

Responsibility of Elders for Oversight of Teaching

1. Oversight starts with accountability, not control

Biblically, elders are:

- *overseers* (Acts 20:28)
- *shepherds* (1 Pet 5:2–3)
- *stewards* (Titus 1:7)

That means:

- They answer to God for the church's teaching
- They cannot outsource that responsibility
- They must be able to say, "*this teaching is ours*"

If they can't own it, they aren't overseeing it.

2. Oversight is relational before it is procedural

In the New Testament:

- Elders know the people
- Teachers are known by elders
- Doctrine is guarded through relationship

Legitimate oversight requires:

- Mutual trust
- Open access
- Willingness to be corrected on both sides

If elders don't know what is being taught until after the fact, oversight has already failed.

3. Elders must be involved before, during, and after

Before teaching

Elders:

- Know the teacher
- Know the subject
- Agree on boundaries
- Clarify the purpose (instruction, exhortation, testimony)

This is not micromanagement.

It is shared clarity.

During teaching

At least one elder:

- Is present
- Is attentive
- Is responsible for discernment

This mirrors:

1 Corinthians 14:29 (NET) *“the others should evaluate what is said”*

Oversight is not theoretical.

It is **active listening**.

After teaching

Elders:

- Are available for questions
- Address confusion or error
- Affirm what was good
- Correct what was not

If correction never happens, oversight is cosmetic.

4. Elders must retain final doctrinal responsibility

This is the non-negotiable line.

Legitimate oversight means:

- Elders decide what is normative
- Elders correct publicly if needed
- Elders bear the consequences

If a teacher can:

- Set doctrine
- Shape belief
- Define boundaries

Without elder correction, then the teacher is functioning as an elder.

That is true regardless of gender.

5. Oversight includes the right to say “no”

Real oversight means:

- Elders can stop teaching
- Elders can redirect content
- Elders can remove a teacher if necessary

If elders lack the moral authority or courage to intervene, oversight is pretend.

6. Oversight does not mean scripting

Oversight is **not**:

- Pre-written manuscripts
- Constant policing
- Fear-based approval

- Personality control

If oversight kills joy, honesty, or truthfulness, it has become domination.

1 Peter 5:3 (NET) *“not as lording it over those entrusted to you”*

7. Oversight applies to elders themselves

This is critical.

Elders must:

- Submit to one another
- Welcome correction
- Be evaluated by the body
- Live transparently

An elder who cannot be questioned cannot legitimately oversee anyone.

8. How this protects women *and* the church

Proper oversight:

- Prevents women from being isolated targets
- Prevents silent power grabs
- Prevents doctrinal drift
- Keeps authority visible and accountable

It also allows:

- Women to teach without bearing inappropriate authority
- The church to hear gifts without confusion
- Elders to shepherd rather than control

9. Signs of fake oversight (red flags)

- Elders absent but “approved it”

- No feedback loop
- No correction ever given
- Oversight invoked only when problems arise
- Women allowed to teach until controversy appears

That's not oversight.

That's abdication.

10. A one-sentence definition

Legitimate elder oversight is when elders knowingly, actively, and publicly share responsibility for what is taught, retain authority to correct it, and bear accountability for its effects.

Anything less is a rubber stamp.