

Elder Profile for IBC Budapest

Overview and Background

According to the New Testament, elders are responsible for the primary leadership and oversight of a church. The function and role of an elder is well summarized by Alexander Strauch in his book [Biblical Eldership](#): “Elders lead the church [[1 Tim 5:17](#); [Titus 1:7](#); [1 Peter 5:1–2](#)], teach and preach the Word [[1 Timothy 3:2](#); [2 Timothy 4:2](#); [Titus 1:9](#)], protect the church from false teachers [[Acts 20:17, 28–31](#)], exhort and admonish the saints in sound doctrine [[1 Timothy 4:13](#); [2 Timothy 3:13–17](#); [Titus 1:9](#)], visit the sick and pray [[James 5:14](#); [Acts 6:4](#)], and judge doctrinal issues [[Acts 15:6](#)]. In biblical terminology, elders shepherd, oversee, lead, and care for the local church” (16). “Elder” and “pastor” are not two different offices.

We believe the Bible teaches that a team of biblically qualified elders is to lead the local church- men who are equal in authority, serving as under-shepherds to the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ. This aligns with the IBCB Constitution and enables the correct functioning of the church both spiritually and organizationally while allowing ministry to happen naturally and organically with and between every member of the congregation.

Selection and Removal Process

Elder Selection: When a new elder is required, nominations for appointment can be made by any church member for consideration by the elders. A recommendation for a new elder will be made to the church for endorsement by church members.

All those who aspire to leadership within the church as an elder or ministry leader must meet the following candidacy requirements:

1. Submission of the Leadership Questionnaire shall be made to the elders.
2. All candidates shall attend a leadership class to acquaint themselves with the church’s Statement of Faith, Constitution, history and ministry with particular attention given to the church’s Statement of Faith.
3. All candidates shall meet with at least two elders to give their personal testimony of their salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and to acknowledge their agreement with the Statement of Faith, Constitution, the Elder Profile and ministry of the church following the ‘biblical eldership’ model for the ministry of the church.
4. Upon unanimous approval by the elders and significant support of the congregation, candidates shall be approved for service.
5. All requests for leadership will be handled in the manner described above, except for the senior pastor and his wife, or associate staff and their spouses, who will be appointed by the elders and endorsed by the congregation for their respective ministry roles as described below.
6. As an elder the senior pastor of this church shall be a male baptized believer who is in agreement with the Statement of Faith, recommended by a selection committee that has been appointed by the elders and endorsed by the church members. Terms and conditions shall be determined in writing at the time of appointment and subject to periodic review.

Here is an outline of the process for new elders:

1. Open a period of nominations from the congregation at least once/year and if a current elder is leaving the board for any reason.
2. An elder approaches the nominee to confirm his availability and then share the responsibilities of the role.
3. The nominee then completes the IBCB Leadership Questionnaire and reviews the Elder Profile document.

4. The nominee would then be interviewed by the elders (at least 2) while obtaining their agreement to the Elder Profile, Constitution and Statement of Faith.
5. Presentation of candidate to the congregation with an opportunity for him to share his testimony in a church service setting.
6. 2-week window for the congregation to affirm this candidate in their role as an elder. Church members should be encouraged to share their perspective on the strengths and gifts this elder would bring to this role.
7. A show of approval by the congregation standing in support of the nominee (or a vote, in some cases) would then precede their appointment and dedication in a church service.

Elder Removal: It is envisaged that the removal of a church elder would only be for reasons of not adhering to the Statement of Faith or conduct incompatible with a position of leadership within the church. If such a course of action is deemed appropriate, discussions should take place between the parties in an effort to amicably resolve the situation. If this is not possible, a majority of elders will approach an appropriate intermediary from the International Baptist Convention to provide spiritual oversight and direction for reconciliation or removal from service.

Additional notes:

1. Elders (other than the teaching elder/pastor and associates) have a tenure of 3 years with a required 1 year sabbatical after the 2nd term (after 6 years of service) providing that there are sufficient elders for this to take place. If an elder were to be absent for an extended time, they become "inactive" but, their tenure will continue. He may be reactivated by the current elders upon his return.
2. Removal of elders based on non-performance is regarded as a task of the Elder Board and should be considered in future revisions to the Constitution.
3. Nominations to the Elder Board for additional members should take place prior to the conclusion of an elder's term, or as needed for adequate leadership, with an explanation of the process to the congregation upon opening a period for nominations. This should also take place when the number of elders is expected to fall below three.

Characteristics of Biblical Eldership

Plurality God's Word speaks of elders in the plural who share in the overall governance of the church.

Shared Although elders may function differently according to their gifting, all are needed to provide overall responsibility and authority to lead the church.

Biblically Qualified Scripture lays out explicit teaching on elder qualification (or characteristics) for those who shepherd the local church. See [1 Timothy 4:13](#); [2 Timothy 3:13–17](#); [Titus 1:9](#). Elders will be spiritual men who aim not to lord it over anyone, but to be servants of the people of God for their upbuilding in the joy of faith. Elders should have (at the least) the following qualifications:

- Aspiration - one who desires to serve in this ministry, not under compulsion
- Irreproachability - one with a high reputation and no cause for others to think ill
- A husband of one wife - one who models a life of purity and, if married, is faithful to his wife
- Temperate - one who is a master of his own appetites and not given to indulgence
- Sensible, prudent and reasonable - one with mental clarity and critical thinking skills
- Respectable, honorable - one who does not easily offend others or speak inappropriately
- Hospitable - one who is welcoming and makes others to feel at ease in their presence, communicating that they are valued and valuable
- Skilled in teaching - one who has a clear and deep understanding of Scripture and can both defend and apply it to specific situations and discussions

- Gentle, peaceable - one who is not divisive but helpful and encouraging in speech and attitude
- Not a lover of money - one who values the work of God's Kingdom above everything else including his own comfort. Financial concerns do not overrule good ministry decisions but only help to guide them.
- Leader of a well-ordered household - one who is respected, loved and obeyed in his own home (and whose wife and marriage is also admirable, if married)
- A mature believer - one who is established spiritually to avoid the tendency of pride and ambition of those in leadership

The Office & Work The office of elder is to be distinguished from the spiritual gift of pastor or pastor-teacher (which an elder may or may not have). Any who serve with the gift of pastor or pastor-teacher do so under the authority of the elders. (Further, the work of elder is to be distinguished also from the work of deacon.)

1. The elders shall appoint and remove such ministry leaders as may be necessary to carry out the ministries and vision of the church. The elders shall be responsible for ensuring coordination of the ministries and providing appropriate leadership, support and encouragement.
2. The elders have responsibility for spiritual oversight but often must make a decision on ministry roles or activities based on their spiritual responsibility while in communication with the ministry leaders.
3. The goal of the Elder Board is to defer ministry related decisions and tasks to the ministry leaders while ensuring that the mission and vision of the church is carried out in every area of ministry under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
4. An elder and ministry leader should not be combined in one person. This excludes the roles of the teaching elder (or pastor) and any associate pastor or pastors, who are also elected to the Elder Board and have specific ministry roles. Other elders may be required at times to fill a ministry leadership role temporarily or when there is no other leader available. Elders are expected to be engaged in ministry within the church, which is part of their responsibility as followers of Christ and as part of the local church fellowship.

The Vocational Elder The elder who rules, teaches or preaches well is worthy of financial support (i.e. "double honor" see 1 Tim. 5:17-18), so that he may serve the church more fully. Such an individual serves under the authority of the elders as a whole and does not supplant but supplements the elders' pastoral ministry.

5. Senior Pastor/Teaching Elder: He shall take initiative in providing and promoting leadership, preaching and teaching the Gospel, evangelism, shepherding and discipling members, reaching out to prospective members and administering the ordinances. He will be an ex-officio member of church committees as assigned by the elders.
6. Associate Pastor(s): As a vocational elder, all that applies to senior pastor/teaching elder applies to the associate pastor(s) with the exception that the associate pastor(s) will only initiate leadership over his assigned ministry segment or other ministries and responsibilities as assigned by the elders.

Submitted by the Elder Board of IBCB
2 November, 2016
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NOTE: This document includes elements of the current version of the IBCB Constitution with some procedural modifications. It is not our intent to modify the Constitution at this point, but some elements may indeed impact future revisions to the Constitution. The current elder board believes that this document reflects the current needs of IBCB, does not contradict the letter or intent of the Constitution and incorporates the policy recommendations of the Governance Committee which was established by the Transitional Team of 2016.

Source Documents:

IBCB Constitution: <http://ibcbudapest.org/filerequest/1784>

<http://biblicaleldership.com>

<http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/biblical-eldership-part-1a#Qualifications>

<http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-is-the-role-of-an-elder>

The Works Committee Interim Report (of Nov. 2, 2016) with further communications and modifications (available upon request)