



# Provisional Elders at Redeemer

## A Transitional Leadership Role

Redeemer Church was established in Wichita Falls through the [Redeemer Network](#). Led by our Lead Pastor, Cody McMurray, we embarked on a mission to develop a gospel-centered, disciple-making family. After completing a two-year church planting residency, Pastor Cody, in collaboration with network mentors, established a Provisional Elder board. In line with Scripture, we affirm that local churches should be led by multiple biblically qualified, harmoniously synced-up elders, necessitating the creation of a provisional board. This strategic setup supports our governance structure, ensuring that our leadership remains steadfast and our doctrinal commitments are upheld as we grow. During the church's early years, this board is crucial in embedding the gospel within our designated sphere of influence.

The term *provisional* underscores the transitional nature of this role. Provisional Elders form an initial leadership board, established with the understanding that this arrangement is temporary, serving until we can identify and install Local Elders from within our church. This approach respects the biblical principle of elder-led churches and provides a faithful solution during the foundational stages of the church, as exemplified in Titus 1:5. The Provisional Elder board, not being local, does not undertake typical shepherding responsibilities. Instead, their primary role is to hold the Lead Pastor to biblical principles and advise him to keep the church on course toward Jesus. **Provisional Elders do not shepherd Redeemer Church directly. Their role is limited to advising and holding the Lead Pastor accountable, while carrying legal responsibility for the church in extraordinary circumstances.**

The vision for Redeemer Church in Wichita Falls is to cultivate a community deeply rooted in the gospel, dedicated to making disciples. The establishment of a local board of elders organically emerges through our Discipleship pipelines. These pipelines identify and nurture individuals who fully embrace Redeemer's vision, demonstrating a genuine shepherd's heart and a desire to see our church flourish. However, immediately assembling a full local board of elders in a newly established church presents challenges.

## Transition to Local Elders

The transition from Provisional Elder leadership to Local Elders within Redeemer Church is an organic process, deeply intertwined with the growth and maturation of our church's unique culture and DNA.

Jesus' picture of the vine and branches in John 15 helps us see this clearly. The vine—our gospel life and growth—comes from the Holy Spirit. The trellis—the supportive structure—is our church's gathered rhythms: worship, Gospel Communities, and discipleship. As the Spirit gives growth, the trellis provides strength and shape.



In time, Local Elders emerge from within this life together. Their calling becomes evident, Lord willing, as they faithfully facilitate the growth of others, shepherding the community through our shared rhythms and building people up in Christ. These men, deeply immersed in and shaped by Redeemer's DNA, will mark the transition from provisional oversight to a permanent, elder-led leadership. Their intimate understanding of Redeemer ensures a smooth transition that preserves our integrity and vision while upholding the biblical pattern for church leadership.

### Qualifications and Role

The qualifications for a Provisional Elder are established according to the biblical criteria in Titus 1:5–9 and 1 Timothy 3:1–7. These include being above reproach, devoted in personal and family life, sound in their understanding of doctrine, and leading a lifestyle that mirrors humility, self-control, uprightness, and holiness.

The role of a Provisional Elder involves providing oversight, encouragement, and accountability to the Lead Pastor as he shepherds the local flock, while themselves exemplifying Christlike behavior and adhering to sound doctrine. They serve eagerly and willingly, not under compulsion or for personal gain, as stated in 1 Peter 5:1–5. **In practice, their function is closer to trustees in Baptist polity—providing accountability, legal responsibility, and organizational oversight—rather than acting as shepherds of the flock.**

### Accountability

As underlined in Titus 1:10–16, 1 Timothy 5:17, and 1 Timothy 5:19, Provisional Elders are accountable to each other, to the Redeemer Network, and to the Lead Pastor they oversee. Provisional Elders maintain regular check-ins with the Lead Pastor. If any accusations of misconduct or false teaching are raised against any elder, whether Provisional or Local, they must be rigorously investigated and corroborated by at least two or three witnesses as per 1 Timothy 5:19. This process ensures transparency, fairness, and upholds the integrity of the church. **Only in extraordinary circumstances, such as the incapacitation or death of the Lead Pastor, would Provisional Elders exercise direct responsibility for Redeemer's future.**

### Conclusion

The role of a Provisional Elder at Redeemer Church is a critical stepping-stone toward cultivating a leadership body composed of Local Elders. This structure safeguards the spiritual health and direction of our church during its foundational phase, ensuring the continuation of solid, biblically grounded leadership as the church matures and is established. **At times, confusion may arise if expectations are placed on Provisional Elders that do not match their biblical or functional role. For this reason, it is important to be clear: they exist to serve as a transitional board of accountability and counsel until local elders are raised up within Redeemer.**