



Session #5: *The Man* – Mark Driscoll

Qualifications of the Lead Planter: The Dude

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Preface

Even a cursory reading of the Bible reveals that when God wants to get something done, He starts by selecting a dude to lead that change and works through that dude. Examples include sparing humanity (Noah), founding a nation (Abraham), liberating a nation (Moses), establishing a throne (David), building a Temple (Solomon), preparing hearts (John the Baptizer), reaching Gentiles (Paul), and redeeming creation (Jesus).

Therefore, a church cannot be successfully planted and expect to survive if it is not led by a dude who obediently follows God as He speaks through Scripture and leads through the Spirit. To qualify as a church planter, a man must therefore meet the criteria set in Scripture for an elder, as well as the additional requirements necessary for a church planter.

Part 1 – Qualified Eldership

The elder qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:5–9 are virtually identical and are the basic minimal criteria that should be expected of any man being considered for eldership. Therefore, the lead planter must at least meet these minimal criteria if he hopes to plant a church that honors God and one that the Holy Spirit blesses. The following criteria are taken from 1 Timothy 3:1–7:

1. Relation to God

- A man — masculine leader, not a female
- Above reproach — without any character defect
- Able to teach — effective Bible communicator
- Not a new convert — mature Christian

2. Relation to Family

- Husband of one wife — one-woman man, sexually pure
- Has obedient children — successful father
- Manages family well — provides for, leads, organizes, loves

3. Relation to Self

- Temperate — mentally and emotionally stable
- Self-controlled — disciplined life of sound decision-making
- Not given to drunkenness — without addictions
- Not a lover of money — financially content and upright

4. Relation to Others

- Respectable — worth following and imitating
- Hospitable — welcomes strangers, especially non-Christians for evangelism
- Not violent — even-tempered



- Gentle — kind, gracious, loving
- Not contentious — peaceable, not quarrelsome/divisive
- Good reputation with outsiders — respected by non-Christians

Part 2 — Competent Eldership

The lead elder in a church plant is setting a precedent for what faithful pastoral leadership is in that church. Therefore, the lead pastor in a church plant must not only have character, which qualifies him to lead God's people, but also the competency to accomplish the duties Jesus his Senior Pastor has assigned him. The duties of the elders are many according to Scripture. Until an elder team is in place, the lead elder who founds the church should expect to work as a generalist doing the following duties. Elders, deacons, and members can share the load once the church leadership formalizes a few years into the church plant.

- Prayer and Scripture study (Acts 6:4)
- Ruling/leading the church (1 Timothy 5:17)
- Managing the church (1 Timothy 3:4-5)
- Caring for people in the church (1 Peter 5:2-5)
- Giving account to God for the church (Hebrews 13:17)
- Living exemplary lives (Hebrews 13:7)
- Rightly using the authority God has given them (Acts 20:28)
- Teaching the Bible correctly (Ephesians 4:11; 1 Timothy 3:2)
- Preaching (1 Timothy 5:17)
- Praying for the sick (James 5:13-15)
- Teaching sound doctrine and refuting false teachings (Titus 1:9)
- Working hard (1 Thessalonians 5:12)
- Rightly using money and power (1 Peter 5:1-3)
- Protecting the church from false teachers (Acts 20:17-31)
- Disciplining unrepentant Christians (Matthew 18:15-17)



Part 3 – The Church Planting Elder

Because church planting is so unlike pastoring an existing church, there are requirements for a founding, church planting lead elder in addition to those of a typical elder. A church planter must be willing to embrace and execute these if he hopes to be the dude. They include the following:

- Gifts as apostle, leader, evangelist, and teacher
- Life of passionately following Jesus that is worth following (1 Corinthians 11:1) and imitating (Hebrews 13:7)
- Ability to pull the church toward God’s mission with the strength of an ox (1 Timothy 5:17–18)
- Fight for the purity of the church with the toughness of a warrior (2 Timothy 2:3–4)
- Live a life of discipline so that he can compete with the skill of an athlete (2 Timothy 2:5)
- Work tirelessly like a farmer who is up before the sun doing his job every day (2 Timothy 2:6)
- Serve as the only elder until elders are appointed a few years into the church plant
- Lead the church as the first among equals when the elder team is in place

Mark Driscoll founded Mars Hill Church (www.marshillchurch.org) in Seattle in the fall of 1996, which has grown to over 6,000 people. He co-founded and is president of the Acts 29 Church Planting Network, which has planted over one hundred churches in the U.S. and internationally. Most recently, he founded the Resurgence Missional Theology Cooperative (www.theresurgence.com). His writing includes the books *The Radical Reformation: Reaching Out Without Selling Out* and *Confessions of a Reformation Rev.: Hard Lessons from an Emerging Missional Church*. He also contributed to the book *Listening to the Beliefs of Emerging Churches*. His forthcoming works include a chapter in *Above All Earthly Powers*, edited by Dr. John Piper, and the books *Vintage Jesus* and *Death by Love*. Most enjoyably, Mark and his high school sweetheart, Grace, delight in raising their three sons and two daughters.