

Our elders in MICC function primarily as pastors of a flock, not corporate executives, CEOs, or advisers to a pastor. As keepers of sheep, biblical elders are to protect, feed, and lead the flock and to help meet the flock's many practical needs.

They are preeminently men of godly character as described by Paul in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. They are responsible to maintain the vision and direction of the church and to provide for the shepherd care of the body. This includes actually shepherding as well as equipping the members of the body to care for the spiritual lives of others near them.

Alexander Strauch describes this perspective on elders in his book, *Biblical Eldership*:

Biblical eldership...can't exist in an atmosphere of nominal Christianity. There can be no biblical eldership in a church where there is no biblical Christianity. If a biblical eldership is to function effectively, it requires men who are firmly committed to living out our Lord's principles of discipleship. Biblical eldership is dependent on men who seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt. 6:33), men who have presented themselves as living and holy sacrifices to God and view themselves as slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 12:1,2), men who love Jesus Christ above all else, men who willingly sacrifice self for the sake of others, men who seek to love as Christ loved, men who are self-disciplined and self-sacrificing, and men who have taken up the cross and are willing to suffer for Christ.

This is the standard for eldership which we are striving to model in MICC. Our elders are not men of perfection, but they are men of proven character and leadership in the church.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT AND VOTING

After the elders are assured of God's direction, of unity in the church family, and that any known objections have been dealt with properly, they publicly present the elder candidates to the congregation.

They further charge the church family to be praying specifically for these candidates and their families.

The church family is given the responsibility to pray and express themselves regarding the candidate. During this period the elders challenge the body to affirm the man or to bring to them any report which may affect his qualification for the office of elder.

Any objections concerning the candidate which might surface during this process are worked through in a constructive manner with the candidate involved so that any deficiencies or misunderstandings may be addressed and corrected.

After the elders are re-assured of God's direction, of unity in the church family, and that any additional objections have been dealt with properly, they publicly present the elder as a candidate to the congregation for voting by written ballot at a General Meeting of the church. 70% of the votes cast are required for election as an elder.

TERM OF SERVICE

In MICC, the term of service is two years. An elder may be reelected to serve indefinitely so long as he continues to be qualified to serve and recognized by the body.

DISQUALIFICATION

Every member is subject to accountability within the church and therefore the elder may be disciplined according to Biblical principles (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5; 2 Thess. 3:14, 15). An elder, as an appointed representative of the church, is subject to scrutiny in areas which call for church discipline (unrepentant sin) and which might affect his continuing qualification to serve as an elder.

ACCOUNTABILITY

In carrying out his duties, the elder operates under the spiritual leadership of the other elders and functions in unity with the other elders. He is continually responsible to his brothers and sisters in the congregation, and ultimately accountable to the Lord Jesus Christ for the faithful discharge of his duties.

MUNICH INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CHURCH

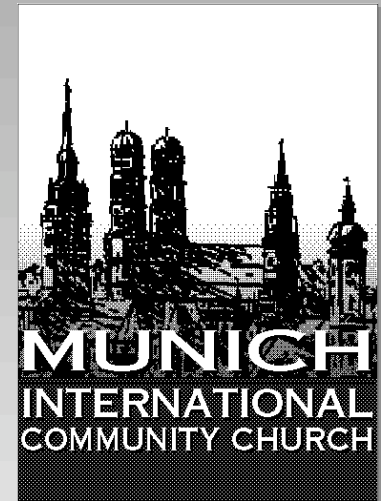
SUNDAY WORSHIP AT 4:00 PM

MOZARTSTRASSE 12 · CENTRAL MUNICH
IN THE FREIE EVANGELISCHE GEMEINDE
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OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.MUNICHURCH.DE

ELDERS: LEADING IN MICC

GLORIFYING CHRIST
QUALIFIED BY CHARACTER
SERVING AS UNDERSHEPHERDS



DESCRIPTION OF AN ELDER

The New Testament teaches us that Jesus Christ is the head and Lord over all things pertaining to his church (Col. 1:18-20). It is under Christ's leadership that the New Testament establishes the offices of both elders and deacons within the local church. (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-4). Following the example of their Lord, the elders and deacons are *servant leaders* of the church (Mark 9:35, 10:43)

The elders are charged with the spiritual care and oversight of the local church while the deacons are given responsibility for the practical physical needs of the congregation. These two offices of elder and deacon represent Christ's loving provision for structure and order within his church.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELDERS

An elder is one who oversees the spiritual matters of the local church body. It is the function of overseeing, not an office of overseer that is honorable. Elders (spiritual leaders) are not made by election or appointment. A spiritual leader is one who leads not by merely pointing the way or giving orders, but by influencing others to follow where he has already gone.

Elders are servant-leaders, hence the office of elder is not one of power but one in which a man gives himself in the ministry to equip the members of the body of Christ for ministry (1 Peter 5:1-4; Mark 10:35-45; Acts 20:28).

Elders are not selected because of their business finesse, financial success, or skills in other areas, but because of their *spiritual qualifications*.

Elders are to be: "above reproach": They are to be an example or model of personal integrity before others. Both lists (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9) of the qualifications for elders begin with the general qualification of "blamelessness", carrying the idea of being irreprouchable. The more specific qualifications fall into four categories:

1. PERSONAL QUALIFICATIONS

DEMANDING HIGH MORAL CHARACTER

Husband of one wife: a loyal husband living in a pure marriage relationship without adulterous relationships or attitudes. This does not prohibit a single man from being an elder, but it does set some limits on those who have been divorced. These cases shall be considered individually without establishing precedent.

Temperate: not given to excess in any area of life.

Prudent: sensible and of sound mind; self controlled.

Respectable: having a well-ordered, disciplined life.

Not self-willed: not more interested in self-pleasure than service.

Self-controlled: master of himself and thus obedient to the initial promptings of the Holy Spirit through the study of the Word.

Just: giving men their due.

Devout: performs his duty toward God with gravity and gladness.

Free from the love of money: his life must not be concerned with amassing material things.

2. FAMILY QUALIFICATIONS

IN ACCORD WITH GOD'S SCRIPTURAL ORDER

Children must be under control in all dignity, following the faith of their father. They must not be in open continuous rebellion.

The household must be managed well or else the man will not know how to take care of the church of God. This does not mean that his home will be without problems. However, when problems arise, they will be managed well.

3. RELATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

CHARACTERISTICS IN PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Not addicted to wine: not addicted to alcohol. A life marked by drunkenness is not a life of the Spirit (Eph. 5:18).

Not pugnacious: he must not easily or often lose his cool.

Gentle and uncontentious toward others: does not insist on his own way; treats others with respect; seeks godly peace.

Hospitable: means that his concern for others must be expressed in the use of his home

Lover of what is good: his attitude displays that he desires God's best in every relationship and situation

A good reputation among outsiders: his lifestyle among unbelievers lends credibility to the Gospel message.

4. SPIRITUAL QUALIFICATIONS

MARKS OF PERSONAL SPIRITUAL MATURITY

Not a novice: not a recent convert, but spiritually mature.

Able to teach: demonstrates a knowledge of sound doctrine and the ability to use it to instruct, to exhort, and to correct. This includes qualities that make him teachable in receiving instruction and sensitive to people in giving it.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ELDERS

The specific ministries of an elder as spelled out in the New Testament are described in three categories.

He is to shepherd the flock of God under his care.

by spiritually feeding and caring for those under his care like a shepherd cares for his sheep (1 Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28).

by providing an example of godly living (1 Peter 5:3)

by helping those in physical need (Acts 11:29, 30)

by praying for the weak and sick (James 5:14)

He is to promote sound doctrine.

by being able to teach those under his care (1 Tim 3:2; 5:17).

by exhorting in sound doctrine and refuting those in error (Titus 1:9).

by responsibly caring for the other elders, especially in areas of doctrinal purity (Acts 20:28-31).

by meeting with other elders to decide issues of doctrine and practice (Acts 15:6 ff).

He should manage the affairs of the church.

by ruling (oversee, manage) the church (1 Tim. 3:4, 5; 5:17).

by providing oversight to the church's finances (Acts 11:30).

PERFORMANCE OF DUTIES

ACCORDING TO HIS GIFTS

Each individual elder is particularly gifted by the Spirit for the benefit to the body of Christ (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:12-31). Each elder assumes specific responsibilities in accordance with his gifts and availability. The church depends on Christ to provide a balance of gifts, abilities, and availability in the plurality of the eldership.

AS PART OF A BALANCED CHRISTIAN LIFE

The elder is to be both a 'doer' and an 'equipper'; leading by example and by precept. Active and regular participation in the life of the church family is necessary to fulfill his duties. As part of a team, he can be freed from some church duties and able to fulfill other responsibilities. In this way he models and maintains balance in fulfilling his church, family, devotional, employment, and civic duties.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Elders are not subject to any higher earthly authority outside the local assembly (Acts 20:17, 28). Therefore, elders have a responsibility to rule in the church.

Elders are not a checks and balances system for the pastor, nor he for them. They are never to be torn by dissension and internal conflict. (See Phil. 2:2,3; Romans 12:16; James 2:1).

Elders are to rule by precept and example. They are to serve and care for the flock and give themselves for it. Eldership requires servants, not dictators. The example of a personal life is what makes precept and exposition of the word believable.

ELECTION OF ELDERS

It is really God who makes men elders by maturing and burdening them to fulfill such a ministry. A God-inspired desire for servant leadership will be recognized by the elders and the church they serve. The process of election of elders at MICC is as follows:

NOMINATION

Each spring, nominations are open for elders. Any church member may, after prayerful consideration of the scriptural qualifications, nominate one or more men (also members) for the office of elder.

CONSIDERATION

Following the nomination of a potential elder, he is notified of the biblical qualifications and duties of elders in MICC. Each person so identified is given serious consideration by the elders.

If the elders are not aware of any Scriptural reason to decline the nominee, they proceed through a prayer and interview process with the nominee to decide together whether he is a true candidate for the office of elder. Any areas of life in which the man is found lacking are discussed lovingly, candidly and confidentially among the elders. His continuation in the process is determined by the elders and nominee following this discussion.

In MICC we believe that the activities of teaching and exercising authority over men mentioned by Paul in 1 Timothy 2:12 are those that fundamentally distinguish the activities of an elder from the activities of a deacon. Both offices are to be filled by those who will serve the church; because of God's scripturally revealed order and design for eldership and spiritual oversight, the office of elder is restricted to men.

Since the tasks performed by deacons do not regularly involve the exercise of spiritual oversight in the body, the office of deacon is open to both men and women.