

Eldership

at Crossroads International Church Amsterdam

***Here is a trustworthy saying:
Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task.
(I Timothy 3:1, TNIV)***



This document has been written, revised and approved by subsequent elder boards from 2007 onwards. It describes what we believe an elder is and does and how elders should be selected and operate in the specific context of Crossroads International Church Amsterdam.

I. Qualifications for Eldership at Crossroads

Biblical Qualifications

Our understanding of eldership is shaped by a number of key scriptures, three of which address directly the question of qualifications:

Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one 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 with proper 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.

(I Timothy 3:2-7)

An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless--not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. 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.

(Titus 1:6-9)

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers--not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, 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.

(I Peter 5:1-4)

From these passages, our shortlist of elder qualifications is:

- Respectability; having a good reputation within and beyond the church
- Godly lifestyle (sexual purity, not materialistic)
- Self-control; temperate; not quick tempered
- Hospitable nature
- Teachability and ability to teach; well-grounded in scripture
- Gentleness; not overbearing; open to correction; not given to violence or quarrels
- Commitment to family life (one whose family relationships are submitted to God)
- If married, faithfulness in marriage
- Maturity as a follower of Christ (disciplined), not a recent convert
- Servanthood; having a pastoral character and the heart of a shepherd
- Honesty, integrity, uprightness
- Setting the right priorities in life

Additional Qualifications for a 'Crossroads elder'

1. An elder must be enthusiastic about the mission, vision, and values of Crossroads.
2. An elder should have a gifting or competency in leadership.
3. An elder should be a change agent, or at least be open to change and transition.

4. An elder should have a passion and calling for the Church.
5. An elder should be comfortable with a consensus method of decision-making.
6. An elder should give financially on a consistent basis to Crossroads.
7. An elder should be rooted in God's Word, theologically balanced and able to live with diversity on non-essentials.

Gender

In the late 1990s Crossroads went through a process of considering female eldership. The results of this process can be found on the Crossroads website in a document titled "Crossroads International Church. Our Position Regarding Men and Women in Leadership". As the document states, we do believe in female elders. At the same time, also out of sensitivity to our very diverse community, we have retained the view that the roles of Senior Pastor and Chair of the Elder Board are male. The chair of the board is selected from the elder board by the elder board.

II General Functions of Elders

1. Leading (1 Tim. 5:17, *directing the affairs of the church* – which is not the same as management)
2. Spiritual discernment and strategic direction (Acts 15)
3. Preaching and teaching (guarding God's word) (1 Tim. 5:17, *those whose work is preaching and teaching*)
4. Praying (James 5:14, *Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church...*)
5. Shepherding (including disciplining) (1 Pet. 5:2, *Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care...*)
6. Building community (modeling a Christ-like character) (1 Pet. 5:3, *being examples to the flock; Ephesians 4:11, Equipping the saints*)
7. Encouraging and mentoring staff, ministry leaders, and volunteers

III. Responsibilities of Elders at Crossroads

VISION and LEADERSHIP

- With senior pastor, seek God in prayer for the vision He is calling the church to for the future.
- Affirm and re-direct overall vision over the course of time.
- Communicate vision and model leadership.

PLANNING

- Frame strategic planning process
- Agree on annual budget and income strategy

PASTORING and SHEPHERDING

- Ensure the spiritual well-being of the church (ensuring sound doctrine)
- Mentor staff and other leaders in spiritual growth, discernment, lifestyle (marriage and sexuality issues) and ministry activities
- Help staff and ministry leaders apprentice emerging leaders

POLICY

- Articulate positions on key Scriptural matters, set policy for church matters (e.g. church discipline, finance, issues related to marriage and sexuality)
- Propose changes in the constitution and by-laws of the church to the members when needed, based on new policy decisions

STAFFING

- Select, oversee, develop and review senior pastor
- Approve selection of management team personnel, based on recommendations from senior pastor and executive pastor
- Biannually review the functioning of staff with senior pastor and executive pastor

OPERATIONS/ADMINISTRATION

- Support senior pastor and executive pastor in delivering annual operational plan
- Mentor staff and ministry leaders in carrying out ministry
- Ensure overall fiscal responsibility

BOARD CHAIR

- The chairman of the board is responsible for working with the senior pastor to lead the board as a small group and community. The chairman is the primary protector of the lead pastor and the other pastoral staff. He is also the primary communicator for the board on congregation-wide matters.

IV. "Core Elders"

As an international church it continues to be critical to our effectiveness to have a stable core of leaders in the church. For this reason we seek to have four or five "core" elders who plan to be in The Netherlands for five years or more. Included in this core is the lead pastor. In addition to these core elders we seek others who are able to commit at least two years as elder. The preferred size of the elder board is 9 or 10 members with a good balance in giftings and strength while reflecting the diversity of the church.

V. Elder Selection Process

1. Members always have the possibility to recommend members to the board for the board. The elders can also take the initiative to make their need for new elders known to the community.
2. Recommendations of elder candidates from the congregation, from current elders, and/or from the staff are reviewed regularly by the elders. The elder board considers and prays over the recommendations and determines whom to approach as candidates. Someone from the board has an initial meeting with the person to check his or her willingness to enter the process. Whenever a 'yes' comes, this document is sent for reading and reflection.
3. Potential candidates meet with two elders. They lay out the vision, values, Crossroads' philosophy of ministry as well as expectations and opportunities for the potential candidate. Also the candidate's position in theological and life style issues is discussed and references are asked. The candidate is asked to prayerfully consider entering the selection process. Both sides take at least two weeks to think and pray.
4. When both sides indicate to want to move forward, the candidate is interviewed by the whole Elder Board. If married the candidate brings his/her spouse. The Board will also answer any questions the candidate may have and look at whether

or not the candidate is a good "fit" looking at the elder board current make up, giftings and strengths. After that both sides again take at least two weeks to think and pray.

5. When both sides indicate to want to move forward, the candidate is interviewed by a representative team of people from the church. Two elders are part of this meeting as well. The candidate is asked specific questions about:
 - Their personal spiritual life
 - Their calling in ministry
 - Their philosophy of ministry
 - Their spiritual gifts
 - Theological views
 - Their views on how Crossroads should move forward

Within two weeks after the meeting the interview team gives their impressions of and thoughts about the candidate to the elder board.

6. The elders will prayerfully consider the feedback from the interview team. If concerns have been raised these will be discussed. If necessary these will be processed with the candidate. If all lights are green the elders will make the decision to present the candidate to the whole church and inform the candidate accordingly.
7. The elder candidacy is then announced to the community during all services on two consecutive Sundays and via other communication channels. Every member has the right to submit to the elders a concern regarding the candidacy of a nominee within one week following the last announcement of the candidacy. The candidate then begins to participate as a Board member on a three-month trial basis, and members of the church can share any questions or concerns about the candidate with current Board members during this time. The candidate will not participate in any public elder functions such as occur on a Sunday morning. The candidate may participate in smaller meetings with individuals along with another elder. At the beginning of the elder candidacy an on-boarding program will be set up by the current elders for the elder candidate.
8. At the end of the three month period the elders will make a final decision on whether to install the candidate as an elder. If the decision is made to install the candidate then this will be announced during two consecutive Sundays during all services prior to the installation.
9. The candidate is installed as an Elder on a Sunday morning during all the services.

VI. Board meetings

The Elder Board meets on average two times per month. At present these meetings are held on Monday evenings. Meeting days and times are reviewed regularly. The following is a typical outline of an elder meeting.

18:30-19:30 Time of prayer in the prayer room for those who can make it
19:30-20:00 Devotional, personal updates and prayer for each other and the church
20:00-20:30 Updates on ministries
20:30-21:30 Strategic issues: new ministries, problems
21:30-22:00 Any other business

NOTE that if an elder cannot make it for prayer at 1830 hours he/she can come just for the meeting beginning at 1930. Also note that the meeting may need to stretch to 22:30 or even 23:00 once in a while to cover all necessary issues.

Elders normally meet in the ministry centre in Amstelveen. In addition to the twice-monthly meetings, the elders and their families try to get together socially from time to time, and there are two 'elder retreats' each year (one in the Spring (March or April) and one in the Fall (October)).

From time to time key staff members may be invited to attend a board meeting.

VII. Current Elders

Please see our website for a list of our current elders.
