

## Pastor/ Elder

The Pastor is an elder (outside of specific areas, anytime elders are mentioned, the pastor is also assumed as such). Their responsibilities and qualifications are the same for the most part. The pastor (poimen) is responsible for the oversight of the undershepherding of the vision of the church (I Peter 5: 1-4; examples include Moses, Timothy and James) while the elders as a whole are responsible for the affairs of the church (I Timothy 5:17). While being different responsibilities at a quick glance, these roles work together in a very tight way where these roles overlap and intertwine 70%-80%. The elders (including the pastor) would be accountable to God and to each other while communicating to the church family.

Communication - This communication can come in the form of Family Meetings, reports, or other forms of communication as each situation calls for. We are going to be having two family meeting each year (one at the beginning of the year, one in the middle of the year) and then others if needs arise.

The elders are an oversight group for the church. They meet at least once a month for study, prayer, and to direct the affairs of the church (I Timothy 5: 17; I Timothy 3: 4-5). Other responsibilities include to correct others who are not holding onto sound doctrine (Titus 1:9); able to teach (I Timothy 3:2); finances (Acts 11: 29-30); have input and make leadership decisions on issues within the church (Acts 15); praying for the sick when called upon (James 5: 14-15); lay hands on people in prayer as they are called into ministry (I Timothy 4:14); able to be a good example and standing for those outside the church (I Timothy 3:7).

Finances - At this point of our church life, the elders will continue to oversee and administer the finances and provide communication to the church family via reports. The long term goal as the church grows is to add a Financial Committee to assist in these affairs. Once the new eldership is in place, one of their first charges is to review our current financial policies for adjustments to the new leadership structure.

Qualifications - The qualifications of elders are listed in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. We also require that anyone serving in the role of pastor or elder will be in Covenant Relationship with the church.

"of one wife" - In the area of "of one wife", we will have the position that this is a matter of heart. Any case of divorce and remarriage will be prayed over on a case by case scenario as we look at the heart of the individual. We believe in forgiveness and "of one wife" is a matter of heart. For this reason, we will use prayer and discernment to find individuals who are examples to our community of Biblically outlined principles in their life.

Gender of Elders - In the area of rather or not elders need to be men or can women serve in this role: This is still a matter of prayer and loving debate. At this point, it appears we do not wish to limit who God may raise up into this role even though there is an agreement that men generally are better suited for this role. There is a belief that if we are truly seeking who God is raising up and if God wishes for men to be in this role....then this will continue to show itself as time moves on. There is a concern that we could possibly stop someone who God may raise up into this role if we hold too tightly to what appears to be a cultural teaching yet aware that there are great points that have been given on why men may be better suited for this role as a general guideline.

New Convert – Paul warns that a new convert should not be an elder. In the same way, one who is new to the Fellowship should not be considered for eldership. An elder for the community should be one who has been tested and proven sincere. One who has already exhibited these qualities and have the respect of the church family. It would be wise for any person who is being considered for eldership (rather new to the church or from the date someone enters into a new relationship with Christ) to have been active within the church community for at least a year including already being in covenant relationship and showing a commitment to this covenant.

Public Rebuke – In the event that an elder is submitting to a sin, it is the role of the other elders to rebuke them and counsel them. If this elder does not submit to the rebuke and continue in a sinful lifestyle (again not speaking of struggling with sin but embracing a sin), then the elders are to rebuke this elder with the full knowledge of the other elders so the other elders can take warning (I Timothy 5: 17-21) and that elder will be removed from eldership.

Concerning the rest of the church, anytime an elder is removed will be a tough situation the church has been thrust into. It will be revealed to the church that the elder has been removed and a general idea of the sin (ie: sexual sin, financial sin). While some will want to know more details, there will be a need to address things on a case by case scenario to protect the needs of the spouse, children, or others who may be effected by this one person's choice.

Another contributing factor could be if the sin is hidden or if it is within the church and affects the community directly. Again, all sensitivities are going to be explored to protect those who could be hurt but at times public sins do warrant more talk for those left in the wake. These times will take great care and prayer. Elders do need to be aware of this as they enter into the calling.

How elders are appointed – Long Term

It is the responsibility for the elders to find, appoint, and call a new elder that God is raising into that calling. This is done by accepting nominations from the church family of others or one's self as well as nominations the elders themselves may be aware of. Once these names have been reviewed as to the qualifications of an elder and prayed over, the elders will meet with possible candidates and their families to assess their interest and to make sure they have their family's support. From these individuals, the elders will determine the

person to take the role of elder and in a public service, lay hands on them to pray over them and call them into service.

Short Term – The current leadership team will serve as the elders for this task as their last act of leadership. They will collect the information, meet with possible individuals, and pray over the nominations. If some of the nominations include people who are currently on the leadership team, we will add additional interim members to the team from long term church covenant members to assist in the search instead of selecting ourselves. After this search, future searches will follow the above process.

Also, in the short term, as the initial leadership is put into place, a strategy for a staggering process will be into place for when these elders will be up for sabbatical rest as to not cause future concerns. The details for this process will be better determined as we find how many elders will be on the initial team.

In the long term, as the church grows, we will look again at possibly adding to the process an elder mentorship program where identified future elders will work with the eldership in a mentor manner to assist in best leadership action for the church.

How an elder resigns – If for any reason, an elder feels the need to resign from this role, it would simply take talking with the other elders. The other elders would be responsible to talk through any issues that may arise, tend to any spiritual needs that individual may need, and to accept the resignation if the individual still feels the leading to do so. It is for the elders to work with that individual to pray over and use discernment on how to announce this change to the church family.

How an elder is removed – As always, any concerns or situations should be talked through and prayed over to find unity and healing. From time to time, there could be a situation where an elder is not acting in accordance to the Biblical mandates for the qualifications of an elder or be exhibiting that they should not be an elder yet refuse to take that break on a volunteer basis. After all communications and options are looked at, it would take the full agreement of the other elders for an elder to be removed. The same care as for public rebuke would be used in this situation to communicate why an elder was removed.

Rest – The role of an elder is an honorable role within our church that also can take its toll. At the same time, we have identified some possible concerns within term limits.

The process we are working with for elders is their terms will be 2 years long. However, at the end of a term, instead of automatically being removed, there is a several step process that will aid in identifying who may be prepared for a follow-up term and who may be needing a period of rest. The first step is to ask the sitting elder if they are feeling led to another term. If not, then we honor them by letting them take this step. If so, then two other components are added. First, there is asked for a "vote of confidence" from the church family that they feel the elder is doing a great job and should be allowed to continue or if they feel the elder needs rest. The other elders will also do a peer review of that elder to determine the same. The input from these areas will be reviewed by the elders and a joint decision will be made if that elder should serve another term or take a rest.

## Pastor hiring and firing –

If the pastor position becomes available, it is the role of the elders to locate possible candidates for that calling. They will have these individuals spend some time with the church family, preach at the church, and then gather information from the church family as to their insight on the individuals. Then after review of this information and great prayer, it is the elders' role to call a pastor to this position.

If there are concerns with a pastor, they should first be taken to the pastor for further communication. However the eldership is there to serve as a team resource to help facilitate a concern that is not settled. If a concern is great and the pastor is unwilling to work with the elders or the appropriate individuals, it is the task of the elders to know when it is time to release a pastor from their role. When explaining this decision to the church family, the same care should be given to the exiting pastor and their family as explained in the public rebuke of an elder.

## Deacons

One of the main Scriptures for Deacon's is found in Acts 6: 1-7

Within this Scripture, it appears the main task of the deacon's is to have oversight of the care for those in need (widows, orphans). The general thought we have is we would have two focuses in our situation that deacon's would be charged with....what are the emotional crisis and material needs within our community of the church family and what are the needs of those in the community around us? These would be individuals taking oversight of things such as encouragement team, the Stephen Fund, and the like. They would be working with the pastor on things such as prayer needs, people in financial and material need in everyday life, and outreach into the community. They would not be over the day to day operational needs of the church as these will fall to roles within the Ministry Support team.

Deacon appointment – The deacons will be appointed by the church family and confirmed and called by the elders. The following is that process....

The current deacons will facilitate the process. They will accept nominations from people within the church family who can nominate another or themselves. The deacons will investigate and interview those nominated to discuss through the Biblical qualifications (I Timothy 3: 8-13) and make sure the individuals are willing to serve in this role. Then the deacons will facilitate the selection of those willing and able to serve with the church family. The person selected by the church will then be presented to the elders and they will do a search of the Biblical qualifications of the role and if that individual qualifies, the elders will confirm the choice of the church family by laying hands on and calling the individual. The

elders can only decide to not call an individual due to the Biblical guidelines, not because they agree or disagree with the selection of the church family.

For the first time selection as we enter into this new leadership structure, the new elder team will be in place before this selection. One of their first roles will be to facilitate this process with the church. After that point, it will turn over to the deacons.

Accountability – The deacons will be accountable to the elders by working with the pastor as well as submitting reports monthly to the elder team. They are also responsible to communicate with the church family at the two set family meetings, the meetings of the ministries that fall under their calling, and other ways as needed.

Term Limits – The same process for sabbatical rest as defined for the elders will apply to the deacons but will include input from both the deacons and elders. The elders would have the burden of reviewing all input given and making the joint decision if the deacon should serve another term or take a rest.

How a Deacon Resigns – If for any reason, a deacon feels the need to resign from this role, the first step is talking with the other deacons. The other deacons would be responsible to talk through any issues that may arise and tend to any spiritual needs that individual may need. If this does not resolve any possible concerns, they would then come and meet with the elders to facilitate any possible concerns and to accept the resignation if the individual still feels the leading to do so. It is for the elders to work with that individual to pray over and use discernment on how to announce this change to the church family.

How a Deacon is Removed - As always, any concerns or situations should be talked through and prayed over to find unity and healing. From time to time, there could be a situation where an deacon is not acting in accordance to the Biblical mandates for the qualifications of an deacon or be exhibiting that they should not be an deacon yet refuse to take that break on a volunteer basis. After all communications and options are looked at, it would take the full agreement of the elders for an deacon to be removed. The same care as for public rebuke would be used in this situation to communicate why an deacon was removed.

Covenant Relationship – It is required that an individual wishing to seek this calling would be in covenant relationship with the church.

Concerns – If there are any concerns with a deacon, this would first be handled with the pastor and the deacons. If this does not resolve the conflict, it would then go to the elders. If the concern is still not able to be resolved, it would be the responsibility of the elders to decide a new step or removal of a deacon.

### Ministry Support Team

Ministry Support Team are roles such as Worship Leader, Youth Leader, Church Sectary, Home Group Coordinator, and the like rather or not they are a paid or volunteer role. This is

not a role in the first century church so there is not a lot of black and white instruction as such. However, we can learn much from Scripture, the example of the creation of a new role in the first century church like deacons were, and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

First these roles must be people who meet the heart of the requirements laid out for elders and deacons in the letters to Timothy and Titus as studied before.

These positions are charged with the day to day care of the overall vision of the church so these roles would report first to the pastor of the church who is charged with this responsibility. If someone in one of these roles had a concern and they were not able to support the findings while working with the pastor, they would be able to come to the elders as a whole for further facilitation in these situations as a second resource but should not be the normal process in the working relationship.

The selection of individuals for these roles would involve input from the church family as a whole and then called by the pastor in agreement with the other elders

The removal of someone in one of these roles would be the responsibility of the pastor in agreement with the elders.

Ministry Support Team members would not be able to serve as an elder and/or deacon.

Ministry Support Team members must be in covenant relationship with the church.

### Family Member

This portion will continue to be shaped as we continue to study, pray over, and review the Covenant Relationship commitments. More to come soon.

### Living Document

This is a living document which means it will be constantly be open to review by the eldership for future changes or adjustments as lead by the Spirit. If you have a concern or thought about this document, please see a member of the Eldership for communication and review. A change in this document needs full support of the elders.