying for, for your elders. As they try and lead you in this particular calling.

And so with that in mind, here's where we're going to go this morning. We're going to do an overview of elders in the New Testament. And then I want us to narrow down on the character requirements of elders. So overview and then specifically the character requirements of elders. Here's the overview. There are four things I want to say about elders in the New Testament.

Number one, elders or bishops slash overseers, because that's one term.

Elders, bishops, and pastors are all one and the same thing. They're all one and the same thing. So you've got all these different terms in the New Testament.

[ 8 : 39 ] And the one question naturally arises is whether or not these terms describe one office or are they describing multiple offices? And I think when you put them side by side, you get your different passages out with these terms of reference, and you put them side by side and look at where they are, a very clear picture starts to emerge.

So go to our passage that we just read, 1 Timothy chapter 3. Here's verse 1. Paul says, Here is a trustworthy saying, Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task.

Now there Paul uses this word overseer. It's literally the word bishop. The Greek word is a word episkopos, where we get the language of Episcopalian churches from, or Episcopalian government ruled by bishops.

So overseer, bishop, one word. And he uses this word many, many times in the New Testament for leaders. Now you think, well, bishop and elder are those two different classes of leaders.

Well, here's Titus. Here's another one of the letters that are considered part of the pastoral epistles, where Paul has another long list setting out the requirements for elders.

[ 9 : 51 ] Very similar to the list that we just read in 1 Timothy 3. Here's Titus chapter 1 verse 5. Paul says, He says, Now there, Paul uses the word elder.

Literally in the Greek it's the word presbyter. That's where the word presbyterian comes from, governance by elders. He uses the word elder. And then he makes this list. And the list is basically the same as the list for overseers that you get back in 1 Timothy 3.

So at face value, it looks like he's talking about one and the same thing. But it's even clearer because in verse 7 of Titus 1, he switches mid-sentence from kind of referring to these leaders as elders, and he calls them overseers, bishops.

So he uses elder and bishop interchangeably in Titus 1. Now you see the same sort of interchangeability in the book of Acts. During his travel, Paul comes to the city in Ephesus, and he gathers all the church leaders together.

Acts 20 verse 17 says, That is, he sent for the presbyters. He said, presbyters, I want you to come.

[ 11 : 54 ] And in the rest of the chapter, he gives this kind of moving final address, knowing that he might never see these guys again. And it ends with this charge that he puts before the elders.

Verse 28, Keep watch of yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, he says. And there he uses that word bishop again.

So he basically says, You elders, keep watch over the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you bishops. That's the language. So you can see, I think, that elder and bishop are one and the same thing.

They are not two different things, contrary to what some other church traditions might believe. They are one and the same thing. Not two different classes of leader. But then there's a third term, actually, that I think is largely interchangeable with both elder and bishop, and that's the term pastor.

So in that final charge that Paul gives in Acts 20, he goes on and he says to these elders, these overseers, he says, Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

[ 13 : 00 ] So he talks about the task of an elder as being that of a shepherd. And that's pretty key because there's actually only one place in the New Testament where the office of pastor is mentioned, where the word pastor is used as an office, and that's in Ephesians chapter 4.

And there the original word is literally shepherd. A pastor is a shepherd. But here in Acts 20, what we have is we have Paul telling the elders to be shepherds of God's flock, pastor the congregation that they serve.

If you go to another New Testament author, Peter, you go to the book of 1 Peter chapter 5, you see a similar thing. Peter writes to the elders in the churches that he's addressing, and this is what he says.

He says, To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed. Be shepherds, that is be pastors of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them, not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be.

Not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve, not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd or the chief pastor appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

[ 14 : 24 ] So he says there, Elders, I want you to be shepherds. That is, I want you to be pastors. I want you to shepherd as under shepherds of the great shepherd, our Lord Jesus Christ.

So I think it's very, very clear. When you take all these texts and you take all the New Testament evidence and you put it next to each other, an elder is a bishop, is an overseer, is a pastor, is a shepherd.

They are all basically the same thing. They are all referring to this one singular office of elder. So that's the first thing I want you to think of as you think about elders in the New Testament. Number two, second thing, elders govern in plurality. Elders govern in plurality. So how many elders should there be in each local church?

One or many? When Paul arrives in Ephesus in Acts 20, he doesn't send for the bishop singular to come and meet with him.

[15:26] He calls for the elders, plural, of the church singular in Ephesus to come and meet with him. When Paul in the book of Titus says to Titus, hey, I want you to go and appoint elders in the churches in ancient Crete, he tells them to appoint elders, plural, in every town singular.

And remember, back in that stage, there's only one church in every single town. And so this is a consistent pattern you see all the way through the New Testament. Every time elders in local churches are mentioned, they're mentioned in the plural.

Groups of elders. The snapshots we get from the book of Acts in some of the early churches in Jerusalem. We saw this a few weeks ago in Antioch are governed by plurality leadership. By my count, there are about 17 verses in the New Testament that explicitly or implicitly demonstrate that plural eldership was the norm in the early church.

The idea of a single pastor or single elder rule or governance over a local church is just not in the New Testament. You don't find it there. You only find it later on in 3rd, 4th century documentation. Dan Wallace, who is a leading New Testament scholar, one of the brightest New Testament scholars around. I don't think he's a Presbyterian. I'm not actually sure what his tradition is, but I'm pretty sure he's not a Presbyterian.

[16:51] But he says this. He says, In fact, it's so strong that I have friends who are Anglican by conviction, that is, they operate in a system that is governance by bishops, which is different to this.

And even they would say to me, Yeah, you know what? You guys have probably got the evidence of the Bible on your side. We just do this because it's more pragmatic to order our churches this way. So the evidence is really, really strong for plurality of eldership.

Even if you look at the very earliest Christian documents written straight off in the New Testament, you find the same pattern of plurality leadership. So that's the second thing I want you to see. The New Testament churches were governed by a plurality of elders.

Third thing, there appears to be a distinction between two types of elders. So I think there's only one office, but there does appear to be a distinction between two types of elders.

So while there is clearly parity among elders and pastors and governances of local churches, and it really is a single office, there does seem to be a distinction. There's a point later in the book of 1 Timothy where Paul is discussing the possibility of remuneration for elders, and he makes this statement.

[18:21] So this is 1 Timothy 5, verse 17. He says, The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.

So it sounds from that text like there are two categories of elders. elders. All the elders govern, but some are specifically set aside for the work of preaching and teaching.

Now we know from that qualification list that we read right at the beginning in 1 Timothy 3, and we'll come back to it, that all elders need to be able to teach and defend the faith, but it does seem in the general movement of the New Testament that some of them are set aside especially for that ministry of preaching.

And so historically, Reformed and Presbyterian churches have distinguished between the minister who preaches the word and administers the sacrament, because the sacraments, the table and baptism, are the visible word of God preached to us.

So the minister who preaches the word and administers the sacraments, a distinction between the ministers and the elders who govern the church. Both the minister and the elders together govern with parity in terms of their responsibility for overseeing the church and the authority, but the minister is set aside and especially called and trained often as well to preach the word and administer the sacraments in a way that the other elders are not.

[19:47] In our church, as in most Presbyterian churches historically, we've kept this biblical historical distinction. So we have what we call teaching elders and ruling elders. That language of ruling comes from the old King James version of the Bible for the word for govern.

So what you would be electing today is not teaching elders. You're electing new ruling elders. If you need a new teaching elder, what you do is you form a call committee and you call a new teaching elder from our presbytery, from our local body that governs our churches.

What we're talking about today is electing ruling elders. Teaching elders often, not always, are generally more your staff, your paid elders, whereas ruling elders are usually lay elders representing the congregation.

And that distinction is really key because what it means is that when the elders gather together, whether that's in our session, which is our group of elders meeting for a local church, or in our presbytery, which is all of our elders in a region meeting together from our various churches, it means the lay person is always represented.

It's not just professional clergy getting together, professional ministers getting together. The lay person is always there voting on the decisions, the representatives that we as a congregation elected.

[ 21 : 02 ] So, that's the third thing I want you to see, that distinction between the two different types of elders. Fourth thing to see, alongside governing, the primary task of elders is to teach and defend the faith.

So, what do elders do? What do they primarily do? And I suppose at one level it's pretty implicit in the title overseer, that an elder gives governing oversight to the life of the church.

But then what does that look like? Are they basically like church CEOs, church managers? Are they administrators? What do they do? And the answer to that question comes when you look at the list of requirements for elders.

In our passage, 1 Timothy 3, or in that same list, similar list in Titus 1, when you look at those lists, what you'll notice is this, is that there's actually only one explicit skill that elders are to have.

There's the implicit skill that they should be able to govern, but there's only one explicit skill that they're supposed to have. This is in verse 2 of 1 Timothy 3. Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach.

[ 22 : 20 ] Able to teach. That's the only explicit skill listed. The skill of teaching. Not management skills.

Not marketing skills. Not vision casting skills. Not HR skills. Teaching skill. Now that doesn't mean you don't want elders who are moderately competent at all those other things, and that they don't need to do those other things while they do, and we do want moderately competent, in fact, hopefully more than moderately competent elders in several of those other areas.

But it does mean that they govern the church in a very particular way. That is, they govern by teaching the word. And that makes complete sense, because when you look at Scripture, particularly look at the when Jesus delegates his authority and he gives the keys of the kingdom to his apostles and to future leaders of the church, is that he governs by his word.

And so elders should govern by his word, not their own word, not anybody else's word, not the whim of the congregation, not their personal fancies, but by the word, Scripture. So when you look to elect elders, you're not looking for men with the best management skills in the world.

You certainly don't want them to be inept in that area, but that's not primarily what you're looking for. What you're looking for is, does he know his Bible? Does he have a good grasp of theology?

[ 23 : 47 ] And more than that, can he defend good biblical theology? And I say that because if you go over to the list in Titus, Paul expands on that skill of teaching.

In Titus 1 verse 9, he says, he must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

So he not only needs to be able to defend the faith, teach the faith, sorry, he needs to actually be able to defend the faith in the face of error. This is a constant theme in the New Testament where the apostles point out that people teaching false theology are going to rise up both from within and even outside the church.

And so elders need to be prepared to fight. They need to be prepared to defend the clear teachings of scripture against those false teachers. In Acts 20, then that final address when Paul is addressing the elders in Ephesus, he says this, he says, keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.

Be shepherds of the church of God which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock.

[ 25 : 03 ] Even from your own number, men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard. Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

He says, I know that wolves are going to come up. And that's actually exactly what happened in Ephesus. False teachers did rise up in Ephesus and did significant damage to the church and we know that because later Paul actually writes the letter we just read, 1 Timothy, in part to help his younger colleague, Timothy, deal with those false teachers, those false elders that have caused damage in the church in Ephesus.

That's why there's this detailed outline in 1 Timothy on what is required of an elder and that they have the skill of being able to teach and defend the word of God. Elders have to be able to defend the biblical gospel and biblical truth against attack.

I can't actually think of a time that's in some ways more needed than right now because of the advent of social media. Every single Christian right now, thanks to the algorithm, is getting thousands of theological voices coming at them all day, every single day.

and that must be an incredibly head-spinning experience, confusing experience, like who do I trust, who do I listen to? Because everybody sounds persuasive. If they weren't persuasive, they wouldn't be getting hits on their YouTube channel and they wouldn't be moving up the algorithm.

[ 26 : 34 ] So anybody can come along and sound relatively persuasive. And so navigating theology and what is good theology, what is bad theology today, has probably been harder now than it's ever been. And so we need godly elders who can defend the faith against all the error and the craziness that's out there.

So to sum up four things we see about elders in the New Testament. Number one, elders, bishops, overseers, pastors are all one in the same office. Number two, elders govern in plurality.

Number three, there appears to be a distinction between two types of elders, teaching elders and ruling elders. And the number four, elders govern primarily by teaching the word. So now you kind of know in broad brush strokes what you're looking for in your elders, biblically speaking.

What standard you should be holding them to. Whether you know your elders are doing a good job or not. What you'd expect from them, what you should be looking for when you elect elders, what you should pray for for your elders that they would serve faithfully in teaching and defending the gospel for you.

But there's one more thing we can say that's required of elders and this is our second point here. We can talk about character because that's what the Bible does. It speaks about character.

[ 27 : 57 ] Come back to 1 Timothy 3 and read from verse 2. Paul says, Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.

He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him. And he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?

He must not be a recent convert or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

Here's actually the very first thing you should notice about the requirements for elders as you read on the subject. All the requirements except for one are character requirements.

And we just saw that one exception. They must be able to teach but that's the only skill that's really listed there. The rest of the list is character, character, character, character, character, character, character.

[ 29 : 12 ] Bracketing the beginning and the end of that list is the requirement to be above reproach and have a good reputation with outsiders. So you see that? That is when you look at elders you should see integrity and consistency of character that even the outside world can look at and say he's a decent bloke.

Elders should be faithful in their marriages. In a world of broken marriages and sexual scandals elders should buck that trend with enduring love.

Faithfulness towards their wives. They should be temperate and self-controlled not losing their cool not flipping off the lid under the mildest provocation.

They should be hospitable opening their lives to others. The original word there for hospitable means to welcome in the outsider or the foreigner to befriend them to include them. They shouldn't be given to drunkenness. The original word there is something like one who looks longingly at wine that's what the word means. Now that doesn't mean that elders can't consume alcohol in moderation it means that they can't be dominated by alcohol to the point of over consumption or drunkenness.

[ 30 : 39 ] They shouldn't be violent or quarrelsome instead they should be gentle compassionate empathetic they shouldn't be lovers of money they shouldn't be consumed by greed or use their place as elders for financial gain.

I fail to see how the prosperity gospel missed that passage. It's pretty explicit there. They should manage their own homes well raising their children in a God honoring way.

There mustn't be recent converts which seems to be fairly practical. How can they be expected to govern and shepherd other people in their journey of faith if they're only just learning this journey of faith for the first time?

So you can see here it's character it's character it's character it's character it's character it's character. Now here's the most remarkable thing about this list and this is not my own insight I got this insight from the New Testament scholar Don Carson but here is the most fascinating most provocative most challenging remarkable thing about this list you ready? most remarkable thing about this list is how incredibly unremarkable it is. There's nothing special here these are all just basic character requirements that all Christians are called to in numerous other passages all over the Bible there's nothing special here this is ordinary Christian character the elders are not being asked to do something that you as ordinary Christians are not repeatedly being asked to do in the Bible and think about this an elder must manage his household well does that mean ordinary Christians can just let their household go to pot?

[ 32 : 43 ] an elder must not be given to drunkenness but ordinary Christians you can get smashed every single weekend you can get bubble lost every weekend this is just basic Christian character and that's the whole point an elder is to be an exemplar of Christian character the existence of the office of elder in the Bible is not just a challenge to those who would maybe sit here and aspire to the office of elder it is a challenge to every single one of you it's the challenge of basic Christianity this is what it looks like to live as a Christian it's a call to be above reproach it's the call to be gentle to grow in self-control to grow in hospitality to rid yourself of drunkenness and violence and quarrelsomeness it's a call to be Christ-like that's exactly what Peter actually says in the book of 1 Peter what he says to elders this is his this is what he says 1 Peter 5 be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care watching over them not because you must but because you are willing as God wants you to be not pursuing dishonest gain but eager to serve not lording it over those entrusted to you but being examples to the flock and when the chief shepherd appears you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away so elders as they shepherd are supposed to be examples to the flock he says but what examples are they then themselves following?

these shepherds what examples do they follow? well they follow the example of the chief shepherd our Lord Jesus Christ the challenge of eldership is the challenge of Christ-likeness that's what it is elders model Christ to the congregation so that the congregation in turn can display Christ-likeness you want to know what good shepherding looks like?

well you look at Christ look at the cross there you have all of this you have you have the one who is blameless above reproach taking on himself the sins of all of those who fail to live lives above reproach you and me look at Christ self-control as they hurl those insults at him he never retaliates in violence instead in very very gentle compassion he prays father forgive them for they do not know what they do but there at the cross we see the greatest ever act of hospitality our Lord welcomes the undeserving outsider in right into his family he doesn't just let them into his home for a dinner party he brings them into his family through his own shed blood he takes those who are his enemies and he makes them his friends he's our chief shepherd who fights off the wolves of sin and death by giving up his own life for the flock he's the true elder the true overseer the true head of the church we elders and congregation members alike we can only reflect his glorious grace that he's poured out in us that we take all of our faith and the way we respond to this salvation that we've received is by living a life that has that he set down for us that elders are expressly told to exemplify to the congregation

I suppose you can imagine as a pastor to prepare a sermon on the requirements of eldership it's quite personally challenging because you're just basically writing to yourself the whole time it's a convicting experience it's like scrutinizing your life under a microscope because you sit there and you pour over 1 Timothy 3 and you pour over Titus 1 and 1 Peter 5 you read all these requirements character requirements mainly and you're like well maybe I should resign am I this person can I do that can I be that person do I qualify for this and so a week like this of studying these sorts of things can be an experience of intense moral introspection but when you understand that those requirements are there for elders so that the elders might be exemplars for the congregation well then it means it means

I don't get to go through this introspection by myself you all get to go through it with me because it's just as much for you as it is for me it's just as much for you as it is for any person whose name you're going to write down and put in that little box at the back it's not for Phil for Sean for Trevor for Stephen it's for all of us to take our lives to some extent and put it under the microscope it's for all of us to be called to lives of living blamelessly and so because of that I'm so very very grateful for the chief shepherd the chief shepherd of the sheep who lays down his life to make his flock blameless only when we already know by faith that we have been made blameless through the life and the death and the resurrection of Jesus will we then have the power and the motivation to pursue this blameless living in this life whether as elders or as congregation members following the example of the elders cling to the chief shepherd and may we trust in him to guide us through this process let's pray our father our king won't you help us as a church as we sit and we reflect in your word and we look at what you what you require of elders won't you help us as a church to to move deeper and deeper into this

[ 39 : 09 ] Lord to elect men who would serve you who would display these character requirements who would teach your word defend your word faithfully but not just so that we can elect and then passively receive and sit on the outside but so that we can then be grown and strengthen ourselves in our faith and conform to these character requirements that you put forward here and so we're asking not just that a new group of men become elders but we're asking that you build the entire church up in godliness in Christ likeness that we would all come to see and savor our chief shepherd and become like him have that special mercy upon us as a church this morning we pray and we ask this for Christ's sake in his glory amen