

that the deacons take action in relation to the physical needs of the congregation, Acts 6:2-4).

- **Decide spiritual issues that arise** (Acts 15:1-21).
- **Direct the affairs of the church** (1 Timothy 5:17).
- **Be on guard for yourselves and all the flock** (Acts 20:28).
- **Shepherd the flock of God at Bethlehem – voluntarily, according to the will of God, with eagerness, as examples to the flock** (1 Peter 5:2-3).
- **Teach both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict it** (Titus 1:9).
- **Go to and pray over those who are sick** (James 5:14).

Biblical Eldership

by Alexander Strauch

- **A concise definition of NT eldership:** “elders †lead the church, †teach and preach the Word, †protect the church from false teachers, †exhort and admonish the saints in sound doctrine, †visit the sick and pray, and †judge doctrinal issues.”
- Elders are primarily pastors.
- Elders have enough Bible knowledge to refute false teachers, seek straying sheep, and correct sinful behavior.

- Elders are spiritually alert, courageous, watchful, and prayerful – guarding their own spiritual lives and those of the flock.
- Elders are Bible teachers.
- Elders lead, oversee the church – set goals, make decisions, give direction, correct failures, affect change, and motivate people.
- The elders’ work is people-oriented work.

Conclusion

Dear members of Bethlehem,

If you seem to qualify and have an interest in being a deacon or an elder, *please contact Pastor.*

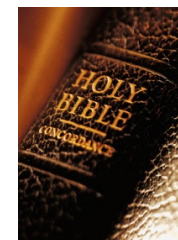
For others who want to mature toward becoming deacons, elders, or simply more mature disciples of Jesus Christ, be faithful in †attending and participating in Divine Service, †attending and participating in Bible classes, and †spending daily quality time in reading, understanding, living, and sharing God’s Holy Word!

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

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The Bethlehem Positions of Deacon and Elder



Introduction

Introduction: Most Churches have deacons and/or elders; however, many are using Bible terms with man-made definitions. At Bethlehem, we *desire* to use Bible terms with Bible definitions; therefore, we have done word studies on these three key terms:

- “διάκονος,” which is *sometimes* translated “deacon.”
- “πρεσβύτερος” and “ἐπίσκοπος,” which are sometimes translated “elder.”

Both studies are available in our brochure rack.

The purpose of this brochure is †to summarize the key teachings in the two brochures and in the booklet entitled “Biblical Eldership” by Alexander Strauch and †to write *qualifications* and *actions* for each of those positions at Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

Note: The positions of “deacon” and “elder” are *closely related* and *do overlap*. However, deacons primarily take action according to *physical* needs, while elders primarily take action according to *spiritual* needs.

The Bethlehem Lutheran Church Position of Deacon

Qualifications: (1 Timothy 3:8-13; other NT references to διακόνος):

- **Men** (Acts 6:3) **and women** (Romans 16:1) **are eligible**. (Since the Bible refers to “our sister Phoebe, who is a servant [διάκονον] of the church...” women can also serve as deacons.)
- **Good reputation; full of the Spirit and of wisdom** (Acts 6:3; 4:31; Psalm 111:10).
- **Honorable, dignified, sincere, not drinking much wine, not greedy** (1 Timothy 3:8).
- **Holding the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience** (1 Timothy 3:9).

What does that mean? Mystery refers to what *God has revealed*; the mystery of the faith is a *mystery of Christianity* – Christians see their sin and gladly embrace their Savior, but most are blinded to both realities. “Any man who is not careful of the truth, or who is enamored of wine, or who allows money to stick to his fingers, cannot hold to Christianity, to this blessed mystery of the faith, ‘in connection with a clean conscience,’ and is certainly not the man [person] to be made a deacon in the congregation.” (Lenski,

1 Timothy 3:9, p. 597)

- **Tested – to make sure they are beyond reproach** (fault, blame) (1 Timothy 3:10).
- **Not married to multiple spouses; good managers of their children and households** (1 Timothy 3:12).

Actions:

- **Nourished by and living according to the Bible** (1 Timothy 4:6).
- **Serve God by serving others, even when such service is difficult, painful, and dangerous** (2 Corinthians 11:23).
- **Take action especially according to physical needs** (so the elders can devote themselves to the congregation’s spiritual needs, especially prayer and the Word, Acts 6:2-4).

The Bethlehem Lutheran Church Position of Elder

Qualifications: (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; other NT references to πρεσβύτερος and ἐπίσκοπος):

- †The Bible terms “πρεσβύτερος” and “ἐπίσκοπος” only refer to men.
- †Therefore, males should preside over churches – *teaching and preaching*. †Besides, 1 Corinthians 14:34 (NAS) says: “Let the women

keep silent in the churches...”
Scripturally then, *only men can serve as elders*.

- **Above reproach** (fault, blame) **as God’s steward, a one woman man, sober, self-controlled, upright, holy, loving what is good, respectable, hospitable, and devoted to the faithful teaching of the Word** (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8-9).
- **Not addicted to wine, not violent, not accused of dissipation** (wasting by misuse), **but gentle, peaceable, and free from the love of money** (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:6).
- **Manages his own household well, has children who believe, and keeps his own children under control with all seriousness** (1 Timothy 3:4; Titus 1:6).
- **Not a recent convert; has a good reputation with outsiders** (1 Timothy 3:6-7).

Actions:

- **Nourished by and living according to the Bible** (1 Timothy 4:6).
- **Serve God by serving others, even when such service is difficult, painful, and dangerous** (2 Corinthians 11:23).
- **Take action especially according to spiritual needs** (especially prayer and the Word in connection with people, overseeing