

ELDERSHIP APPOINTMENT—Responsibility Summary

The Bible is clear that the role of a church Elder is not reduced to something you do; rather, it is someone you are. Eldership is a full-time calling and ongoing lifestyle, as opposed to merely a sporadic contribution made within the context of a busy and distracted life.

However, there are some more formal and practical responsibilities involved in the duties of Eldership that are helpful to understand before nominating or accepting a nomination for this position.

The following serves to paint a picture of what the more official duties of an Elder at The Gathering involve on a monthly basis, some of which an Elder candidate would likely already be engaged in.

A. Regular Meetings

3-5 hours/month

The Board of Elders meet on a monthly basis (digitally or in-person). It is in the context of these discussions that they provide their primary contribution of 'directing and protecting' the church. On the one hand they provide critical accountability to the operation of the ministry, particularly as it is led by our Lead Pastor. They serve a fiduciary function, ensuring our church finances are stewarded in a responsible and God-honouring way, and that in all facets of church life we are legally compliant. They input on strategic issues to ensure that our church's mission is being promoted consistently and effectively. And they promote God's heart and His biblical values in discussions of overall direction and health of the church, ensuring that our church is growing in both biblically orthodox and relationally unifying ways. Often times, the image of 'guardrails' is used to describe the Elders' function, because their review and input into church activity seeks to ensure that The Gathering stays on the path that God intends.

Also, it is possible for an additional "Emergency Meeting" to be called in the event of a crisis or larger concern.

B. Meeting Preparation and Homework

2-3 hours/month

Meetings and conversations require preparation—preliminary reading and reflecting on ideas in order to develop opinions and convictions on issues. In particular this involves the previewing of the monthly meeting agenda and related paperwork. In addition, there may be action items assigned to an Elder at a meeting, which would require attention in between meetings.

Also, Elders are encouraged to continuously develop their gifts and calling, which often involves attending conferences, completing homework and engaging in team-wide assigned readings. It is the thoughtful discernment fostered through these informal devotional and developmental times that enables Elders to fulfill the awesome responsibility of leading Christ's Body and Bride on His behalf—they give God the space in Elders' lives to speak and to lead.

C. Pastoral Contact

1-2 hours/month

Occasionally the Lead Pastor will want to connect one-on-one with an Elder outside of a regular board meeting or church function in order to discuss something in greater detail. Elders are encouraged to make themselves available to the Lead Pastor for these conversations.

D. Congregational Contact

8-12 hours/month

A key component in providing the accountability function that Elders perform is to maintain contact with people throughout the church. As church members themselves, Elders will be participating in aspects of church life such as Home Churches and Volunteer Ministry Teams where they can dialogue with people outside of the formal leadership structure (in addition to regular Sunday attendance).

As well, creating environments for comfortable discussion—especially in listening to people's feedback, ideas and concerns—is a vital function of a healthy Board of Elders. Not only does it communicate love and value to the congregation through exercising such hospitality, but it also ensures the accuracy and integrity of the reports they receive from the Lead Pastor—that what's being reported is in fact the experience of the ministry recipients themselves.

E. Prayer and Reflection and Homework

5-10 hours/month

Of all the formal time investments though, the single most critical involves making space—ideally on a daily basis—to personally and individually commune with and hear from God. Since Christ is the Head of His church, and since He's chosen to work through human leaders to do that, it is paramount for Elders to facilitate Christ's leadership through them by maintaining a close abiding relationship. Time invested into nurturing an Elders' own soul, as well as praying for and receiving God's wisdom and guidance, is essential in providing it to an Eldership discussion on His behalf.

Approximate Monthly Commitment:

20-30 hours/month

Once again, this inventory is not intended to reduce the full-time calling of an Elder down to a specific segment of time investment; rather, to illustrate practically some of how that full-time calling plays out on a monthly basis. Considering this, it is no surprise that Paul declares to Timothy, *“If someone aspires to be an Elder, they desire a noble task.”* Eldership is one the single most significant functions of responsibility in the entire Body of Christ, and deserves to be approached with a sober degree of seriousness—for the Kingdom’s sake!

Through this summary, we hope you can appreciate: *an Elder isn’t something you do; it’s someone you are.*