

Elder Selection Process



Knoxville TN

Introduction:

The local church is the hope of humankind. It is the primary means by which God has chosen to bring glory to himself through redeeming, growing, and unleashing disciples. As the church is Christ's bride—Christ's body—there is no more important task than to properly select those men who will lead this organization composed of those for whom Christ gave his life, whom he has entrusted with his great commission. Like any other local church, the success or failure of Providence in accomplishing his mission will in many ways depend on her leadership. This is why it is critical for the body to prayerfully select men called of God, using great discernment as to their calling, competence, and character. We pray for his help in this.

If you have received the honor of being nominated by members of Providence Church to be a candidate for eldership, we the current elders, ask that you examine the following pages with prayerful consideration. Please know that we are praying for you as you do. May God give all of us wisdom as we seek his will.

Table of Contents

- Elder Structure Page 3
This document serves as a guide and includes a job description of sorts to clearly define what the church expects each individual elder of Providence Church to do, as well as the expectations of the elder body as a whole. Each elder is held accountable by the others to serve according to the priorities and responsibilities spelled out herein.

- Elder Selection Process and Evaluation Page 5
There are necessary biblical and practical qualifications for eldership at Providence Church. In order to be fair and thorough, this process is a way we practice “due diligence” in order to help us ascertain God’s will regarding those who will lead this local church at this time. It also helps the candidate discern his own calling and fitness for serving.
 - Process Description
 - Biblical Qualifications Worksheet
 - Elder Candidate interview Form

- Assessment Tools Page 19
It is important to know how a person fits on the team. God makes everyone unique and wants to use our gifts, talents, personality, experiences, passions, and marriages to edify his church and build his kingdom. As members of his body, it is beneficial to utilize some tools that might help us know how we can best serve within our strengths.
 - Personality Type Limited Assessment
 - Spiritual Gift(s) Assessment
 - Marriage Health Indicator

- Appendix Page 25
Providence Church’s Constitution and Bylaws are the governing documents of our church. Among other things, they contain our official statements and structure. Elders need to be familiar with these documents.



Elder Structure (approved 5/2/2018)

In addition to the biblical qualifications and guidelines stated in our bylaws,¹ these internal guidelines have been adopted by our elders to serve as an aid for us to serve and lead the church with clarity and efficiency. These replace any previous elders' abstracts of responsibilities or other documents guiding elders' roles and structure.

1. Elders will serve a four-year term, and then rotate off for one year. Elders must be invited back on with majority vote of the existing elders. There are no term limits.
2. Meetings should be a priority and meeting times should be adhered to. Minutes must be kept. Basic Roberts Rules of Order for smaller meetings should be followed. In smaller meetings, like an elders meeting, often only four motions are used:
 - To introduce (motion. "I make a motion to...")
 - To change a motion (amend. "I make a motion to change or amend...")
 - To adopt (accept a report without discussion. "I make a motion to adopt this...")
 - To adjourn (end the meeting. "I make a motion to adjourn...")

This allows everyone to have a say in the discussions, share ideas, and to pass items in an orderly manner. Parliamentary procedure should not be used to prevent discussion of important issues. Board and committee chairpersons or other leaders may want to review these before conducting a meeting.²
3. A traditional agenda should be followed:
 - Chairman calls meeting to order.
 - Prayer requests & prayer (10-15 minutes)
 - Minutes and reports approved (no vote required unless objection, can be communicated via email)
 - Old business (things tabled or postponed from previous meetings, or things left on the agenda from previous meetings that were not addressed). These items should be already printed in the agenda.
 - New business. Most pressing items should be first. Time goals for each item should be respected.
 - Adjourn.
4. Specific roles and responsibilities (clarifying the general responsibilities outlined in the bylaws³):
 - Governance of church policies and polity.
 - Hold accountable staff elder(s), fellow elders, and staff who report directly to elders (e.g. XM).
 - Vision refinement, adoption, and protection.
 - Budget preparation, presentation to congregation, and accountability.
 - Approval of ministry staff hiring & firing (unless extreme circumstances require immediate action).
 - Active participation in the life and leadership of the church, including involvement in small groups.
 - Must maintain a circumspect life and adhere to the church covenant as examples to the believers.
5. Discipline must be exercised by all elders regarding what issues are taken up by elders, what issues are discussed in the elders meetings and what issues require elders opinions. Staff need to be free to operate within certain clear parameters. Staff members need to feel free to ask for advice, without feeling that the elders (or an elder) will veto or commandeer.

¹ Section 4,A,8,b: "The Biblical responsibilities outlined for the elders are: 1) To shepherd the flock of God (1 Peter 5:2; Acts 20:20; 1 Timothy 3:5); 2) To be an example to the flock, not lording it over those allotted to their charge (1 Peter 5:3); 3) To teach and exhort, thereby equipping the flock for ministry (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9; Ephesians 4:12); 4) To refute those who contradict truth (Titus 1:9,11); 5) To manage the church in their role as overseers (1 Timothy 3:5, 5:17); and 6) To pray for the sick (James 5:14-15)." See the appendix for the complete constitution and bylaws of Providence Church.

² <http://www.pastoralcareinc.com/resources/robert-rules-of-order/>

6. Elders must appoint officers; vis., chairman and secretary. The chairman should call meetings and have a process for determining agendas in conjunction with EM and staff elder(s). The secretary must keep minutes and keep up with policies and decisions. These should be selected the first meeting of each year.
7. Elders must be willing to hear, inquire about, and vote on issues in a reasonable amount of time. This means the elders should read the agenda and ask questions before meetings if possible, be prayerful, and allow decisions to be made by the majority without feeling slighted if in the minority.



Elder Selection Process

Elder Selection

At Providence Church, there are three phases in the elder selection process: nomination, examination, and confirmation. The information below will describe the practical steps that are taken in each phase.

1. Nomination Phase

In every instance of adding new men to our elder body, there has been unanimous agreement for the need to do so, followed by a season of praying for God's wisdom and guidance in identifying potential elder candidates before nominations are requested.

STEP 1:

The existing elders open up nominations from the active membership of Providence Church. They ask the church to consider men according to:

- Their known character qualities with respect to those given in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
- Their track record of faithfulness in ministry.
- Their gifting, talents, and abilities to shepherd and provide oversight for the church according to the spiritual needs at the time of their selection.

STEP 2:

The existing elders discuss and pray about each potential candidate on the list. The goal is to reach unanimous agreement on the candidate(s) to be challenged to eldership. Then the examination phase begins.

2. Examination Phase

STEP 3:

One or more elders are assigned the ministry of making initial contact with the nominee to inform him of his nomination, and to determine his desire to become an elder.

STEP 4:

If the nominee aspires to become an elder, he will complete the Biblical Qualifications Worksheet, and the elder Candidate Interview Form (both included in this packet) and is asked to complete them in a specified time period (typically about two weeks). If married, he and his wife are asked to work through the evaluation process together. A date for a follow-up interview is also set at this time. The nominee is also to complete a personality assessment, a spiritual gifts survey, and a marriage health indicator.

STEP 5:

During the follow-up interview, each biblical qualification and the responses of the candidate (and his wife) are carefully reviewed. In this meeting, the interviewing elders also seek to clarify any remaining issues that are presented and determine whether the process should continue and/or whether the elder nominee wants to continue the process.

STEP 6:

If there is no need for further consideration, a meeting is scheduled for the elder candidate (and his wife) with the entire elder board. The purpose of this step is to confirm the candidate and answer any remaining questions. If all are in agreement, a date for introducing the candidate to the church is established and the elder board proceeds to the final phase in the selection process.

3. Confirmation Phase

STEP 7:

The candidate is introduced to the church during a worship service in the following manner:

- The candidate and his wife are introduced by an elder who explains the process to this point.
- The candidate shares briefly about his spiritual life.
- The church member's role in confirming the candidate is explained (i.e., the ballot procedure).

STEP 8:

After the introduction of nominated elders to the church, Active members are given two weeks to prayerfully consider the nominations and turn in a ballot confirming the new elder(s). During this two-week period active members are encouraged to ask any questions they have about the potential elders.

Sample Elder Election Ballot
TO THE ELDERS OF PROVIDENCE CHURCH:
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I am willing to follow the leadership of (Candidate's Name).
<input type="checkbox"/> No, I am not willing to follow the leadership of (Candidate's Name). (If "no", please give your phone # so an elder can contact you regarding your thoughts.)
Phone: _____
Print Name: _____ Date: _____
Signature of member: _____

STEP 9:

If there are no concerns noted by the church membership regarding the elder candidate that warrant further investigation, the newly chosen elder will be announced to the church and an ordination ceremony for the newly selected elder will be scheduled to take place in a future worship service.

Ordination is simply the "laying on of hands" ceremony whereby the existing elders, representing the Providence Church body, "set apart" the newly chosen elder(s) for service in this important role. The new elder(s) are now a part of the elder body.



Biblical Qualification Worksheet

The biblical qualifications for eldership are indeed high. Consistency, not perfection, is the thrust of the biblical qualifications. Through the indwelling Spirit's ministry, these character qualities can and must be present in each elder's life.

This personal worksheet will help you think through these issues. The purpose of this tool is to promote an honest self-evaluation to confirm a man's spiritual aspiration to serve (I Tim. 3:1), and to evaluate his personal character as a follower of Jesus Christ according to the standards prescribed in the New Testament.

Some responses on this worksheet are simple yes/no propositions; others involve a scale of 1-to-10 (10 being highest). For example, circling the number 5 on this scale would mean a man is average in the prescribed character quality. It is important that you provide very honest responses.

Suggested Steps

1. Read each character trait carefully with your mate. (If not married, find a close personal friend who will provide honest spiritual feedback.)
2. Discuss each qualification and its application to your life.
3. Write brief explanations of your responses in the personal comments column. Also, write down any questions that need clarification.
4. Confirm in prayer and final evaluation with your spouse or friend that you should continue to pursue eldership.
5. Report this in your follow-up interview with the elder who challenged you to consider this ministry.

Biblical Qualifications	Personal Comments
<p>“above reproach” “blameless” (I Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:6-7) Requires that an elder be a model of integrity. He has a blameless reputation and no accusation made against his character can stand.</p> <p>Yes ____ No ____</p>	
<p>“faithful to his wife” (I Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:6) Requires that an elder be fully committed and faithful to his wife. He is without adulterous relationships or attitudes. This does not prohibit a single man from serving.</p> <p>Yes ____ No ____</p>	
<p>“temperate” (I Tim. 3:2) Requires that an elder be even-tempered, level-headed and calm under pressure.</p> <p>Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p>	
<p>“self-controlled” (I Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:8) Requires that an elder be under control, reasonable and clear minded.</p> <p>Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p>	
<p>“respectable” “one who loves what is good, upright, holy and disciplined” (I Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:8) Requires that an elder be of good behavior leading an orderly and well-balanced life. Given the choice he does what is right, even when it’s hard.</p> <p>Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p>	
<p>“hospitable” [lit. “loves strangers”] (I Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:8) Requires that an elder open his heart and his home to others. Implies that an elder is a friend to those who might be considered “outsiders” including unbelievers, and desires to lead them to Christ.</p> <p>Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p>	

<p>“able to teach” and “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” (I Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:9) Requires that an elder embrace the Scriptures as God’s truth, have a knowledge of sound doctrine, and a desire to share what he knows with others.</p> <p>Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p>	
<p>“not addicted to wine” [lit. “not beside wine”] (I Tim. 3:3, Titus 1:7) Requires that an elder not be given to drunkenness or be controlled by a habit of drinking. Implies that he is not known at all as a drinker.</p> <p>Yes ____ No ____</p>	
<p>“Not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome” “not quick-tempered...not violent” (I Tim. 3:3, Titus 1:7) Requires that an elder not be inclined to fight, but is fair, kind, yielding, and patient. He does not use abusive words and is not violent. He does not allow himself to be controlled by anger.</p> <p>Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p>	
<p>“not a lover of money” “not pursuing dishonest gain” (I Tim. 3:3, Titus 1:7) Requires that an elder not be controlled by the pursuit of money or amassing material possessions.</p> <p>Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p>	
<p>“manages his own household well” (I Tim. 3:4-5) Requires that an elder be skillful in leading and providing for his family.</p> <p>Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p>	

<p>“keeping his children under control” (I Tim. 3:4, Titus 1:6) Requires that an elder who is a father command the respect and obedience of his children. His children do not have a reputation for leading an ungodly lifestyle.</p> <p>Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p>	
<p>“must not be a recent convert” (I Tim. 3:6) Requires that an elder have a spiritual track record leading toward a mature faith.</p> <p>Yes ____ No ____</p>	
<p>“a good reputation with outsiders” (I Tim. 3:7) Requires that an elder have a good testimony in the community. He is respected by unbelievers.</p> <p>Yes ____ No ____</p>	

Some excellent resources for digging deeper into the practical manifestation of these character qualities is found in the books, *Man of Honor* by Ray Pritchard and *Elders and Leaders* by Gene Getz.



Elder Candidate Interview Form

Since the very beginning of Providence in 1993, a version of the following form has been utilized to contextualize the biblical qualifications of eldership with the present expectations and practical functions of eldership at Providence Church.

Some of the questions may seem to duplicate items on the previous worksheet. While the previous worksheet was intended to help the candidate understand the biblical qualifications for eldership and his fitness regarding them, the following form is more specific and is primarily for the current elders to evaluate the candidate's character, and understanding of (and commitment to) the doctrines, statements, structure, and strategy of Providence Church.

For married candidates, there is an additional form for his wife. Once again, it is imperative that responses on both forms are open and completely honest.

Suggested Steps

1. Read the questions carefully and answer prayerfully. This form is intended to be answered individually: the elder candidate should work on his part alone, and the candidate's wife should work on hers alone. Answers will be kept confidential, only to be seen by the current elders.
2. Write down any questions that need clarification.
3. Confirm in prayer that you should continue to pursue eldership.
4. Report this in your follow-up interview with the elder who challenged you to consider this ministry.



ELDER CANDIDATE

INTERVIEW FORM

(Confidential)

(Please print clearly)

Name: _____ Wife's name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: Home _____ Work _____ Cell _____ Other _____

Date of Birth: _____ Occupation: _____ Employer: _____

PERSONAL

1. Briefly describe how and when you sensed God's call and responded to the gospel unto salvation.

2. Describe your current family situation (marital status, children & ages, etc).

3. Have you ever been through a divorce? **Y N** If yes, on a separate sheet of paper, please explain the
circumstances, when, etc. circle one

4. As far as it depends on you, are there any problems or circumstances that keep you from being a spiritual leader in your home? **Y N** If yes, explain below. circle one

5. Do you abstain from alcoholic beverages? **Y N** If not, please explain. circle one

6. Do you have difficulty controlling your temper? Y N
circle one

7. What is your experience in working in team settings (church, ministry, vocation, etc.)?

8. In your view, what is the importance of material possessions and wealth?

9. Do you give at least a tithe of your income to Providence Church? Y N If not, explain below.
circle one

10. Do you spend time daily with God in prayer and Bible study? Y N
circle one

11. Please list any teaching positions, leadership positions, accomplishments, training, courses you have completed, and church involvement within your Christian service.

12. Please share any experience you have had in managing and overseeing people (employees, subordinates, volunteers, etc.)

13. To the best of your knowledge, are there any personal financial transactions, business dealings, or any other dealings within this community (or any other community) that could cast doubt upon your integrity, character, love for fellow man, goodness, or Christian witness? **Y N**
circle one
If yes, explain below.

DOCTRINE

1. Review carefully the doctrinal statement of Providence Church (see appendix). Is there any area of personal disagreement or differing preference? **Y N**
circle one If yes, please explain below.

2. Do you believe Jesus Christ died as a substitute in order to atone for the sins of humanity? **Y N**
circle one

3. Do you believe that Jesus Christ physically and actually rose from the dead? **Y N**
circle one

4. Do you believe that the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” occurs simultaneously with being “born again” (i.e., there is no needed “second blessing”)? **Y N**
circle one

5. Do you believe in the perseverance of the Saints (i.e. those truly saved are eternally secure and cannot fall away from salvation)? **Y N**
circle one

6. Do you believe in the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture as defined in the doctrinal statement of Providence Church? **Y N**
circle one

7. Do you believe people are born with a tendency to sin, and all do sin, thus all are under condemnation and are helpless apart from salvation through Jesus Christ? **Y N**
circle one

8. Do you believe salvation is a gift of God that is received solely through repentance and personal faith in Jesus Christ? **Y N**
circle one

9. Do you believe that there is any way to God and eternal life other than that given in the previous question (#8)? **Y N**
circle one

10. Do you believe that the biblically binding form of baptism for Providence Church is for believers only, by immersion? **Y N**
circle one

11. Do you believe the local church to be the foundational center for Christian practice, spiritual growth, and evangelism? **Y N**
circle one

12. Do you believe the Bible is the sole authority for Christian beliefs and living (i.e. no other church, human being [e.g. Pope], council, denomination, creed, etc. has that authority)? **Y N**
circle one

13. Do you believe in the autonomy of each local church under the headship of Christ? **Y N**
circle one

14. Do you believe giving to the local church (beginning with the tithe) is biblical? **Y N**
circle one

15. Read this statement on divorce and remarriage:

Because marriage is sacred, we will not remarry a divorced person if there are no scriptural grounds. We believe marriage is a life-long commitment to one another. We believe the remarriage of a divorced person is possible when 1) the divorce occurred when one's mate was guilty of adultery through sexual immorality (Mat 19:9; 5:32), 2) the divorce occurred when there was desertion of the marriage by one's mate and there is no hope of reconciliation (1 Cor. 7:15). We will make every effort to encourage reconciliation in a marriage.

Are you in agreement with the above statement? **Y N** If not, explain below.
circle one

16. Read this statement on tongues.

Because "tongue speaking" has very little value in worship (1 Cor. 14:19), hinders our ministry to seekers (14:22-23), violates our understanding of order (14:40), and inhibits the edification of many in our body, we will not encourage the practice of "tongue speaking" during any gathering, large or small, of Providence Church.

Are you in agreement with the statement? **Y N** If not, explain below.
circle one

17. Review the Constitution and Bylaws of Providence Church (see appendix). Are there any doctrinal differences you have with these documents? **Y N** If yes, explain below.
circle one

MISSION, PURPOSE, STRUCTURE, AND STRATEGY

1. Review the "Providence Statements." Are you in agreement with, and willing to work within the context of the seven Core Values, Mission Statement and six Purposes of Providence Church? **Y N**
circle one

2. Are you in agreement with our structure, which recognizes congregational authority under the headship of Jesus Christ (i.e. not elder-rule authority system, but elder-led and -guided within the context of congregational authority)? **Y N** If not, explain below.
circle one

3. Are you in a Providence small group? **Y N** Do you believe in the importance of small groups? **Y N**
circle one If you circled "no" on either of these answers, explain below.

4. Is there any major difficulty you have with the Core Values, Mission, Purposes, Structure, or Strategy of Providence Church? **Y N** If yes, explain below.
circle one

THE POSITION

1. Should you be called, are you willing to make fulfilling your role of elder a top priority? **Y N**
circle one

2. Do you recognize the spiritual authority and responsibility of the position of elder? **Y N** Please
circle one explain briefly what this means to you:

3. Spiritual warfare is a very real thing and the enemy can sometimes target elders and their families. If you become an elder, are you willing to rely on God's strength and accept this responsibility with humility and prayer? **Y N**
circle one

4. If you become an elder, are you willing to submit to the mutual accountability of the body of elders? **Y** **N**
circle one

5. To the best of your knowledge, is there anything not already covered that could possibly be a hindrance for you becoming an elder? **Y** **N**
circle one

To the best of my knowledge what I have indicated by my answers on this form is true before God.

Signature of elder candidate: _____



INTERVIEW FORM FOR THE WIFE OF THE ELDER CANDIDATE

(Confidential)

(Please print clearly)

Name: _____ Husband's name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: Home _____ Work _____ Cell _____ Other _____

Date of Birth: _____ Occupation: _____ Employer: _____

1. Is your husband the spiritual leader of the family? **Y N** If not, please explain.
circle one

2. Do you feel your husband is qualified to assume the position of elder at Providence Church? **Y N**
If not, please explain. circle one

3. If your husband is called as an elder of Providence church, are you willing to support him by encouraging him, praying for him (along with the other elders), holding in confidence any sensitive information to which you may be privy, and refusing to gossip? **Y N** If not, please explain.
circle one

4. Please realize that people in the church look to an elder's wife as a leader also. In addition, spiritual warfare is a very real thing and the enemy can sometimes target elders' families. If your husband becomes an elder, are you willing to rely on God's strength and accept these leadership responsibilities with humility? **Y N**
circle one

To the best of my knowledge what I have indicated by my answers on this form is true before God.

Signature of elder candidate's wife: _____