



RULING ELDER TRAINING SYLLABUS

Elliot Grudem, Senior Minister | Fall / Winter 2008

General Information

We will meet six times between October 6 and December 15. We will meet on Monday evenings from 8-10 p.m. We will meet at my house. All are welcome to attend. If you will be attending, please let me know prior to the first session so I can have enough materials ready.

If necessary, there will be a session to review what we've covered prior to the examinations. If you complete the training and wish to be considered for elder, you will need to complete, with your spouse (if married), a confidential questionnaire related to your Christian character and marriage. You will also need to take (and pass) written and oral exams with me prior to being examined by a group of men from the Presbytery.

In addition, you and your wife (if married) will need to come to a separate meeting with me and Kacey to discuss the qualifications, duties, and challenges of being an elder.

Attendance at all the sessions and completion of all the work are required to serve as an elder at CTK.

This training assumes three things: First, it assumes you are attending worship on Sunday morning and are actively engaging with the service. What is covered in the sermons and during the service will be assumed for this training. Second, it assumes you are actively involved with a community group. The material covered in the community groups will be assumed for this training time. Third, it assumes you are diligently making use of the means of grace (word, sacrament, prayer), both individually and corporately. In addition to the Christ-like character that flows from these means, things like knowledge of the Scriptures or application of the Scriptures to life and ministry can only come from regular, personal interaction with God's word.

Or, to put it another way, if you are too busy to attend worship on Sunday, read your Bible and pray, and attend a community group every other week, you probably are too busy to attend elder training.

Assignments

Paul tells Timothy, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). Paul clearly expects this young pastor to put in the study necessary to do his job with excellence.

In addition, *The Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America* says, an elder "should possess a competency of human learning" (8-2). Since elders are to set an example by their lives (Hebrews 13:7, 1 Peter 5:3), the study patters exhibited by elders are to be models for the rest of the congregation.

All that to say, there will be a fair amount of self-study. Some of it will be easy. Other materials will be more of a challenge. Where I could, I chose an article or sermon or lecture over a book, both out of respect for your time and to allow you to read the material slowly and consider what you are reading.

Copies of the articles will be provided for you, upon request (email Kelley Ann Frye at office@ctkraleigh.org to request copies).

The lectures by Carson, Keller, and Piper can be found online at www.thegospelcoalition.org/plenary.php (you can either watch the video or listen to the audio). Text and audio of Driscoll's talk on "The Ox..." can be found at www.acts29network.org/article/the-ox-qualifications-of-an-acts-29-church-planter. You can either read the lecture or listen to it. The sermon by Chapell can be found at www.covenantseminary.edu/resource. You will need to search for sermons on the book of Numbers.

You will be responsible for securing copies of the books. You can find the *Book of Church Order* and *The Westminster Confession of Faith* online at www.pcaac.org. You can find a modern version of *The Westminster Confession of Faith* at www.opc.org/documents/MESV.html.

The other books can be found at amazon.com. The additional books you will need to purchase are:

Chapell, Bryan. *Why Do We Baptize Infants*
Grudem, Wayne. *Christian Beliefs*
Mahaney, C. J. *Humility: True Greatness*
Smallman, Stephen. *How Our Children Come to Faith*

You should listen / watch / read the assigned readings / lectures / sermons *prior* to the meeting they will be discussed at. The discussions will assume you have completed the reading and any questions assigned with the reading. *In fact, due to the limited amount of time available for this training, only those who have completed the work will be allowed to participate in the discussions.*

Under each assignment, I wrote a few sentences (in italics) explaining the reason I assigned that particular reading / sermon / lecture. As you read, watch, or listen, think about what this assignment helps you understand about Christ, his Church, and the leadership he desires for his Church.

Schedule

October 6: Character for Service

Carson, D. A. "What Is the Gospel?" (lecture)
This is a very clear lecture on what the gospel is and what it is not.

Higgins, Craig R. "Spiritual Formation and the Lord's Supper: Remembering, Receiving, Sharing"
This article will help you not only deepen your understanding of the Lord's Supper, but also help you understand how you can benefit from partaking from it.

Mahaney, C. J. *Humility: True Greatness*
Simply the best book I've read in a long time on the character required for leadership.

Smallman, Stephen. *How Our Children Come to Faith*
A great little book on salvation that should help deepen your understanding not only for your children, but also for your own life and ministry.

The Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America, chapter 8
The central chapter in the BCO on the qualifications and duties of an elder.

1 Timothy 3, Titus 1, 1 Peter 5
The key texts on the qualifications for elder.

Completion of the Personal Assessment Questionnaire
Write out your personal testimony

October 20: Context for Service

Driscoll, Mark. "Ten Curious Questions"

A great summary of questions each church planter (and its elders) need to ask both before and while they are planting and leading a church. The answer to these questions will help determine the trajectory of the plant. As you read, decide how you would answer these questions. Then I will tell you how I answered them.

Driscoll, Mark. "The Ox—Qualifications of an Acts 29 Church Planter" (text or audio)

Though this was created for church planters who desired to be part of a church planting network, I have found this to be a clear explanation of the qualifications required not only for a church planter but also the men that would serve as ruling elders in a church plant.

Keller, Tim. "The Missional Church"

A basic document that has greatly influenced the philosophy of ministry at CTK.

Keller, Tim. "A New Kind of Urban Christian"

This is an important article on the need for Christians to live, work, and play and minister in the city from the pastor that has probably had the greatest impact on urban churches in the last 10 years.

Downtown Raleigh Alliance Website. www.godowntownraleigh.com (At least read the Sections found under the "About Raleigh" heading and the "Places of Worship" subheading.)

A website that provides basic information about CTK's context for ministry.

1 Corinthians 9

Paul's discussion on the value and importance of contextualization in ministry.

November 3: Competency for Service I (Bible Knowledge)

Memorize all the books of the Bible.

You will need to know these to pass your Bible examination and will find this helpful for ministry. It will help you answer the "Where can I find that?" question.

Memorize the outlines to the following books of the Bible: Genesis, Isaiah, Mark, and Romans (as provided for you).

You will need to know these not only to pass your exam, but will also find them helpful for ministry.

The Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 1

This chapter is the section in the Confession on the value and sufficiency of Scripture.

Grudem, Wayne. *Christian Beliefs*, chapter 1

Another discussion of Scripture, that may be a little clearer than what you find in the Confession.

Find passages in the Bible you would use in ministry related to the following topics: justification, sanctification, marriage and divorce, habitual sin, and assurance of salvation

Again, this will not only help you on your Bible examination, but also is helpful to think about for ministry.

Write out your personal devotional plan.

I have found that if I don't have a plan, I fail in this. Not that a plan guarantees success, but it does help achieve success.

November 17: Competency for Service II (Theology)

The Westminster Confession of Faith and The Larger and Shorter Catechisms

Part of the PCA's constitution. It's what all elders in the PCA believe contains the system of doctrine in the Scriptures.

Grudem, Wayne. *Christian Beliefs*, chapters 10-15

The sections of the book on salvation, the part of reformed theology that often causes the most discussion and confusion.

Keller, Tim. "What Does Gospel Centered Ministry Look Like?" (lecture)

This is a wonderful compliment to Carson's lecture on the gospel. It contains essential applications for gospel-based ministry.

December 1: Competency for Service III (Polity)

The Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America

The BCO is "rule book" for playing in the PCA. Be sure to read the preface as well as the chapters.

"About the Presbyterian Church in America"

This is a one-page summary of the PCA.

Grudem, Elliot. "The Authority and Responsibility of Elders in Christ's Church..."

A paper I wrote on the Presbyterian view of elders (what I also believe to be the Biblical view).

Taylor, L. Roy. "Presbyterianism"

This is a helpful article on Presbyterian government written by the PCA's Stated Clerk.

One of the Following:

Chapell, Bryan. *Why Do We Baptize Infants*

Pratt, Richard. *Why Do We Baptize Our Children* (DVD)

Both are helpful in understanding a difficult subject.

December 15: Challenges of Service

Chapell, Bryan. "Submissive Leadership" (sermon)

This is a wonderful sermon (quite convicting as well) on how to handle criticism in ministry.

Driscoll, Mark. "Who to Empower and Who to Avoid"

An interesting article on the value of considering who you are spending your time with as it relates to developing future leaders.

Lane, Timothy S. and Paul David Tripp. "One Church's Story"

*This article, from their book *How People Change*, has been extremely helpful in setting the way we do ministry at CTK.*

Mahaney, C. J. "The Pastor's Priorities: Watch Your Life and Doctrine"

This article by Mahaney is a reminder of both the importance of solid theology and solid character in the context of pastoral ministry.

Piper, John. "The Triumph of the Gospel in the New Heavens and New Earth" (sermon)

This may be the single-most encouraging sermon I've heard in the last five to ten years.

Completion of the Confidential Questionnaire

Practical Ministry Assignment