**New Life Elder Training**

**By Pastor Mark Jobe**

**Church Elder Definition:**

New Life Elders are men that have been appointed by a location pastor based on a) Character, b) Gifting and c) Calling. Before being appointed as a Church Elder each man will need to meet the qualifications as listed in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. We consider the Elder and his wife (Elder Couples) as called together to serve in this ministry.

**A. Qualifications of an Elder**

I Timothy 3 and Titus 1

1. Blameless - Blameless, as the steward of God
2. Husband of one wife - Husband of one wife
3. Vigilant, sober of good behavior - Sober, just, holy, temperate
4. Given to hospitality - A lover of hospitality, a lover of good men
5. Apt to teach - Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, That he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince (convict) the gainsayers
6. Not given to wine, no - not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine,

Striker, patient, not a brawler not angry, not given to wine, no strike

1. Not greedy of filthy lucre, - Not given to filthy lucre

Not covetous

1. Ruling well his own house, - Having faithful children not accused

of riot or unruly having his children in subjection with all gravity

1. Not a novice - Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught . . . elders in every city
2. A good report of them which - n/a are without

**Elder Qualifications in simplified form:**

1. Above reproach
2. Husband of one wife
3. Temperate (self-controlled)
4. Prudent
5. Respectable
6. Hospitable
7. Able to teach
8. Not addicted to any controlling substance (wine)
9. Not self-willed
10. Not quick-tempered
11. Not violent
12. Not contentious
13. Gentle
14. Free from the love of money
15. Manages his household well
16. A good reputation with those outside the church
17. Loves what is good
18. Just
19. Devout
20. Not a new con

**B. General Focus of Elder Teams:**

**The THREE MAIN THINGS:**

1. ***Shepherd the Flock (****The idea of tending the flock; teaching, watching over and instruction)*
2. ***Exercise Oversight*** *(To look after: Making sure that the church is healthy and on mission- requires raising leaders and clarifying mission and vision)*
3. ***Lead by Example*** *(godliness, character, marriage and family)*

*1 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: 2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. 5 Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”* ***1 Peter 5:1-5***

**C. Specific Responsibilities of Elder Teams:**

1. **Elders help to settle disagreements in the church.**

Act 15:1-2 points to the fact that Elders were involved in resolving disputes among arguing factions of the church. The Elders took decisive action to end the dispute.

1. **Elders anoint with oil and pray for the sick.**

*"Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord"* [**James 5:14**](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/James%205.14)

1. **Elders instruct and give spiritual oversight the flock.**

*"I exhort the elders who are among you, I being also an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Feed the flock of God among you, taking the oversight, not by compulsion, but willingly; nor for base gain, but readily; nor as lording it over those allotted to you by God, but becoming examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a never-fading crown of glory****”*** [***1 Peter 5:1-4***](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Peter%205.1-4)

1. **Elders watch out for the spiritual life of the flock.**

*"Yield to those leading you, and be submissive, for they watch for your souls, as those who must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you****"*** [***Hebrews 13:17***](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Hebrews%2013.17)

1. **Elders spend time in prayer and teaching the word.**

*"And the Twelve called near the multitude of the disciples and said, ‘It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word’****”*** [***Acts 6:2-4***](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%206.2-4)

**D. Practical Guidelines for Elder Teams:**

**a) Practical questions the Elder Team will ask regularly:**

* What is God doing and how should we be responding?
* Who is doing well that we need to commend, encourage and resource?
* What situations raise red flags that need our attention and intervention?

**b) Practical guidelines for an Elder Team:**

* Frequency of Meeting: once a month for about two hours
* Elder Team size: No less than three and no more than seven
* Tenure: Serve one year at a time with re-commitment option at the end of each year.
* Expectation: to be an extension of the pastoral ministry especially as it relates to dealing with people issues.

**c) Practical reminders for the Elder Team:**

* "Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, for you know that we who teach shall be judged with greater strictness" [**James 3:1**](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/James%203.1)
* This is a trustworthy saying: "If someone aspires to be an elder, he desires an honorable position." **1 Timothy 3:1**

**Note:** New Life is a rapidly growing and expanding ministry. The structures and organization that serve well at one season and size may become obsolete with expansion. We expect the structure to constantly be changing to meet the demands of ministering to more people.

However, the qualifications and responsibilities of elders are stated in Scripture and not subject to change. These remain fixed and permanent qualifications.

**New Life Leadership Structure**

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New Life is strategically organized as a multi-site, multi-congregational church. Each congregation/location is led by a pastoral couple that gives oversight to a particular New Life congregation/location. Each location pastor is asked to build an elder team and develop a ministry team that can assist in giving spiritual oversight and ministry leadership to the congregation/location.

Each Location Pastor forms part of a broader all church pastoral team that works together to shape a spiritually healthy church distributed in multiple communities. Not every New Life pastor shares equal oversight or spiritual responsibility. But each pastor, depending on their role, exercises spiritual oversight over a community of people and lay leaders at New Life.

**New Life Leadership Philosophy**

1. **Biblical Leadership:** New Life believes that Jesus Christ is the head of the church and that the foundation for the spiritual leadership of the church should follow Biblical patterns and principles. We believe that the fiduciary leadership commonly known in other organizations as “Board of Directors/Legal Board” should be held by Pastor/Elders that meet the biblical qualifications (Titus 1:5-9, 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and 1 Peter 5:1-4).
2. **Appointed Leadership:** Consistent with patterns in the New Testament we believe that new spiritual leaders should be appointed by existing called and qualified leaders. We do not appoint leaders through an electoral process, majority vote or congregational rule.
3. **Team Leadership:** New Life embraces a team approach to leadership as modelled in the New Testament church. The different teams will carry different degrees of spiritual responsibility for the well-being and protection of the church. We also acknowledge that consistent with leadership patterns in Scripture each leadership team has a team leader that carries greater authority and responsibility for the direction of the team.
4. **Servant Leadership:** New Life holds that spiritual leaders are stewards of the church that belongs to Jesus Christ and therefore embrace a servanthood approach to leadership. The wellbeing and protection of the church should always be placed above personal gain or interest.

**New Life Leadership Structure**

## Legal Board (formerly Directional Team)

The Legal Board (formerly Directional Team) shall be composed of seasoned, qualified pastoral leaders that have a proven track record in spiritual leadership and appointed by members of the Legal Board. The Legal Board will oversee the legal, financial as well as federal and state compliance matters for religious non-for-profit organizations.

## Lead Pastoral Team

New Life shall have a Senior Pastor, Lead Pastor, Lead Strategic Pastor, and Lead Coaching Pastor, as its senior pastoral leaders (collectively “Lead Pastoral Team”). Lead Pastoral Team may designate other leaders from time to time at its discretion.

**The Senior Pastor** shall help coach and give oversight to the Lead Pastoral Team and speak into the overall vision and direction of New Life.

**The Lead Pastor** shall lead and direct the Lead Pastoral Team and give general oversight to the Pastoral Team in spiritual matters, pastoral leadership and ministry direction.

**The Lead Strategic Pastor** shall help coordinate, equip, and align the Pastoral Team to function together.

**The Lead Coaching Pastor** shall be a “coach to the coaches” and as a seasoned pastor take responsibility to provide leadership, support, problem solving and coaching to other pastors as needed.

The Lead Pastor shall report to the Senior Pastor and the Lead Pastor’s salary will be determined and approved by the financial audit team.

The Lead Pastoral Team including Lead Strategic Pastor and Lead Coaching Pastor shall report to the Lead Pastor.

In the event that the Senior Pastor cannot fulfill his role, the Lead Pastor will do so. In the event the Lead Pastor, Lead Strategic Pastor, or Lead Coaching Pastor cannot fulfill their respective roles, the Legal Board may appoint such as persons as it deems appropriate and advisable for these positions.

**Regional Structure**

Our locations are organized geographically by region (e.g. north, south, suburban) to foster greater collaboration in the areas of church planting, compassion ministry, and community outreach. Regions also provide training, support, and resources for ministry leaders as well as organize special events to build unity across the region (e.g. youth, young adults, marriage).

**BTC Pastoral Coaches Team (Break Through Ceilings)**

The BTC Pastoral Coaches are appointed by the Lead Pastoral Team and BTC Pastoral Coaches to help coach and oversee location pastors. This group of pastors will function as a pastoral support and management team. Each BTC coach will oversee approximately 5 location pastors. This group is responsible to oversee the health and well-being of the location pastoral couples and help locations break through ceilings.

The BTC Pastoral Coaches will work in conjunction with the Lead Pastoral Team to clarify and implement vision, discern best ministry practices, manage the health of New Life locations and appoint and transition pastors.

**Pastoral Team**

New Life’s Pastoral Team consists of all New Life pastors. Each location pastor will be responsible for the spiritual health and leadership of their location. They will work together with called, qualified and appointed elder team to oversee a New Life location/congregation. Each New Life pastor shall be appointed and ordained with the recommendation of a location pastor and the approval of the Pastoral Coaches team.

Location pastors will be invited at key times to participate and give input to all church ministry decisions and practices, but will not be responsible for all church oversight unless appointed to the BTC Coaches team or Lead Pastoral team.

**Location Elder Team**

New Life Elders are men that have been appointed by a location pastor based on a) Character, b) Gifting and c) Calling. Before being appointed as a Church Elder each man will need to meet the qualifications as listed in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. We consider the Elder and his wife to be an elder couple, and have an expectation that the elder couple will be involved together in ministry at a location level.

**Ministry Leaders:**

Ministry leaders are men and women that oversee particular ministries related to a New Life location. Ministries such as Ushers, Greeters, Children’s ministry, Assimilation, Worship Team, Men’s small groups, Women’s small groups, Youth Soul Purpose, Recovery Groups, Prayer ministry and various other teams will be lead by these ministry leaders. Ministry Leaders will oversee and give leadership to their particular ministry but differ in the scope of responsibility from the role of elders.

**Ministry Staff**

Ministry staff are individuals that work at or oversee areas of ministry related to the church through a paid position. Staff usually are able to devote more time to ministry programs and administrative details. The ministry Staff work under the supervision of the Pastoral leadership in fulfilling their responsibilities.

**Note: Organizational Change**

New Life’s leadership philosophy and commitment to Biblical patterns of leadership structure will remain the same. The organizational structure, however, will be periodically reviewed and evaluated to ensure effectiveness as we grow. Structure will be subject to periodic change. These changes will be led by the Lead Pastoral Team and BTC Pastoral Coaches Team.