

I. Terminology

- A. **The Threefold Office:** The New Testament delineates two qualified offices for churches. One of those is the office of deacon. The other is an office to which the Bible refers by three separate names—shepherd (pastor), elder (presbyter), and overseer (bishop). Many passages indicate that these titles refer to the same office. Two passages are the most striking.
1. In 1 Peter 5:1-2, Peter exhorts the **elders** of the church to **shepherd** the flock of God by being their **overseer**.
 2. In Acts 20:28, Paul is addressing the **elders** of the church at Ephesus (see verse 17). He tells them that the Holy Spirit has made them **overseers** over the flock, which they are to **shepherd**.
- B. **Pastor:** As a noun, this word appears only once in the New Testament, in Ephesians 4:11, but the concept appears frequently throughout the New Testament. Literally, the word means “shepherd.” In Ephesians 4:11, Paul links the concept of the *pastor* with the word *teacher*, but Christians have generally associated the term *pastor* with the idea of caregiving.
- C. **Elder:** This is the title favored by the New Testament for the office. It literally means “old man.” The culture of the early church afforded great respect to the elderly and accredited them with wisdom. People turned to the elders for teaching and decision-making.
- D. **Overseer:** The term *overseer* appears a little less frequently than *elder*, but much more frequently than *pastor*. This is a term of authority. It empowers the bearer as the supervisor of the spiritual lives of his charges.
- E. **Preferred Term:** Modern Christianity prefers the title least preferred by the Bible, the word *pastor*. Regardless of whether this is good or bad, to facilitate readability this job description will use the term *pastor* to imply the threefold office of elder/overseer/pastor.

II. **Character:** Who the pastor is.

- A. Persons eligible to serve as pastor.
1. The pastor must be a Christian—someone who has experienced repentance from personal sin in conjunction with personal faith toward Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and who has given public acknowledgment of his salvation. This document lists several

characteristics and qualifications of the pastor. The list endeavors to address every quality explicitly required of the pastor; however, it is important to note that the Bible sets high standards for all Christians. Although the interests of brevity prevent the delineation of each facet of Christian responsibility in this document, it is important to note the following: This job description assumes that pastors are bound by everything the Bible addresses to all Christians.

2. Subsequent to his experience of saving faith, the pastor must have experienced Christian growth sufficient in quality and duration to distinguish him as one who is not a new believer. 1 Timothy 3:6 and 1 Timothy 5:22 both warn of the dangers both to the individual and the church when an immature Christian is thrust into this office. This is not to place a lower limit upon biological age (1 Timothy 4:12), but rather upon spiritual maturity.
3. In 1 Timothy 5:22, among several other places, the Bible indicates that individual Christians become eligible to serve as a pastor through ordination by a church (i.e., the laying on of hands). The pastor is to be a person who has been ordained to the gospel ministry.
4. The office of pastor is limited to men because of its role of proclamation and its authority within the church. 1 Corinthians 14:34-36 explicitly commanded this restriction of the church in Corinth, and 1 Timothy 2:9-15 explains why, tying this restriction to God's commands in Genesis 3:16.
5. The pastor must not be a person who has failed in his home life.
 - i) 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6 both specify that the pastor must be the husband of one wife. This requirement does not exclude those who have not yet married, but does prohibit one who has divorced and remarried from taking up the office. 1 Timothy 3:5 links the ability to build family relationships with the ability to build church relationships; therefore, the man whose marital relationship has ended in divorce is not qualified to lead the church.
 - ii) 1 Timothy 3:4-5 and Titus 1:6 indicate that the pastor's children should be under control and should be believers. Of course, children must reach a proper age to profess faith in Christ, and no children are perfect (just as no pastors are perfect). Nevertheless, children are a reflection upon their parents, and 1 Timothy 3:5 rightly questions how a person can succeed in leading the spiritual development of an

entire church if unable to succeed in the same function in his home. The pastor's children must provide an example of his abilities to persuade patiently, educate effectively, lead people to Christ, and spur believers on to good works.

6. The pastor must not be a person with a bad reputation. 1 Timothy 3:2 encourages the church to select as pastor a person who is "above reproach." Titus 1:6 uses exactly the same language.

B. Virtues the pastor should embody in his life

1. **Abstinence from Intoxication.** The Bible uses two different words to repeat this requirement. These two different words portray two important reasons for the restriction.
 - i) **Because intoxication impairs judgment.** 1 Timothy 3:2 requires that the pastor be temperate. Literally, the word *temperate* means "wine-less." The same book does encourage Timothy to drink wine (1 Timothy 5:23), but only for medicinal purposes and in small amounts. Titus 1:7 requires that the pastor not be a person who is a drunkard. This word also implies a sober attitude in the pastor (i.e., an attitude that thinks and behaves with the level-headedness that wine destroys). While the pastor is free to use legitimate medication as his health necessitates, he must not use alcohol or any other intoxicating substance for social or recreational purposes. To do so deprives the church of the sound judgment in leadership that she desperately needs from her pastor.
 - ii) **Because intoxication causes aggressive behavior.** In 1 Timothy 3:3, Paul used a word that implies a drunken brawler. Alcohol and other intoxicating substances greatly increase the aggressiveness, abusiveness, and violence of our society. No church needs a mean drunk as a pastor. The pastor must abstain from the social or recreational use of intoxicating substances.
2. **Wisdom.** 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:8 both require that the pastor be a person with a sound mind (this is the literal meaning of the word). Although the New American Standard translation renders the two verses with different words (*prudent* in 1 Timothy 3:2 and *sensible* in Titus 1:8), they are the same word in Greek. While the church responds in sympathy and compassion toward persons with mental illness, the grave and demanding nature of the pastorate requires that those who hold this office possess unimpaired mental faculties.

3. **Respectability.** 1 Timothy 3:2 calls upon the pastor to be a person who is well-behaved and well-mannered. The word denotes a person who knows how to say and to do the right thing at the right time. The pastor must not be a boor. Titus 1:6 says that he must not be a person who is even accused of living a life of dissipation (literally, “unredeemed-ness”) or rebellion (literally, “out of control”). He must live a respectable life.
4. **Hospitality.** This word from 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:8 literally means “a lover of strangers.” The pastor often must host guests on the church’s behalf, and must do so with grace and aplomb.
5. **Aptitude for Teaching.** 1 Timothy 3:2 simply states that the pastor must possess an aptitude for teaching. Several other passages go into great detail to define this aptitude and to describe its importance.
 - i) The aptitude for teaching includes a personal commitment to sound doctrine. Titus 1:8 requires the pastor to “[hold] fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.” As the chief doctrinal leader of the congregation, the pastor must uphold biblical teaching. Specifically, he must both affirm and teach forcefully those doctrines cardinal to the Christian faith. As the chief doctrinal leader of a Baptist church, he should adhere personally and in his professional ministry to the church’s statement of faith.
 - ii) Titus 1:8 further mandates the pastor to develop sound doctrine in the body of the church. His preaching and teaching ministry should reflect the church’s statement of faith not only by refraining from contradiction but by wholeheartedly embracing it and encouraging its adoption.
 - iii) Titus 1:8 calls upon the pastor to be the leader in the defense of church doctrine. As such, the pastor must keep abreast of challenges to sound doctrine both within the church and without. He must devote himself to adequate study to refute those challenges positively in all Christian charity.
 - iv) Ephesians 4:11 links the teaching function to the shepherding function of the office of pastor. The pastor must conduct his teaching ministry with an eye toward the best interests of the flock, remembering that teaching is the

primary act of pastoral care (1 Timothy 4:6-16, especially v. 16)

- v) Teaching and preaching must find its ground in the biblical text. The pastor must emphasize the Bible in his preaching and teaching—an emphasis that includes the public reading of the scriptures (1 Timothy 4:13).
 - vi) The pastor should work hard at preaching and teaching—the Bible has placed preaching and teaching in a prominent place vis-à-vis the examination of a pastor’s effectiveness, and the pastor neglects them at his own peril (1 Timothy 5:17-18).
6. **Non-Violence.** Both 1 Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:7 remind us that pastors cannot be *pugnacious* (i.e., people who resort to violence to solve their problems). In the later part of 1 Timothy 3:3, the text describes the pastor as *uncontentious*, a word that literally means “unarmed.” Titus 1:7 states that the pastor must not be *quick-tempered*. The pastor must only resort to physical violence after all peaceful avenues have been exhausted, and even then only in those circumstances grave enough to warrant it (e.g., the prevention of a crime). Rather, the pastor must prefer more moderate modes of response toward others, as specified by the adjective *gentle* in 1 Timothy 3:3.
7. **Absence of Greed.** This is among the most insistent requirements for pastors. 1 Timothy 3:3 requires that the pastor be “free from the love of money.” Titus 1:7 warns not to have a pastor who is “fond of sordid gain.” 1 Peter 5:2 challenges the pastor to serve “not for sordid gain.” Pastors do not serve as one might serve in a secular job, arranging to provide a measured amount of service for a measured monetary reward. Pastoral service occurs not under the compulsion of the requirements for a paycheck, but as the voluntary gift of the minister. The pastor gives it eagerly without consideration of the financial gifts he will or will not receive in return (1 Peter 5:2). While the Bible demands that congregations give generously to their pastors (1 Timothy 5:17-18), the pastor should never allow the sin of the congregation to lead him into sin of his own.
8. **Selflessness.** Pastors must not be dictators over personal empires. Titus 1:7 describes the pastor as one who is “not self-willed.” Literally, this means “not one who pleases himself.” The pastor must be willing to sacrifice personal desires for the good of the church’s ministry. The Bible reminds us that “Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her” (Ephesians 5:25). Pastors are

to follow the same example. Rather than pleasing the self, pastors are to be self-controlled (Titus 1:8). God has not placed the pastor in a position of domineering authority (1 Peter 5:3).

9. **Righteousness.** The pastor must remain firmly committed to right living. Titus 1:8 describes the pastor both as a person who is “just” and as someone who “[loves] what is good.” Although the pragmatic details of church administration and religious politics and the sometimes tremendous stresses of the position may bring great temptation upon the pastor, he must not succumb to dishonesty, immorality, malice, or any other form of unrighteousness. He must strive to provide an example for the flock (1 Peter 5:3). His holiness and righteousness provide the source of his ministry and the credibility of his message.

III. Activities: What the pastor does.

A. Activities related to the shepherd function.

1. The pastor provides ministry to the sick.
 - i) By praying for the healing of the sick (James 5:14). *Note: Although James calls upon the elders to perform this task, the modern interpretation of these terms necessitates that this function appear under the pastoral function.*
 - ii) By visiting the hospitalized.
 - iii) By visiting the disabled and bedfast.
2. The pastor provides ministry to the bereaved.
 - i) By reminding them of God’s promised victory over death for those who are His.
 - ii) By being available to minister at funerals and memorial services.
 - iii) By hosting families of the deceased at church-provided meals.
 - iv) By ministering to survivors in the aftermath of the death and burial events while they work through the process of grief.
3. The pastor provides ministry to the poor.

- i) By working with the Farmersville Ministerial Alliance to provide short-term crisis financial assistance.
 - ii) By assisting the poor to find suitable employment if available.
 - iii) By referring the poor to auxiliary agencies for specialized assistance whenever appropriate.
 - iv) By leading the congregation to take and distribute love offerings in exceptional circumstances.
 - 4. The pastor provides ministry to those in emotional or relational crisis.
 - i) By assisting members of the congregation in the reconciliation of disputes.
 - ii) By providing, to the level of his qualification, pastoral advice of a distinctively Christian and theological nature for people in emotional and relational crisis.
 - iii) By referring to more highly qualified counselors those in need of assistance beyond the pastor's qualification to provide it.
 - iv) By preaching and teaching the Bible in its entirety, including those portions that address God's solution to the problems people face in their relationships and in their personal lives.
 - 5. The pastor coordinates intercessory prayer ministry.
 - i) By preparing and maintaining a comprehensive list of current prayer needs.
 - ii) By providing to the congregation a list of those prayer needs which may appropriately appear in public (subject to the restraints of discretion and confidentiality).
 - iii) By leading the church to pray for those in need.
- B. Activities related to the elder function.
- 1. The pastor proclaims the gospel to the lost.
 - i) Within our church field.

- a) By being the leader and chief participant of the church's evangelistic outreach efforts.
- b) By taking personal opportunities to offer verbal evangelistic witnesses.
- c) By developing and implementing the church's total outreach strategy to present every individual within the church field with the opportunity to hear the gospel, accept Christ, grow as a Christian, and serve Him in a local church.
- d) By initiating innovative outreach methods by direct mail, special events, media, telecommunications, and other methods as they become available.
- e) By preaching evangelistic messages that call the lost to salvation.
- f) By coordinating special evangelistic emphases.
- ii) Beyond our church field.
 - a) By leading the church to participate with other Baptists who share our core values in the funding and staffing of worldwide missions.
 - b) By leading the church to participate in mission trips around the country and the world.
 - c) By cultivating awareness of missions needs throughout the world.

2. The pastor disciples the flock.

- i) By pursuing personal continuing education and spiritual development in order to be prepared to disciple others.
- ii) By preaching sermons that have the Bible as their content and the equipping of the saints as their goal.
- iii) By teaching, from time to time, on a variety of topics as directed by the Holy Spirit to address issues of biblical knowledge, theology, practical Christian living, Baptist doctrine, external challenges (whether from cults and world religions or from secular philosophies), and the Christian heritage.

- iv) By working with other members of the staff to facilitate discipleship for the diverse congregation of believers.
 - v) By leading the Sunday School to disciple believers.
 - vi) By guiding the church to provide discipleship classes on a regular basis for the equipping of the saints.
 - vii) By entering into relationships of personal discipleship with members of the congregation.
3. The leading pastor leads the church in worship.
- i) By maintaining a discipline of personal worship.
 - ii) By working with the Associate Pastor/Minister of Music to prepare services of worship that facilitate the worship of the congregation.
 - iii) By attending the worship service, participating in the worship service, and leading the congregation to worship in teamwork with the Associate Pastor/Minister of Music.
4. The pastor guides the church in discovering and pursuing God's will for the congregation.
- i) By prayerfully seeking God's will for the church on his own.
 - ii) By coordinating the work of church committees to discover and implement God's plan for the congregation at large. This includes the direction of existing committees and the initiative to start new groups and structures to meet needs as they arise.
 - iii) By attending meetings of the Deacons and addressing them from time to time regarding God's will for the congregation.
 - iv) By presiding over church business meetings and conferences, leading the congregation to make decisions under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and maintaining peace and order in the body.
 - v) By preaching sermons that challenge the congregation to embrace and follow God's will for the congregation and their individual lives.

- C. Activities related to the overseer function.
1. The pastor provides spiritual accountability to the flock.
 - i) By maintaining a direct awareness of the spiritual health of the congregation and developing plans to address spiritual needs.
 - ii) By preaching and teaching with forceful conviction messages that hold Christians accountable for their actions.
 - iii) By maintaining an awareness of the spiritual health of the individual members of the congregation and working to hold them accountable through exhortation, fellowship, and church discipline.
 - iv) By developing and implementing within the congregation structures that provide for accountability among the church membership.
 2. The pastor provides ministry oversight for associate pastors in the flock.
 - i) By participating in the selection and calling of pastoral staff.
 - ii) By working with the Personnel Committee in the evaluation of staff.
 - iii) By responding to staff questions and facilitating staff work.
 - iv) By conducting regular staff meetings to coordinate the work of the pastoral staff.
 - v) By assigning additional duties to the staff as needed.
 3. The pastor directs and coordinates the overall ministry of the church.
 - i) By overseeing the work of associate pastors as described above.
 - ii) By supervising the work of non-pastoral staff in the discharge of their duties.
 4. Oversight equals accountability; therefore, the leading pastor must remember that he is eternally accountable to God for his work in the congregation.