Eldership at RBC Stafford

Who and what is an elder?

According to the Bible, an elder is a member of the local church who is called by God, biblically qualified, equipped, and appointed by the congregation to serve as a spiritual leader within the church. This is one of two church offices specified in Scripture and is specifically reserved for men who are set apart in this particular way. In this role, an elder leads alongside other elders who are equally entrusted with the responsibility of guiding the church to love and follow Jesus Christ, as one family, no matter the cost, for the glory of God.

What are the qualifications for an elder?

The foundational passages that provide the qualifications for an elder are found in 1st Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; and 1st Peter 5:1-4. At a minimum, an elder must be:

Above reproach	Have a good reputation with those outside the church
Husband of one wife	Gentle
Sensible	Blameless
Respectable	Love what is good
Hospitable	Able to encourage through faithful teaching
Righteous	Holy
A good leader in his home	Doctrinally sound
Prayerful	An example to the flock
Eager to Shepherd	Able to refute false teaching

Additionally**,** an elder must not be:

An excessive drinker	Greedy
A bully	Arrogant
A new convert	Hot headed

What does an elder do?

1. Dedicates himself to prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6)

Prayer and ministry of the Word were clear priorities for the earliest church elders. When additional ministry requirements began detracting from this primary role, the elders in Jerusalem identified other leaders to oversee these efforts. Prayer and ministry of the Word remain at the heart of what it means to be an elder.

2. Shepherds the flock willingly and gently (1 Peter 5)

Elders are to shepherd the flock through intentional and persistent care of the members of the church. Those God has entrusted to the oversight of RBC Stafford elders are not "their people", but the bride of Jesus Christ himself. Elders must care for the church with this in mind, leading members in ways that promote unity while guarding carefully against division.

3. Sets an example (1 Corinthians 11)

"*Imitate me as I imitate Christ*" (1 Corinthians 11:1). This statement by Paul reflects the expectation for elders to model Christlike character to those inside and outside the church (1 Peter 5:3). While elders are not perfect, they are responsible for leading with humility and integrity when they fall short. The spiritual integrity and servant leadership modeled by elders provide the church with a visible representation of the gospel at work in a life. This modeling includes:

- Personal holiness
- A love for God's Word
- A commitment to prayer
- A passion for making disciples
- Ensuring that church leadership remains focused on the glory of God, reconciliation through Jesus Christ, and the revealing work of the Holy Spirit.

What does it look like to be an elder at RBC Stafford?

1. Pray for the congregation. Every member, by name, on a regular basis.
2. Preach and teach God's Word during corporate gatherings and in small group settings.
3. Regularly meet with other elders to pray, plan and guide the church towards fulfilling our mission to make disciples and multiply churches.
4. Exercise diligent oversight over the ministries and ministry leaders of the church.
5. Be available to meet with and provide biblical counsel to members of the church.
6. Identify, disciple and empower members in the church to do the work of ministry.