

## Delhi Bible Fellowship Statement Paper on Elders

According to the Bible, the local church is to be led by a team of elders (also called in the Bible ‘overseers’, ‘pastors’, and ‘bishops’). For a fuller explanation of the Bible’s teaching on this, please consult the paper ‘DBF Leadership: The ministry of elders and deacons’.

**Qualifications:** The elders of each DBF congregation shall be comprised of a plurality of men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in I Timothy 3: 1–7 and Titus 1: 6–9. Ideally a majority of the eldership shall be composed of church members not in the regular pay of the church, and no elder shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure.

The key passages here are **1 Timothy 3:1-7** (where the word ‘overseer’ in the NIV means ‘elder’) and **Titus 1:6-9**. From those passages it is clear that elders need to be men (not women) who have the *right character* and the *right abilities*.

In terms of the right character, we’re looking for men who:

- are self-controlled in the areas of:
  - temper (‘not violent’).
  - alcohol (‘not given to drunkenness’).
  - sex (‘the husband of but one wife’ - that doesn’t mean he has to be married).
  - speech (‘not quarrelsome’).
  - money (‘not a lover of money’).
- manage their own families well.
- are not recent converts.
- have a good reputation with outsiders

**Responsibilities:** The elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the congregation to which they are appointed. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6: 1–6 and I Peter 5: 1–4, the elders shall devote their time to praying together, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God’s flock.

The elders shall take particular responsibility to:

- examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions.
- oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees.
- conduct worship services and administer the ordinances of baptism and communion.
- equip the membership for the work of the ministry.
- encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error.
- oversee the process of church discipline.
- coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church for world missions.
- ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions.
- take primary responsibility in for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff members in their congregation. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to another staff member.

The office of elder is non-transferrable between DBF congregations.

**Term:** The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as elders. This recognition shall be reaffirmed by the church every three years. After an elder, other than the senior or associate pastor(s), has served two consecutive three-year terms, he may only be elected to the office of elder after at least one year.

An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by his being asked to step down. Any two church members with reason to believe that an elder should be asked to step down should express such concern in writing to the elders. Any such action shall be taken only after they have followed the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18: 15–17 and I Timothy 5: 17–21.

**Accountability:** Elders are accountable ultimately to the Lord Jesus, the chief shepherd, but under Him are also accountable both to the team of elders and the congregation.

**Appointment:** The existing elders shall nominate other elders in accordance with the qualifications and responsibilities outlined above. The congregation shall then have the opportunity to approve the nominations put forward by the eldership through three weeks of public notice in the church services.

**Commitment:** I, \_\_\_\_\_ agree in dependence upon God to fulfill the above responsibilities and duties of an elder.

Date of commencement of term:

Signature:

PLEASE SIGN ALL THREE COPIES: RETAIN THE BOTTOM COPY FOR YOURSELF AND RETURN THE TOP TWO COPIES TO THE PASTOR.

**Delhi Bible Fellowship**  
**Statement Paper on Deacons & Deaconesses**

According to the Bible, the local church is served by a team of deacons and deaconesses. The office of deacon is described in I Timothy 3: 8–13 and Acts 6: 1–7. The church shall recognize, men and women who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service. These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons and deaconesses. For a fuller explanation of the Bible’s teaching on this, please consult the paper ‘DBF Leadership – ministry of elders and deacons’.

**Qualifications:** Deacons and deaconesses must satisfy the qualifications for the office of deacon/deaconess set forth in I Timothy 3: 8-13 and Acts 6: 1-7. No deacon shall hold the office of elder during his tenure.

**Term:** Deacons and deaconesses shall be elected to one term of three years. This recognition may be reaffirmed by the church for service for a further three years. After a deacons or deaconess has served two consecutive three-year terms, he or she may only be elected to the office of deacon after at least one year. A deacons/deaconess’s term of office may be terminated by resignation or by their being asked to step down by the eldership.

**Responsibilities:** Deacons and deaconesses shall:

- care for the temporal needs of members.
- attend to the logistics for public worship.
- encourage and support those able to help others and those with gifts of administration.
- with the approval of the elders, present to the church an itemized budget every year.

The deacons and deaconesses, with the agreement of the elders, may establish unpaid administrative positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church.

**Appointment:** The elders shall nominate to the congregation the names of people who they have identified as suitable for this office. The congregation shall then have the opportunity to approve the nominations put forward by the eldership through three weeks of public notice in the church services.

**Accountability:** Deacons and deaconesses are accountable ultimately to the Lord Jesus, the chief shepherd, but under Him are also accountable both to the team of elders and the congregation.

**Commitment:** I, \_\_\_\_\_ agree in dependence upon God to fulfill the above responsibilities and duties of a deacon/deaconess.

Date of commencement of term:

Signature:

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