

Affirmation Phase

WEEK FIVE: OCTOBER 7TH - 13TH

Today, we hear the names of those who have agreed to be considered as shepherds. Write down those names.

1 The next three weeks will be challenging for them. Pray that God will extend to them his protection, the mind of Christ, and the wisdom and comfort of the Spirit.

2 Now would be a good time to reflect further on what it means to be a shepherd. Download the worksheet from our website again. What do the included passages say about the *faith* of a shepherd? His reliance on God, walk in the Spirit, trust in Christ, knowledge of the teachings? How do our candidates rate on this?

3 What do these passages say about the *character* of a shepherd? Do the candidates demonstrate these qualities? Spend time prayerfully meditating on what you know of each candidate's character.

4 What do these passages say about the *work* of a shepherd (e.g., how many mentions of "elders' meetings" can you find)? What is a shepherd's work? Are our candidates capable of doing it?

5 What do these passages say about the *abilities* of a shepherd? Do the candidates we're considering possess these abilities? Are they knowledgeable, bold, encouraging, teachers, and builders?

6 Have these reflections raised any red flags for you? This is the time to voice objections. If you see a problem, talk to the candidates personally. Failing that, talk to someone on the Selection Committee. Better a difficult conversation now than six years of a difficult elder!

7 Think: browse <http://mintools.com/shepherding-ministry.htm> or—for shepherding resources—try <http://lynnanderson.org>. What is the "shepherd's heart"?

Otter Creek Elders

List of past Otter Creek Elders

Affirmation Phase

WEEK SIX: OCTOBER 14TH - 20TH

1 Current elders will be hosting a series of "get to know you" receptions for each of our candidates. Pick one (or two) and attend. Bring some probing questions with you ... and a loving attitude.

2 The "Selection Committee" serves quietly and behind the scenes. This week, however, may be difficult as they hear objections to certain candidates and foster hard dialogue. Pray for them: wisdom, compassion, courage.

3 Sometimes, simple questions bring great clarity. Look over your list of candidates and ask some simple questions in the days ahead. *Do these men love the Lord?* How do you know? What "fruit" of their love do you see in their lives? Does their love of God radiate like a fire?

4 *Do these men love this church?* Not the church in general or in concept. *This church.* Comprised of these flawed and vexing people. How has this specific love been evident in their lives? Pray about this and ask for insight.

5 *Do these men have a vision worth following?* Do they see anything about us, our future, or our calling that excites you? Call a candidate and ask where he would lead us. Let's find some leaders who make us a little nervous.

6 *Are these men in tune with the mission of Otter Creek?* Go to our website (under "About OC") and read the mission statement that defines this church. Can these men support that statement, pursue its goals, help us become what we long to be? Pray over this.

7 *Will these men value, protect, and deepen the unity of this church?* Will they be advocates for harmony or sources of discord? Will they sacrifice our peace for the sake of sacred cows? Do they have a passion for unity?

If the answer to any of the above questions is "No," you need to say something to someone. Right now. No matter the consequences. Ask God to strengthen you for a difficult task.

Affirmation Phase

WEEK SEVEN: OCTOBER 21ST - 27TH

1 We've talked about leaders in this Guide. But what about followers? Do you welcome leaders in your life? Are you eager to support and encourage? Will you make our shepherds' work easy or hard? Examine yourself on this.

2 We have a God-given responsibility to respect our shepherds. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12. Write it out. Carry it with you today. To respect ourselves and our judgment more than leaders is not only prideful, it is disobedient.

3 Meditate on Hebrews 13:17 today. There are hard words here: obey, submit, authority. Do you agree with the following? "Shepherds are judged for the directions they lead; we are judged by whether we follow."

4 It takes a lot to be a follower: trust, commitment, discernment, discipline. "Father, help me to follow where my shepherds lead—like Joshua followed Moses; like Jonathan followed David; like Timothy followed Paul. Help me follow my shepherds as they follow Christ."

5 Being a disciple of Jesus often requires an example. Paul invited people to "follow my example" and "imitate me" (1 Corinthians 4:16). Are you willing to follow the example and to imitate the lives of our shepherds?

6 There are few things more destructive than people who talk critically behind their leaders' backs ... second guessing motives ... questioning character. Read Numbers 16 and meditate on the destructive power of words. Ask God to protect you from the sin of Korah.

7 Tomorrow you will hand in your ballot, listing the names you either approve or disapprove as shepherds. Spend time today in silence before the Lord. Hold up each candidate and listen for God's voice. Fill in your ballot humbly, hopefully, prayerfully. This is an important and privileged part of being a member at Otter Creek.

Elder Selection Website

[HTTP://OTTERCREEKELDERSELECTION.BLOGSPOT.COM](http://ottercreekelderselection.blogspot.com)

Choose From Among You

OTTER CREEK ELDER SELECTION 2007



Nomination Phase

WEEK ONE: SEPTEMBER 9TH - 16TH

1 Look around you. Sitting in this room worshiping with you are men God is calling to lead this church. Who are they? Can you see them? Read 2nd Kings 6:8-17. Pray for God to open your eyes like Elisha's servant.

2 Using your observations yesterday and a church directory, make a preliminary list of people you consider to be "shepherd material." Pray over each person on your list, asking God's wisdom to see their qualifications.

3 There are three words used in the Bible to refer to the role we are considering: elder, shepherd, and overseer. Go to www.biblegateway.com and do a word search on each of these terms. What do you learn?

4 Today, carry your preliminary list of nominees around with you. Take out the list at coffee breaks, lunch, down times. Pray over each name. Ponder each name. Ask God's blessing on each.

5 Go to our web site and download the worksheet on elder qualifications. Read the recommended passages and then use the worksheet to think about the qualifications of the nominees you have in mind. Be honest. Be prayerful. Be wise.

6 Pray for: our Selection Committee as they guide this process ... for your brothers and sisters as they prepare to make nominations ... for those who will be nominated by yourself and others ... for the Otter Creek church and its leaders.

7 Begin making contact with those you want to nominate. Tell them how you have already experienced their shepherding. Let them know you appreciate their spirit and spiritual wisdom.

Nomination Phase

WEEK TWO: SEPTEMBER 16TH - 22ND

1 Leaders are not optional for the church. Read these passages and reflect on how purposeful and consistent God has been to provide leaders for churches: Mark 3:13-18; Acts 14:23; 1st Corinthians 12:28; Titus 1:5.

2 When all is said and done, God, not churches, calls leaders. Moses (Exodus 3). Samuel (1st Samuel 3). David (1st Samuel 16). Paul (Acts 9). Meditate: how does God "call" leaders today? Pray that God will call out once again ... and that we all will have ears to hear his voice.

3 Read 1st Chronicles 12, paying special attention to verse 32. What does "understanding the times" mean? Why is this important to leaders? Meditate: what needs to be understood about present times for effective leadership?

4 Read Ephesians 4:11-13. Why does God give leaders to the church? What is the great task of godly leaders? Now look at your nominee list. Are these men able to lead us toward these ends? Pray for wisdom.

5 Leaders can help us. They can also harm. Read Ezra 22:23-29; Matthew 7:15; 10:16; John 10:11-13; Acts 20:28-29. Look at your list. Will these men protect us from wolves? Will any of them *become* wolves themselves?

6 Think of someone at Otter Creek whose wisdom you respect. Talk over your list with them. Who are they enthusiastic about? Are you hearing hesitation? Why? (Be careful to "keep your speech pure" in this conversation. These are brothers you're discussing.)

7 Devote today to prayer and fasting. (Read Acts 14:23 again.) Observe some sort of fast today ... from food, coffee, desert, something. Use this discipline to spur your prayers to God on behalf of your list, the men you want to nominate, and Otter Creek.

Consideration Phase

WEEK THREE: SEPTEMBER 23RD - 29TH

1 Turn in your nomination form today. Look over it one more time before doing so. Are you confident these are the men you want to lead this church into the future? Will you follow where they lead?

2 There are a number of your brothers getting phone calls today, asking if they will stand for affirmation as shepherds. Pray that they will be encouraged by this mark of congregational respect ... and that they will seriously consider serving us in this role.

3 There are a number of brothers *not* getting phone calls. Some expected to be nominated but were not; they may be disappointed. Some (too young and unknown this time?) may lead in the future and should be encouraged. Pray for them all.

4 As those nominated pray and consider, we ought to lift them up to God. But not them alone. Pray today for their wives—the godly women who made nomination possible. And for their children.

5 Our current shepherds are spending time (this week and next) talking, counseling, and praying with nominees. Some of these discussions are hard ... sensitive ... draining. Pray for our elders as they shepherd these future shepherds.

6 Like every church, our leadership has "gaps"—needs, skills, sensitivities, vision—that are currently lacking or underrepresented. Do you know what these gaps are? Pray that God will raise up leaders who will fill these gaps.

7 We tend to take shepherds for granted. Take a few moments to jot a note to one of our current shepherds expressing your gratitude.

Consideration Phase

WEEK FOUR: SEPTEMBER 30TH - OCTOBER 6TH

1 Set a goal of shaking the hand of every Otter Creek shepherd (past or present) who is at our assembly today. (There's a list in this brochure.) Say "Thanks." Offer a word of encouragement about their leadership in general and this selection process in particular.

2 On our "Selection Website," we've collected some words from currently serving shepherds about their thoughts on this role: what has blessed them ... what they love about their work. Go read these comments. You will be encouraged.

3 Write out your prayer for nominees who are thinking about serving as shepherds. You don't know who they are yet, but you can pray for them. When the names are announced (October 7), send a copy of your prayer to each candidate to encourage them.

4 Also on our "Selection Website," there are comments from shepherds who've served us in the past: greatest challenges, fondest memories, highest hopes. Again, you will be encouraged.

5 Today, let's focus on the other side of leadership: following. Are you a good follower? Do you know how to trust and submit? Do you accept and appreciate the spiritual wisdom of others? Pray.

6 Again, on our "Selection Website," there are testimonials from OC members who've been helped by shepherds. Their stories will also encourage you ... and emphasize the power of godly shepherds.

7 Once more, in prayer, lift up the men you have nominated ... all those nominated ... all those asked to stand for shepherd. Pray about the announcement tomorrow. An important day for OC.

A Word From

STEVE GIDDENS



To lead people, walk beside them.
As for the best leaders, the people do not notice their existence. The next best, the people honor and praise. The next, the people fear; and the next, the people hate. When the best leader's work is done, the people say, "We did it ourselves!" (Lao-tsu)

