



FirstDenton

Bylaws and Governance Review Task Force

New Governance Model Presentation

October 2024



New Model Presentation

Foreword

Over the past several months, our committee has dedicated hundreds of hours to prayer, research, and thoughtful discussion regarding the governance structure of our church. As we have examined our current Committee Led Congregational Rule Model, it has become increasingly clear that while this model allows for a high level of congregational engagement and ownership, it also presents significant challenges, especially as our church continues to grow and evolve.

Through our analysis, we have identified several key benefits of our current model, such as the high degree of input and control given to the congregation through committee appointments, and the sense of ownership it fosters among our members. However, we have also recognized critical drawbacks, including the fatigue experienced by the congregation when handling complex issues, the potential for emotional or reactionary decision-making, and the overlapping jurisdictional issues that can arise within and between our committees. These challenges often lead to inefficiencies and blurred lines of authority, which can hinder our ability to effectively carry out the mission and vision of our church. These challenges are not unique to us; they are inherent to the congregational committee model of governance we currently have. These are structural conflicts, and merely changing the people involved will only delay the recurrence of the same issues in the future.

In light of these findings, we have sought to explore alternative governance models that can better support the continued growth and health of our church. Our focus has been on developing a model that is not only biblically sound but also practical, sustainable, and reflective of our commitment to the furtherance of a Christ-centered ministry. This journey has led us to the proposed transition to an elder-led governance model—a structure that we believe will provide the necessary stability, clarity, and spiritual oversight as we move forward together.

As we present this new model to you, we want to assure you that our goal is to create a structure that promotes ministry and service, fosters open dialogue between leadership and the congregation, and ensures that all decisions are made with wisdom, prudence, and love. We are confident that this model will allow our church to navigate the complexities of growth while remaining steadfast in our mission to serve Christ and His people.

We invite you to join us in prayer as we seek God's guidance in this important transition. It is our hope and prayer that this proposed new governance model will enable us to better fulfill the calling God has placed on our church, equipping every member—both women and men—to serve faithfully and effectively in the roles He has prepared for them.

In His Name,
-Bylaws and Governance Review Task Force

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Committee Information

Creation:

The Bylaws and Governance Review Task Force was created by a vote of the congregation on January 24, 2024 at a quarterly business meeting, arising from a motion made by Member Lealand Dean, Sr. The Members were then selected by the Nominating Committee, and were confirmed by the congregation on April 17, 2024.

The Members of the Bylaws and Governance Review Task Force Committee are:

- George Coleman, Chairman
- Marc Moffitt, Vice Chair/Secretary
- David Carl, Member
- Lealand Dean, Sr, Member
- Robb Dean, Member
- Michael Deason, Member
- Dylan Lee, Member

Special Thanks:

We would like to offer a special “thank you” to the following individuals and groups:

- **Our Wives:**

We are deeply grateful to our wives and families for their support throughout this process. We acknowledge the sacrifices you have made, including the time we have spent away from home, in order to complete the task we were given.

- **The Congregation:**

We thank the congregation for their continued prayers and patience throughout this process. This has been a significant project that has taken much longer to complete than any of us anticipated.

- **Church Staff:**

We thank the staff for their time and effort in engaging with us. We also thank you for your honest and direct feedback, as well as for your heart to serve this church.

- **Third Parties:**

We thank the many third parties who freely and willingly offered their advice and counsel throughout this process, sacrificing their own time and resources. Your involvement was crucial to our progress and success.

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Background and Initial Research

Definitions

We define the following terms for use as a foundation in moving forward.

Elder: A Servant Leader

The scriptures define an Elder as a shepherd, having responsibility before God for the care and nurturing of the church. They are to protect, admonish and/or discipline, encourage, ordain, anoint the sick to be healed, see to it that no one comes short of the grace of God, ward off a root of bitterness, worship, disciple, and rule, by plural leadership through service as Jesus' example. In simple terms Elders are to know, feed, lead , and protect the flock.

Deacon: A Lead Servant

The role of a deacon is to support the church's leaders (Elders/Pastors), and serve in meeting the body's needs.

Pastor: A shepherd, spiritual leader, and vocational minister that meets the biblical qualifications of an Elder as defined in the New Testament.

They are to protect, admonish, encourage, ordain, anoint the sick to be healed, see to it that no one comes short of the grace of God, ward off a root of bitterness, worship, disciple, and rule, by plural leadership through service as Jesus' example.

Minister: A ministry focused vocational leader

Ministers are those performing a service to or on behalf of someone of a higher authority, called to lead a specific type of ministry, such as Youth Minister, or Missions Minister.

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Analysis of our Current Model

Our current model can be described as a Committee Led Congregational Rule Model. This type of model prioritizes the engagement of the congregation at a high level. The level of congregational involvement in the governance process is the primary benefit of this type of governance model. The primary drawbacks for this model relate to the interaction of the committees, overlapping jurisdictional issues, and congregational fatigue from handling complex matters.

- **Benefits of the Congregational Model**
 - High level of congregational input and control
 - Decisions are made directly from the body
 - Members can have a high degree of knowledge of operational issues
 - High degree of “ownership” among members
- **Drawbacks of Congregational Models these issues are inherent to this model**
 - Body can become fatigued with handling complex issues
 - Highly dependent on specific personality types
 - Decisions of the body may be emotional or reactionary & without full knowledge of the issues
 - There are unclear jurisdictional boundaries when complex issues arise
 - Committees may become politicized over time
 - Members may seek to gain “perceived political power”
 - Members may begin to “stack” committees to achieve an agenda
 - The constant voting on issues will continue to fatigue the body
 - Desire to serve may wane and ultimately end up with “warm bodies” who lack real enthusiasm for the tasks at hand.
- **Drawbacks of Congregational Model as Churches Grow and Scale**
 - Unqualified/underqualified committee members due to a lack of vetting or training.
 - Issues in larger churches grow in complexity, often requiring a professional background or experience in those issues or topics.
 - Church body lacks (practical) authority to hold committees as a whole or individual members accountable for failure to serve the body.
 - Committees can experience scope creep, leading to an encroachment on the operational authority of church leadership, as decisions that should be managed by staff increasingly are assumed under committee control.
 - Complex decisions may require multiple committees to review.
 - This causes the decision process to follow the calendar of the committee(s). *Example: X Committee does not meet again for two more months... No decision can be made until then.*
 - Jurisdictional Boundaries can become blurred or violated

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- Lack of clarity in Human Resource (HR) matters:
 - Examples:
 - "Do I have to get committee approval for this?"
 - Who does the Senior Pastor report to?
 - Senior Pastor is handcuffed on setting a broad vision
 - How does the Executive Pastor manage a large team all on his own?
 - Committee members with no management or supervisory experience making significant and highly impactful personnel decisions.
 - Committee members without clear understanding of complex state and national laws governing HR.
 - Employee Handbook and Policy Manual may become outdated.
- Outdated Bylaws (most churches review their bylaws on a regular basis, we do not have a review/revision cycle.)
 - Bylaws are silent in many areas of significance which leads to vague interpretation and erosion of jurisdictional boundaries.
 - Bylaws lack (practical) consequences for actions of staff or members who are "Out of Order".
 - No clear authority to recall committee members for acting "Out of Order".

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Biblical References We Relied Upon

The Church

The Identity of The Church

According to the Bible, the church is not merely a building or an institution but the collective body of believers in Jesus Christ. It is a spiritual community, united by faith, and called to live out the teachings of Christ. The church is described in various ways throughout Scripture, with several major themes that define its nature and purpose:

1. The Body of Christ

Scriptural Reference: [Colossians 1:18](#); [1 Corinthians 12:12-27](#); [Ephesians 1:22-23](#)

Theme: The church is the Body of Christ, featuring Christ's role as the head who provides direction and life. The church is composed of diverse members, each with unique roles, yet all united in one Spirit and interdependent, needing one another to function properly. As the Body of Christ, the church is the tangible expression of His presence in the world, called to embody His purpose, power, and mission.

2. The Bride of Christ

Scriptural Reference: [2 Corinthians 11:2](#); [Revelations 21:2,9](#); [Revelation 19:7-9](#)

Theme: The church is described as the "Bride of Christ," symbolizing a deep, intimate, exclusive, and sacred relationship with Christ that is characterized by purity, devotion, and faithfulness, with Christ as the loving and sacrificial husband who sanctifies and prepares the church for eternal union.

3. Owned by God

Scriptural Reference: [Acts 20:28](#); [Revelations 5:9](#)

Theme: The church is owned by God. This ownership implies that Christ has ultimate authority over the church, which He established through His sacrifice. Church leaders are reminded of their role as stewards, serving under Christ's headship, and the global church is depicted as a diverse, redeemed community belonging to Christ alone. These verses collectively highlight the profound spiritual truth that the church is not an institution but redeemed and owned by Christ through His sacrificial love.

4. The Children and Family of God

Scriptural Reference: [John 1:12](#); [Ephesians 2:19](#); [Galatians 6:10](#)

Theme: The church is referred to as the "household" or "family of God," indicating that believers are adopted into God's family through faith in Christ. This theme emphasizes the relational aspect of the church, where believers are brothers and sisters in Christ, sharing a common identity and purpose.

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5. A Holy Temple

Scriptural Reference: [1 Corinthians 3:16-17](#); [Ephesians 2:19-22](#); [1 Peter 2:5](#)

Theme: The church is described as a "holy temple" or "spiritual house," where God dwells by His Spirit. This theme underscores the sacredness of the church as a dwelling place in its members by God and the importance of holiness and purity.

6. The Pillar and Foundation of the Truth

Scriptural Reference: [1 Timothy 3:15](#)

Theme: The church is called the "pillar and foundation of the truth," signifying its role in upholding and proclaiming the truth of God's Word. This theme stresses the church's responsibility to teach and maintain doctrinal integrity.

7. The Flock of God

Scriptural Reference: [John 10:14-16](#); [1 Peter 5:1-3](#)

Theme: The church is depicted as a flock with Christ as the Good Shepherd. This theme highlights the care, protection, and guidance that Christ provides to His church, as well as the responsibility of church leaders (elders, pastors) to shepherd the congregation.

8. A Light to the World

Scriptural Reference: [Matthew 5:14-16](#); [Philippians 2:15](#)

Theme: The church is called to be "a light to the world," reflecting the light of Christ in a dark world. This theme emphasizes the church's mission to evangelize, serve, and bear witness to the Gospel, showing the love and truth of Christ to all people.

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The Role of the Church

The role of the Church according to the Bible is to glorify God. This encompasses several key priorities, as described in various passages of the New Testament. The church glorifies God by/through:

1. **Worship of God:** The Church exists to worship and glorify God. [Ephesians 1:12](#), states believers are "for the praise of His glory." The Church glorifies God through prayer, song, teaching, and communion.
2. **Service and Charity:** The Church is called to serve others, especially those in need. [James 1:27](#) describes "pure and faultless" religion as caring for orphans and widows. The Church is to be a model of Christ's love and compassion in the world.
3. **Teaching and Preaching the Word:** The Church is responsible for teaching and preaching the Word of God. This is emphasized in [2 Timothy 4:2](#), where Paul instructs Timothy to "preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage, with great patience and careful instruction."
4. **Fellowship and Community:** The Church is a community of believers who support and encourage one another. [Acts 2:42](#) describes the early Church as devoted to "the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."
5. **Discipleship and Spiritual Growth:** The Church is tasked with making disciples of all nations, as seen in the Great Commission ([Matthew 28:19-20](#)). This involves nurturing believers in their faith, helping them to grow spiritually.
6. **Evangelism and Missions:** The Church is called to spread the Gospel, proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ to the world. [Acts 1:8](#) speaks of believers being witnesses "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." [Matthew 28:19-20](#) also says to "go and make disciples of all nations..." .

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Functions of the Local Church

These functions together describe the holistic mission of the local Church as it seeks to fulfill its role as the body of Christ in the world. These functions can be summarized as follows:

1. **Worship:** The Church gathers to worship God, glorifying Him through collective praise, prayer, and observance of ordinances. Worship is central to the life of the Church ([John 4:24](#); [Ephesians 5:19-20](#)).
2. **Teaching and Instruction:** The Church is responsible for teaching and instructing in the doctrines of the Christian faith. This includes preaching the Word of God, educating believers, and promoting spiritual growth, in order to equip the saints for the work of the ministry ([2 Timothy 3:16-17](#); [Acts 2:42](#); [Ephesians 4:11-12](#)).
3. **Fellowship:** The Church fosters a sense of community and belonging among believers. Fellowship involves mutual support, encouragement, and accountability, helping members to grow in their faith ([Hebrews 10:24-25](#); [Acts 2:42](#)).
4. **Discipleship:** The Church is tasked with making disciples, which involves leading people to faith in Christ and nurturing them in spiritual maturity. This includes mentoring, teaching, and providing opportunities for spiritual growth ([Matthew 28:19-20](#); [Colossians 1:28](#)).
5. **Evangelism:** The Church is called to spread the Gospel, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with others. Evangelism is a key function of the Church, reaching out to non-believers and inviting them to believe in Christ and to obtain eternal life through faith alone without works. ([Acts 1:8](#); [Romans 10:14-15](#)).
6. **Service and Ministry:** The Church serves the needs of its members and the broader community. This includes acts of charity, caring for the poor, the sick, and those in need. The Church is to be a visible expression of Christ's love ([James 1:27](#); [Galatians 6:10](#)).
7. **Prayer:** The Church is devoted to prayer, both corporately and individually. Prayer is essential for maintaining a relationship with God, seeking His guidance, and interceding for others ([Acts 2:42](#); [Philippians 4:6](#)).
8. **Administration of Ordinances:** The Church administers the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper (Communion). These are outward symbols of inward spiritual realities and acts of obedience to Christ ([Matthew 28:19](#); [1 Corinthians 11:23-26](#)).
9. **Discipline and Correction:** The Church maintains order and purity within the Christian community by practicing discipline when necessary. This includes addressing sin, correcting error, and restoring those who have fallen ([Matthew 18:15-17](#); [1 Corinthians 5:12-13](#)).

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10. **Edification of the Body:** The Church is meant to build up and strengthen the faith of its members, encouraging spiritual growth and maturity. This includes the use of spiritual gifts for the benefit of the body ([Ephesians 4:11-16](#); [Romans 12:3-8](#); [1 Corinthians 12:4-11](#)).
11. **Missions:** The Church is called to participate in God's mission to reconcile us to Him. This includes sending missionaries, supporting global evangelism, and working for justice and peace ([Matthew 28:19-20](#); [Micah 6:8](#), [2 Corinthians 5:17-20](#)).

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Elders

The Role of Elders

The role of elders in the church is biblically defined as one of responsibility and spiritual leadership. They are responsible for shepherding the flock in accordance with biblical principles, ensuring sound doctrine, and caring for the spiritual well-being of the congregation. Their role is essential in maintaining the spiritual health and doctrinal purity of the church, guiding the congregation in faith, and serving as godly examples for others to follow.

1. Shepherding the Flock

Primary Role:

Elders serve as shepherds of the congregation, caring for the spiritual and sometimes physical needs of the members, guiding them in their faith journey, and protecting them from false teachings.

Biblical References:

- [1 Peter 5:2-3](#): "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care... not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock."
- [Acts 20:28-31](#): Paul exhorts the elders of Ephesus to be vigilant in guarding the church against false teachers and to shepherd the flock with care.
- [Jeremiah 23:4](#): "I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing," declares the Lord."

2. Spiritual Oversight and Leadership

Primary Role:

Elders are tasked with providing spiritual oversight and leadership within the church, ensuring that the church remains faithful to biblical teaching and practice.

Biblical References:

- [1 Peter 5:1-3](#): "To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder... Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock."
- [Acts 20:17-28](#): Paul addresses the elders of Ephesus, reminding them of their responsibility to oversee the church, which has been entrusted to them by the Holy Spirit. He emphasizes the gravity of their role and the accountability they have before God.
- [Hebrews 13:17](#): Believers are to obey their leaders (elders) and submit to their authority because the elders watch over their souls as those who must give an account.

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3. Teaching and Preaching

Primary Role:

Elders are responsible for teaching and preaching the Word of God, ensuring that the congregation receives sound, doctrinally correct instruction.

Biblical References:

- [1 Timothy 5:17](#): "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching."
- [Titus 1:9](#): "He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it."

4. Role Models of Exemplary Christian Character

Primary Role:

Elders are expected to model godly character, living lives that are above reproach and demonstrating the qualities of a mature Christian. This includes being temperate, self-controlled, hospitable, and able to manage their own household well.

Biblical References:

- [1 Timothy 3:1-7](#): The qualifications for elders emphasize traits such as being above reproach, faithful to his spouse, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness nor argumentative nor a trouble maker , but gentle, peaceable, and not given to the love of money.
- [Titus 1:6-9](#): Additional qualifications focus on the importance of integrity, self-discipline, and sound doctrine.
- [2 Timothy 2:2](#): And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrusted to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.
- [Philippians 2:19-20](#): I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare.

5. Overall Governance, Decision-Making, Managing Church Affairs

Primary Role:

Elders are involved in the overall governance and significant decision-making processes of the church, providing spiritual wisdom and guidance in matters that affect its direction, operations, and discipline.

Biblical References:

- [Acts 15:6](#): "The apostles and elders met to consider this question." This passage shows the role of elders in making important decisions in the early church, such as in the Jerusalem Council.

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- [1 Timothy 4:14](#): Elders are involved in the laying on of hands and ordaining others for ministry, indicating their role in church leadership and governance.
- [1 Timothy 5:17](#): "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching."

6. Prayer and Spiritual Support

Primary Role:

Elders are called to be men of prayer, interceding for the congregation, anointing the sick, and providing spiritual support in times of need.

Biblical References:

- [James 5:14-15](#): "Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord."
- [Acts 6:4](#): "and will give our (spiritual leaders) attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."

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Elder Qualifications

The New Testament outlines specific qualifications for elders in the church, primarily found in [1 Timothy 3:1-7](#) and [Titus 1:6-9](#). These qualifications focus on godly character, spiritual maturity, and the ability to lead and teach. Elders are to be examples of godliness, managing their households well, and maintaining a good reputation both inside and outside the church. Their lives are to reflect the values and teachings of Christ, demonstrating a commitment to the well-being of the church and the faithful teaching of God's Word. Below are the key qualifications:

1. Above Reproach

Definition: The elder must live a life that is blameless (above reproach), free from any serious accusations or scandal.

Biblical References:

- [1 Timothy 3:2](#): "Now the overseer is to be above reproach..."
- [Titus 1:6-7](#): "An elder must be blameless..."

2. Faithful to His Wife (Husband of One Wife/One Woman Man)

Definition: The elder must be devoted to his wife, demonstrating marital faithfulness and integrity.

Biblical References:

- [1 Timothy 3:2](#): "faithful to his wife..."
- [Titus 1:6](#): "faithful to his wife..."

3. Temperate

Definition: The elder must be sensible, reasonable, prudent, and rational, exhibiting moderation and self-control in all aspects of life.

Biblical Reference:

- [1 Timothy 3:2](#): "temperate..."

4. Self-Controlled

Definition: The elder must demonstrate discipline, particularly in personal behavior and decision-making.

Biblical References:

- [1 Timothy 3:2](#): "self-controlled..."
- [Titus 1:8](#): "self-controlled..."

5. Not Lording Over

Definition: The elder must not seek the position for status, power, or the pleasure of exercising unauthorized authority over others to satisfy his pride.

Biblical References:

- [1 Peter 5:3](#): "not lording it over those entrusted to you..."

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6. Respectable

Definition: The elder must be orderly, well-behaved, and dignified in conduct.

Biblical Reference:

- [1 Timothy 3:2](#): "respectable..."

7. Hospitable

Definition: The elder must be welcoming and generous, especially toward strangers, and willing to open his home to others.

Biblical References:

- [1 Timothy 3:2](#): "hospitable..."
- [Titus 1:8](#): "hospitable..."

8. Able to Teach

Definition: The elder must be capable of teaching and instructing others in sound doctrine, and refuting false teachings.

Biblical References:

- [1 Timothy 3:2](#): "able to teach..."
- [Titus 1:9](#): "He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it."

9. Not Given to Drunkenness

Definition: The elder must not be addicted to wine or alcohol, showing moderation and self-control.

Biblical References:

- [1 Timothy 3:3](#): "not given to drunkenness..."
- [Titus 1:7](#): "not given to drunkenness..."

10. Not Violent but Gentle

Definition: The elder must be peaceable and gentle, avoiding physical aggression and harshness.

Biblical References:

- [1 Timothy 3:3](#): "not violent but gentle..."
- [Titus 1:7](#): "not violent..."

11. Not Quarrelsome or Pugnacious

Definition: The elder must avoid unnecessary conflicts, promoting peace and unity within the church. Does not cause trouble within the body.

Biblical Reference:

- [1 Timothy 3:3](#): "not quarrelsome..."

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12. Not a Lover of Money

Definition: The elder must not be greedy or motivated by financial gain, demonstrating contentment and integrity in financial matters.

Biblical References:

- [1 Timothy 3:3](#): "not a lover of money..."
- [Titus 1:7](#): "not pursuing dishonest gain..."

13. Manages His Own Family Well

Definition: The elder must lead his household with diligence, showing the ability to manage his family in a godly way, with children who respect and obey him.

Biblical References:

- [1 Timothy 3:4-5](#): "He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)"
- [Titus 1:6](#): "...a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient."

14. Not a Recent Convert

Definition: The elder should not be a new believer, to avoid the risk of pride or falling into the devil's trap due to inexperience.

Biblical Reference:

- [1 Timothy 3:6](#): "He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil."

15. Good Reputation with Outsiders

Definition: The elder must have a good reputation outside the church, demonstrating integrity and credibility in the wider community.

Biblical Reference:

- [1 Timothy 3:7](#): "He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap."

16. Loves What Is Good

Definition: The elder must have a genuine love for what is good, seeking righteousness and godliness in all aspects of life.

Biblical Reference:

- [Titus 1:8](#): He must be, "one who loves what is good..."

17. Upright, Holy, and Disciplined

Definition: The elder must live a life that is just, devout, and disciplined, reflecting a commitment to holiness and self-control.

Biblical Reference:

- [Titus 1:8](#): He must be, "upright, holy and disciplined."

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Elder Selection Process

The following steps outline a biblically grounded process for identifying and appointing elders, ensuring they meet the qualifications and are recognized as leaders by the congregation.

1. Identification of Potential Candidates

Scriptural Basis: [Acts 6:3](#); [1 Peter 5:2-3](#)

Members of the congregation, along with current church leadership, identify potential candidates who exhibit the character and qualities outlined in scripture. Candidates should be those who are already serving the church faithfully and exemplify Christlike character.

2. Examination and Evaluation

Scriptural Basis: [1 Timothy 3:10](#); [Titus 1:9](#)

Candidates undergo an evaluation process that includes an examination of their personal life, family life, and doctrinal understanding. This evaluation may involve interviews, written questions and answers, discussions with neighbors, family members, and observations of their ministry. The candidate's adherence to sound doctrine and ability and a record of teaching should be carefully assessed.

3. Congregational Input

Scriptural Basis: [Acts 6:5](#); [1 Timothy 5:19-21](#)

The congregation should be informed of the potential candidates and given an opportunity to provide feedback. Any concerns or affirmations from the congregation should be investigated and considered carefully by the leadership.

4. Affirmation and Appointment

Scriptural Basis: [Acts 14:23](#); [1 Timothy 4:14](#)

After thorough examination, the final candidates are presented to the church for affirmation. The elders will formally appoint the elder candidates. This appointment is accompanied by prayer & fasting and the laying on of hands, symbolizing the church's recognition of God's call on their lives.

5. Ongoing Support and Accountability

Scriptural Basis: [1 Peter 5:1-4](#); [1 Timothy 5:17-20](#)

Once appointed, elders should receive ongoing support through prayer, encouragement, and resources to help them fulfill their responsibilities. They should also be held accountable to the biblical standards of eldership and be subject to regular evaluation to ensure they continue to serve faithfully.

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Elder Accountability

Elders in the Bible are held to a higher standard of accountability due to their role in leading and shepherding the church.

- **God**, as they will ultimately give an account for their leadership and care of the church.
- **Fellow Elders**, with mutual oversight ensuring doctrinal and moral integrity.
- **Scriptural (Higher) Standards**, particularly in their teaching and personal conduct, as they are judged by a higher standard.
- **The Congregation** Elders are subject to the congregation in regard to discipline for falling short of their qualification and standards for eldership.

Here are key aspects of how elders are accountable according to the Bible:

1. Accountability to God ([Hebrews 13:17](#))

Verse: "Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you."

Application: Elders are accountable to God for their leadership. They must give an account to God for how they have shepherded the flock, emphasizing the gravity of their responsibility. This accountability requires them to lead with integrity, diligence, and care.

2. Accountability to the Church ([1 Timothy 5:19-20](#))

Verse: "Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. But those elders who are sinning, you are to reprove before everyone, so that the others may take warning."

Application: Elders are accountable to the church (body). If an elder is found in sin, they are to be publicly rebuked, which serves as a warning to others and maintains the integrity of the church. This underscores the importance of transparency and discipline within church leadership.

3. Accountability to Fellow Elders ([Acts 20:28-31](#))

Verse: "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number, men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears."

Application: Paul exhorts the elders to keep watch over themselves and one another, emphasizing their mutual accountability. Elders are responsible for protecting the church from false teachings and for ensuring that their own conduct aligns with the Gospel. This mutual accountability helps maintain doctrinal purity and moral integrity.

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4. Accountability through Examination and Selection ([1 Timothy 3:1-7](#))

Verse: "Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap."

Application: Before becoming an elder, a person must meet specific qualifications that ensure they are capable and trustworthy. This rigorous process of selection holds elders accountable from the outset, ensuring that those chosen to lead are well-suited to the role and can maintain the church's spiritual and moral standards.

5. Accountability in Teaching ([Titus 1:9](#))

Verse: "He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it."

Application: Elders are accountable for the soundness of their teaching. They must adhere to the true doctrine and be able to refute false teachings, ensuring that they faithfully represent the Gospel. Their teaching is under scrutiny not only from the congregation but also from other leaders, making them responsible for upholding biblical truth.

Verse ([Acts 17:11](#)): "The Berean Jews . . . examined the scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true."

Application: Elders are accountable for the soundness of their teaching; the church is commended for studying the scriptures to make sure the Elders' teachings are scripturally sound.

6. Accountability to a Higher Standard ([James 3:1](#))

Verse: "Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly."

Application: Elders, as teachers and leaders in the church, are subject to a higher level of judgment. This heightened accountability means that elders must be particularly careful in their words, actions, and teachings, knowing they will be judged more strictly by God.

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7. Accountability in Example and Conduct ([1 Peter 5:1-3](#))

Verses: "To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock."

Application: Elders are accountable to the church as examples of Christian living. Their conduct should inspire and guide the congregation, and they must lead by example in humility, service, and integrity.

New Model Presentation

Deacons

The Role of The Deacon

The role of deacons in the church is biblically rooted in service, leadership, and spiritual support within the Christian community. Deacons are called to serve the needs of the congregation, support the ministry of the Word, and model Christian character. Their work ensures that both the spiritual and practical needs of the community are met, allowing the church to function effectively.

1. Servants of the Church

Primary Role:

Deacons are primarily seen as the lead servants within the church, responsible for addressing practical needs so that the elders and pastors can focus on teaching and spiritual oversight.

Biblical References:

- [Acts 6:1-6](#): The origin of the role of deacons is often associated with the selection of seven men to serve the needs of the Hellenistic widows, allowing the apostles to focus on prayer and the ministry of the Word. Though the term "deacon" is not used here, this passage is viewed as the foundation for the role.

2. Assisting with Practical Needs

Primary Role:

Deacons assist with the material and logistical needs of the church, including caring for the poor, managing resources, and serving the congregation in various capacities.

Biblical References:

- [Acts 6:2-3](#): The apostles instructed the church to choose men who were "full of the Spirit and wisdom" to take care of the daily distribution of food, a practical and essential service to the church.

3. Supporting the Ministry of the Word

Primary Role:

By handling the practical, material, and logistical tasks, deacons support the ministry of the Word, allowing pastors and elders to devote themselves to teaching, prayer, and spiritual leadership.

Biblical References:

- [Acts 6:4](#): "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." This verse highlights the division of responsibilities, with deacons providing support so that spiritual leaders (Elders and Pastors) can focus on their primary duties.

New Model Presentation

4. Role Models of Service

Primary Role:

Deacons are expected to be models of Christian character, exhibiting integrity, faithfulness, and a commitment to living out their faith in a way that others in the church can emulate.

Biblical References:

- [1 Timothy 3:8-13](#): This passage outlines the moral and spiritual qualifications for deacons, emphasizing the importance of character in their service.

5. Spiritual Support and Compassion

Primary Role:

Deacons often play a key role in offering spiritual support and compassion to those in need within the congregation, including visiting the sick, caring for the needy, and providing comfort and encouragement.

Biblical References:

- [Acts 6:2-4](#): The purpose and the origin of Deacons was to serve those in need (the widows).
- [Acts 6:5-6](#): The selection of deacons was made with prayer and the laying on of hands, indicating the spiritual significance of their role and the expectation that they would serve with compassion and spiritual maturity.

New Model Presentation

Deacon Qualifications

The biblical qualifications of a deacon are outlined primarily in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. These qualifications focus on character, faith, and the ability to manage personal and family life effectively. Deacons are expected to exhibit strong moral character, a deep and sincere faith, and the ability to manage their personal and family lives with integrity. These qualifications ensure that those serving as deacons are spiritually mature and capable of fulfilling their roles in supporting the ministry of the church. Below are the key qualifications:

1. Worthy of Respect

Definition: A deacon must be dignified and honorable, earning the respect of others through their conduct.

Biblical Reference:

- [1 Timothy 3:8](#): "In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect..."

2. Sincere (Not Double-Tongued)

Definition: A deacon must be sincere in speech, not speaking out of both sides of their mouth (double-tongued (NASB)) or being deceitful.

Biblical Reference:

- [1 Timothy 3:8](#): "...sincere, not deceitful..."

3. Not Indulging in Much Wine

Definition: A deacon must not be given to excessive drinking, demonstrating self-control and moderation.

Biblical Reference:

- [1 Timothy 3:8](#): "...not indulging in much wine..."

4. Not Pursuing Dishonest Gain

Definition: A deacon must not be greedy or seeking financial gain through dishonest means, showing integrity in their dealings.

Biblical Reference:

- [1 Timothy 3:8](#): "...not pursuing dishonest gain."

5. Holding to the Deep Truths of the Faith with a Clear Conscience

Definition: A deacon must have a firm grasp of Christian doctrine, living out their faith with integrity and a clear conscience.

Biblical Reference:

- [1 Timothy 3:9](#): "They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience."

6. Tested and Proven

Definition: A deacon must be tested and found blameless (above reproach) before being appointed to serve, ensuring their readiness and reliability.

Biblical Reference:

New Model Presentation

- [1 Timothy 3:10](#): "They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons."

7. Faithful in Marriage

Definition: If married, a deacon must be faithful to their spouse, demonstrating marital fidelity and integrity.

Biblical Reference:

- [1 Timothy 3:12](#): "A deacon must be faithful to his wife..."

8. Manages Their Children and Household Well

Definition: A deacon must manage their children and household effectively, showing leadership and responsibility in their family life.

Biblical Reference:

- [1 Timothy 3:12](#): "...and must manage his children and his household well."

New Model Presentation

The Pastor

The biblical role of a pastor is to be a shepherd, teacher, leader, caregiver, and example to the congregation, guiding them in their spiritual journey and equipping them for the ministry. The pastor's role is one of servant leadership, grounded in love and a deep commitment to the well-being of the church. Below are the primary roles of the pastor.

1. Shepherding the Flock

Primary Role: The word "pastor" itself comes from the Latin word for "shepherd." A pastor is called to be a shepherd to God's people, guiding, protecting, and nurturing them.

Biblical References:

- [Ezekiel 34:2-4](#): God condemns the shepherds of Israel for neglecting their duties, implying that a true shepherd should care for and tend to the needs of the flock.
- [John 10:11-16](#): Jesus describes Himself as the Good Shepherd, setting an example for pastors to follow in caring for the flock sacrificially.
- [Acts 20:28](#): Paul instructs the elders (pastors) of Ephesus to be shepherds of God's church, underscoring their responsibility to watch over and care for the congregation as stewards of a precious trust.

2. Teaching and Preaching the Word

Primary Role: A pastor is responsible for teaching and preaching the Word of God, ensuring that the congregation is spiritually nourished.

Biblical References:

- [2 Timothy 4:2](#): Paul instructs Timothy to "preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction."
- [Titus 1:9](#): A pastor must "hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it."

3. Spiritual Oversight and Leadership

Primary Role: Pastors are tasked with leading the church through preaching and teaching, to provide spiritual oversight, and to ensure that the church remains faithful to its mission.

Biblical References:

- [1 Peter 5:1-3](#): Peter exhorts the elders (pastors) to "be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock."

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- [Hebrews 13:17](#): The congregation is instructed to "have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account...."

4. Caring for the Congregation

Primary Role: Pastors are called to care for the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of their congregation, offering guidance, comfort, and support.

Biblical References:

- [James 5:14-15](#): Pastors are called to pray for the sick, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord.
- [Acts 20:28](#): Paul tells the elders to "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood."

5. Equipping the Saints for Ministry

Primary Role: Pastors are also responsible for equipping the members of the church for the work of ministry, helping them grow in their faith and spiritual gifts.

Biblical References:

- [Ephesians 4:11-12](#): "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up."

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Dispute Resolution

Purpose of Dispute Resolution: (Church Discipline):

A clearly defined method of handling disputes within the church and between its members is necessary and is in line with scripture.

Process of Dispute Resolution:

[Matthew 18:15-17](#) outlines a process for resolving disputes among believers. These steps for dispute resolution aim to resolve conflicts within the Christian community through private correction, involvement of witnesses, and, if necessary, the broader church. The ultimate goal is to bring about repentance, reconciliation, and restoration while maintaining the integrity and unity of the church. Here are the steps:

1. Address the Issue Privately ([Matthew 18:15](#))

- **Step:** If someone sins against you, go to them privately and point out their fault.
- **Purpose:** The goal is to resolve the issue between the two of you alone, without involving others, to avoid unnecessary embarrassment or escalation.
- **Biblical Reference:** "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over."

2. Involve One or Two Witnesses ([Matthew 18:16](#))

- **Step:** If the person does not listen to you, take one or two others along to help establish the matter.
- **Purpose:** The presence of witnesses helps ensure that the discussion is fair and that the facts are clearly established. It also adds weight to the confrontation and may encourage the offending party to listen.
- **Biblical Reference:** "But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.'"

3. Bring the Matter to the Church ([Matthew 18:17a](#))

- **Step:** If the person refuses to listen to the witnesses, bring the issue before the church.
- **Purpose:** Bringing the matter to the church allows the larger community of believers to be involved in seeking resolution and to uphold the integrity and unity of the body. It also establishes the future reconciliation to the church if the person repents and approaches the church for reconciliation.
- **Biblical Reference:** "If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church;..."

4. Treat the Unrepentant as a Pagan/Tax Collector ([Matthew 18:17b](#))

- **Step:** If the person refuses to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.
- **Purpose:** This step is meant to signify a break in fellowship with the unrepentant individual, recognizing that they are no longer in right standing with the

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community. However, the underlying hope remains for repentance and eventual restoration.

- **Biblical Reference:** "...and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector."

The Role of Women in the Church

The biblical role of women in the church is significant and diverse. While some passages suggest specific roles and limitations, others highlight the significant and active contributions of women in various ministries and leadership positions. The overall biblical narrative shows that women are integral to the life of the church, participating in teaching, prophecy, service, and ministry leadership, while also reflecting on the complementary roles that may be emphasized within certain traditions. Their role is characterized by these themes:

1. Equal Value and Dignity in Christ

Primary Role:

In Christ, men and women are equal in value and dignity, and both are called to live out their faith and use their gifts for the building up of the church.

Biblical References:

- [**Galatians 3:28**](#): "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."
- [**Genesis 1:27**](#): "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

2. Active Participation in the Church

Primary Role:

Women are called to actively participate in the life of the church, using their spiritual gifts for the edification of the body of Christ.

Biblical References:

- [**Acts 18:24-26**](#): Priscilla, along with her husband Aquila, teaches Apollos more accurately about the way of God.
- [**Romans 16:1-2**](#): Paul commends Phoebe, a deaconess in the church at Cenchreae, who has been a great help to many, including Paul.
- [**1 Corinthians 12:4-7**](#): The passage emphasizes that a manifestation of the spirit is given to each believer, regardless of gender, for the common good.
- [**Romans 12:4-8**](#): emphasizes the diversity of gifts within the body of Christ, illustrating that each member has a unique and vital role to play. In relation to the role of women in the church, this passage supports the idea that women, like men, are endowed with a spiritual gift that is meant to be used for the edification of the church. Whether through teaching, service, encouragement, or leadership, women are called to exercise their gifts in ways that contribute to the unity and growth of the body of Christ.

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3. Roles of Teaching and Leadership

Primary Role:

The New Testament reflects a range of practices concerning women's roles in teaching and leadership.

Biblical References:

- [Titus 2:3-5](#): Older women are encouraged to teach what is good, particularly to the younger women.
- [Romans 16:1-2](#): Paul commends Phoebe for her service and leadership
- [Philippians 4:2-3](#): Paul acknowledges women as co-laborers in the Gospel, indicating that they were actively involved in the ministry and played crucial roles alongside men in spreading the Christian faith.
- [Acts 18:26](#): Priscilla, along with her husband Aquila, is depicted as teaching Apollos, an eloquent speaker, and instructing him in the Christian faith. This example shows a woman actively participating in teaching and leading, particularly in more personal or small group settings.

4. Ministry and Service

Primary Role:

Women in the Bible are shown to engage in various forms of ministry and service within the church, from hospitality to missionary work.

Biblical References:

- [Luke 8:1-3](#): Women, including Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna, financially supported Jesus and His disciples.
- [Acts 16:14-15](#): Lydia, a businesswoman, becomes a believer and opens her home to Paul and his companions, playing a key role in the early church in Philippi.

5. Prophecy and Prayer

Primary Role:

Women are shown to prophesy and pray in the church, indicating their active role in spiritual matters.

Biblical References:

- [Acts 21:9](#): Philip's four daughters are described as having the gift of prophecy.
- [Acts 1:14](#): In the early church, women were part of the communal prayer gatherings. This verse shows that women were fully integrated into the prayer life of the church, participating alongside men in seeking God and waiting on the Holy Spirit.
- [Acts 12:12](#): This verse illustrates that women hosted and participated in prayer meetings in their homes. The church met in Mary's house to pray

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for Peter's release from prison, indicating that women were active in the prayer life of the early Christian community.

6. Hospitality and Compassion

Primary Role:

Women in the early church are often noted for their hospitality, compassion, and service to others, key elements in the life of the church.

Biblical References:

- [1 Timothy 5:9-10](#): Widows who are enrolled for church support should be known for their good deeds, including hospitality, raising children, and helping those in trouble.
- [Acts 9:36-39](#): Tabitha (Dorcas) is remembered for her acts of kindness and charity, making garments for the needy.

Committee Statement Regarding the Role of Women in Our Church

We deeply believe that Jesus demonstrated a profound respect and love for women during His time on earth, and this truth remains just as relevant today. He sees every person, both women and men, as masterpieces of His creation, uniquely designed and equipped with a blend of gifts, abilities, skills, and aptitudes to fulfill the specific purposes He has prepared for each of us ([Eph 2:10](#)). Furthermore, God generously distributes spiritual gifts ([Romans 12:6-8](#)) to both women and men within the body of Christ, for the benefit of the entire community ([1 Cor 12](#)). Paul reminds us that failing to recognize and honor the contributions of each member weakens the church, leading to spiritual illness and decline ([1 Cor 11:29-30](#)).

Our sincere goal is to help every woman and man in this church to discover their God-given role within our local church, where they can fully live out the calling He has for them. We are committed to ensuring that women have significant and meaningful roles that allow them to contribute meaningfully to our church community. These roles we envision include, but are not limited to:

1. Administrative and Organizational Roles

- **Advisory or Ministry Support Team Participation:** Even in an elder-led model, there are advisory teams or ministry support teams where a woman's voice can be heard and skills utilized, such as in planning events, reviewing and analyzing church finances, or overseeing specific events and programs.
- **Volunteer Coordination:** Organize and lead volunteer efforts, ensuring the smooth operation of various church activities.

2. Spiritual Care

- **Counseling and Support:** Offer spiritual care through counseling, prayer groups, or support groups for those going through difficult times.
- **Visitation Ministry:** Visit those who are sick, elderly, or in need, bringing comfort and spiritual support.

3. Teaching and Discipleship

- **Bible Studies:** Facilitate or lead Bible studies geared towards women or girls, and co-ed groups.
- **Mentoring & Discipleship:** Offer mentoring & discipleship to younger women, those new to the faith, or those looking to grow in their faith, helping them navigate their spiritual lives.
- **Educational Programs:** Contribute to or lead educational initiatives within the church, such as Life Groups or bible studies.

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4. Ministry Leadership

- **Women's Ministries:** Lead or be actively involved in ministries that focus on women's spiritual growth and support.
- **Children's and Youth Ministries:** These are often pivotal areas where you can have a profound impact, guiding the next generation in their faith journey.
- **Outreach and Mission Work:** Many churches value the input and leadership of women in organizing and executing outreach initiatives, both locally and globally.

5. Worship and Creative Arts

- **Worship Leading:** A woman may lead or be part of the worship team, contributing to the spiritual atmosphere through music and arts.
- **Creative Contributions:** A woman may utilize creative talents in various areas such as drama, art, or media to enhance worship services and church events.

6. Advocacy and Support

- **Voice Concerns Respectfully:** Even if a woman is not in a decision-making role, she can still advocate for issues that matter to her, ensuring that diverse perspectives are considered by the elders.
- **Support Other Women:** Encourage and support other women in the church, fostering a community where women feel valued and heard.

While the governance model may change, a woman's influence and contributions remain vital to the life and health of our church. By focusing on these areas, a woman member continues to play a significant and meaningful role in making a difference in the church.

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New Model Overview

Model Goals

- The structure should promote and support our focus on Christ by creating a culture of ministry and service, while providing stability and confidence to the body when needed.

Model Objectives

- The model should encourage our congregation to focus on ministry and service.
- The model should create an open and collaborative dialogue between church leadership and the members of the congregation that will equip and promote ministry.
- The model should ensure that controversial topics are managed at the appropriate level to avoid interruption of ministry and service activities.
- The congregation should have confidence that the leadership of the church will handle all issues with love, spiritual maturity, wisdom, prudence, and caution,
- The congregation should have confidence that the individuals governing the church are well qualified, well trained, and that they have been through a thorough and vigorous vetting process.
- The model should create an authority to be the arbiter of spiritual issues

Guiding Principles for Model Development

- The model must be able to be defended by scripture
- The model must support and promote the Mission, Vision, and Core Values of our Church
- The model must be palatable to the congregation, and thus avoiding a church split.
- The model must be agnostic to personalities or positions; and neither promote, protect, or attack any personality or position.
- The model must allow for a path to address the concerns of members in a manner that is just
- The model must function consistent with Christ's love for the church, with respect to the role of women, and how the church will lead, shepherd, and care for women within the church
- The model must provide a path to handle controversial or serious issues with confidence and resolve, and to limit the damage caused by contagion of those same issues
- The model should not be designed to handle or avoid any specific situations, however, specific situations should be tested against the model for soundness.
- The model should support the priesthood of the believer
- The model should support the autonomy of the local church

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New Model Description

The New Model is an Elder Led Governance model that places the focus of the church on performing and supporting ministry activities. The description of the model is divided into areas of existing and new components:

Existing Components:

- **Focus and Function of the Congregation**

The new model is designed to focus the efforts of the congregation on the furtherance of ministry. Numerous opportunities for leadership and service will exist within each ministry. The new model promotes nearly endless opportunities to engage in Mentoring & Discipleship as well as Bible Studies and Life Groups throughout the church.

- **Focus and Function of Deacon Body**

The new model is designed to focus the efforts of the Deacon Body on serving the needs of the internal and external ministries of the church. The Deacons will become the lead servants within each ministry, often serving side by side and at the direction of the staff Ministry Leaders.

- **Focus and Function of Senior Pastor**

The new model is designed to shift the focus of the Senior Pastor towards the core functions of a pastor according to scripture. This includes preaching and teaching, and caring for the needs of the congregation. An enhanced level of focus will be placed upon leading advanced level study groups, and the preparation of members of the congregation to engage in advanced level evangelism.

- **Focus and Function of Executive Pastor**

The new model is designed to shift the focus of the Executive Pastor towards daily operational issues, and managing the ongoing affairs of the church business operations. The Executive Pastor will serve as the primary liaison for staff to connect with the Elder Board

New Components:

- **Ministry Support Teams**

The New Model creates Ministry Leadership Teams (MLT's). The purpose of MLT's is to assist the Ministry Leader (Pastor/Minister) in planning, executing, identification of resources, volunteer training & leadership development, curriculum, programming, and other issues necessary for the ministry to be successful. The composition of MLT's will include the ministry leader, an elder, deacons, and key volunteers.

- **Advisory Teams**

The New Model creates Advisory Teams to advise the Elder Board by gathering and analyzing specific situations, events, or decision processes that require specialized skills, or that may take considerable time. These individuals will have a high degree of technical or professional credentials and experience in the subject matter area they are asked to assist with. Advisory Teams will be appointed by the elder board based on professional and experience based qualifications.

New Model Presentation

Elder Model Benefits

- **Spiritual Oversight:** Elders provide consistent spiritual leadership and shepherding, ensuring that the church remains focused on its mission and aligned with biblical principles.
- **Stable Leadership:** An elder-led model offers stability, especially during times of transition or crisis, as elders are typically more experienced and deeply rooted in the church's mission and vision.
- **Clear Decision-Making Authority:** Elders serve as the final decision-making body, reducing confusion and jurisdictional overlap that can occur with multiple committees.
- **Efficient Governance:** Streamlines decision-making processes, allowing the church to respond more quickly and effectively to issues and opportunities.
- **Accountability:** Elders are accountable to one another and to the congregation, ensuring that decisions are made with collective wisdom and are spiritually sound.
- **Focus on Ministry:** Allows pastors and other leaders to focus on ministry, teaching, and pastoral care, as elders handle governance and administrative responsibilities.
- **Biblical Foundation:** Rooted in scriptural examples and teachings, providing a model of governance that is in line with New Testament church practices.
- **Protection from Factionalism:** Reduces the potential for internal divisions and power struggles that can arise in a more politicized committee-led model.
- **Consistent Vision:** Ensures that the church's vision and direction are maintained consistently over time, as elders work together to lead the church according to a shared understanding of its mission.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Elders are equipped to handle conflicts and discipline within the church in a way that is pastoral and redemptive, protecting the unity and health of the congregation.
- **Encourages Leadership Development:** An elder-led model often includes mentoring and developing future leaders, ensuring continuity of strong, spiritually mature leadership within the church.

New Model Presentation

Items Requiring Congregational Input

Under the proposed New Model, the following items will require congregational input prior to a decision being made by the Elder Board:

- Purchase or Sale of Real Property Owned by The Church
- Issuance of Debt Obligations
- Significant Capital Expenditures
- Annual Budget Development Process
- Selection of Senior Pastor
- Selection of Elders

Elder Selection Process

- **Nomination**
 - Candidates received from Church Body
 - Anyone May Nominate
- **Initial Vetting**
 - Initial Vetting by Senior Pastor & Elder Review Panel
 - Must Meet Scriptural Qualifications
 - Candidates shall go through an initial screening and vetting process to determine any glaring concerns or issues related to candidacy. This process shall be performed by the Senior Pastor and the Elder Review Panel
- **Testing Period**
 - Testing to be performed by Elder Review Panel
 - Self Reflection Process
 - Self Selection Process
 - Testing should be over scriptural and doctrinal knowledge, defending the faith and refuting error.
 - Issues brought forth from the vetting will be addressed.
 - Candidate may withdraw voluntarily
 - Elder Review Panel may advise candidate to suspend or withdraw their candidacy
 - Clearly False Accusations/Allegations will be handled through church discipline procedures.
- **Final Assessment**
 - Following the completion of training, candidates will meet with the Elder Board to review the Training and Testing process.
 - A decision will be made to accept, reject, recommend further training, or recommend further development of spiritual maturity.
- **Presentation of Candidacy**
 - After Initial Vetting, Candidate is Presented to The Church Body as a “Candidate for The Elder Board”

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- A period of time will be made available for any member to bring forward any issues as to why the candidate is not qualified.
- **Elder Candidate Training**
 - Elder Candidate Training will commence.
 - Supervised by Elders
 - A course of study should be developed to encompass discipleship, mentoring, bible study, and how to effectively minister to the needs of the flock. This should be led by the senior pastor, using scripture, along with good reference and study materials.
- **Affirmation By Congregation & Activation**
 - The Chairman of the Elder Board will announce to the Church Body that the candidate has successfully met the qualifications to become an elder, and has completed the required training.
 - The Chairman will present the candidate for affirmation & confirmation by the congregation to become an elder.
 -
 - The Elder-Elect shall then begin service as an Elder.

Elder Duties

- Lead the flock
- Ensure ministry provisions and resources are available
- Named Ministry Assignment
- Called Pastor Assignment
- Leading Group/Study
- Review of Ministry Performance
- Church Discipline

Elder Accountability

Elders in the Bible are held to a higher standard of accountability due to their role in leading and shepherding the church. They have accountability through the following:

- Accountability to God
- Accountability to the Church
- Accountability to Fellow Elders
- Accountability through Examination and Selection
- Accountability in Teaching
- Accountability to an exemplary Higher Standard
- Accountability in Example and Conduct
- Procedure for Accountability
 - In accordance with Matthew 18
 - Escalation Procedure
- Admonishment, Suspension, Removal from Elder Board

New Model Presentation

Member's Grievance Process

Scriptural References ([Matthew 18: 15-17](#); [1 Timothy 5:19-20](#))

In the event an issue arises between a Member and an Elder, the Member may follow the Member's Grievance Process outlined below to resolve the issue. The process outlined below is designed to provide a path to address grievances of members in a manner that seeks reconciliation, accountability, and adherence to scripture.

Confidentiality

Throughout the process, the Member and the Elder shall maintain a level of confidentiality about the matter to prevent the spread of gossip, division, or defamation.

Member Grievance Process Steps:

1. The Member shall respectfully approach the Elder regarding the issue of concern, and discuss it with them directly following Matthew 18 and 1 Timothy 5 as a guideline.
 - Setting a time and place is recommended
2. If the issue remains unresolved, the Member shall invite "two or more" Members to discuss the issue again with the Elder.
3. If the issue still remains unresolved, not less than 2 weeks after the last discussion with the additional Members, the Members may then request in writing to be placed on the agenda at the next Elder meeting to discuss the issue.
4. In advance of the meeting, the Member will provide a written summary of their observances of the issue and list the steps the Member has taken to resolve the issue for the Elders to read. The notice shall also include a list of witnesses the Member plans to present.
5. The Elders shall discuss the issue without the Elder present who is subject of the grievance after hearing from the parties involved.
6. After the members have left the meeting the Elders shall invite the Elder in question into the meeting to give an account of the accusation and what he has done to address the concern. After which the Elder will be asked to leave the meeting so the remaining Elders can discuss the concern and make a decision.
7. Following a decision by the Elder Board, the Elders shall invite the Members back to the next meeting to inform the Members of their decision.
8. The Elders will then meet again with the Elder who is subject of the grievance to explain their decision.
9. The decision or direction of the Elder Board shall be final and binding.
10. Upon a finding that the Elder's actions rise to a level that warrants public admonishment or removal, the Chairman of the Elder Board shall do so as soon as practicable.
 - This shall be the next gathering of a substantial number of the members of the church (ex: Sunday Service, Business Meeting)

New Model Presentation

Roles of Each Position In New Model

The role of each of the defined positions below should align with scripture. The primary roles of each position are summarized below:

- **Elders**

- Shepherding the Flock
- Spiritual Oversight and Leadership
- Teaching and Preaching
- Role Models of Exemplary Christian Character
- Overall Governance, Decision-Making, Managing Church Affairs
- Prayer and Spiritual Support

- **Deacons**

- Lead Servants of the Church
- Assisting with Practical Needs
- Supporting the Ministry of the Word
- Role Models of Service
- Spiritual Support and Compassion

- **Pastor**

- Shepherding the Flock
- Teaching and Preaching the Word
- Spiritual Oversight and Leadership
- Caring for the Congregation
- Equipping the Saints for Ministry

- **Minister**

- Service to the Church
- Proclamation of the Gospel
- Equipping the Saints for Ministry

New Model Presentation

Qualifications & Selection Process

Qualifications

The qualifications for each position are summarized below:

- **Elder**
 - Above Reproach
 - Faithful to His Wife (Husband of One Wife/One Woman Man)
 - Temperate
 - Self-Controlled
 - Not Lording Over
 - Respectable
 - Hospitable
 - Able to Teach
 - Not Given to Drunkenness
 - Not Violent but Gentle
 - Not Quarrelsome or Pugnacious
 - Not a Lover of Money
 - Manages His Own Family Well
 - Not a Recent Convert
 - Good Reputation with Outsiders
 - Loves What Is Good
 - Upright, Holy, and Disciplined
- **Deacon**
 - Worthy of Respect
 - Sincere (Not Double-Tongued)
 - Not Indulging in Much Wine
 - Not Pursuing Dishonest Gain
 - Holding to the Deep Truths of the Faith with a Clear Conscience
 - Tested and Proven
 - Faithful in Marriage
 - Manages Their Children and Household Well
 - [Deaconesses] Women (Wives) Should Be Worthy of Respect, Not Malicious Talkers, but Temperate and Trustworthy in Everything
- **Pastor**
 - See Qualifications of Elder
- **Minister**
 - See Qualifications of Deacon

New Model Presentation

Selection Process

- **Elders**
 - Refer to Elder Selection Process Above
- **Deacon**
 - The Deacon Body shall adopt a written set of qualifications and training, as well as policies and procedures for handling issues that arise within the Deacon Body.
- **Pastor**
 - The Elders, in concert with the Senior and Executive Pastors shall define the qualifications and process for selection of pastors.
- **Minister**
 - The Elders, in concert with the Senior and Executive Pastors shall define the qualifications and process for selection of ministers.

Advisory Teams

Duties

- Assist Elder Board with subject matters requiring specific knowledge, experience, training, or certifications.
- Research, review, and provide advice, counsel, or guidance to Elder Board on matters as requested

Selection

- Advisory Team members shall be appointed at the sole discretion of the Elder Board
- Advisory Team Members will serve at the pleasure of the Elder Board
- The qualifications for candidates shall be created by the Elder Board
- Criteria should be objective, and should be focused on ensuring that the candidates have the necessary experience and qualifications to provide expert level input to the Elder Board.
- Advisory Team members may be reappointed for additional terms at the discretion of the Elder Board if they are willing to continue to serve.
- Additional members may be invited at any time which will give them time to become familiar with any ongoing or current projects that may require their advice.

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Ministry Support Teams

1. Assists the Ministry Leader in planning, executing, identification of resources, volunteer training & leadership development, curriculum, programming, and other issues necessary for the ministry to be successful.
2. Appointed by the Ministry Leader
3. Should include volunteers showing commitment or passion for the ministry.

New Model Presentation

Appendix - References

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Appendix - Review of the Baptist Faith and Message

History of the Baptist Faith and Message

The [Baptist Faith and Message](#) (BF&M) is a statement of faith **used by most** Southern Baptist churches. Here's a brief history:

Note: First Denton adopted the BFM on Sunday, October 6, 2024 during the church service.

1925 Version

- **Origins:** The first version of the Baptist Faith and Message was adopted in 1925.
- **Purpose:** It was created to address the theological controversies of the time and provide a clear statement of Southern Baptist beliefs, particularly in response to modernist and liberal theological trends.
- **Content:** The 1925 BF&M was relatively concise, focusing on fundamental Baptist doctrines, including the authority of Scripture, the nature of God, salvation, and the role of the church.

1963 Version

- **Revision:** In 1963, the Southern Baptist Convention revised the statement to address changes in society and further clarify Baptist beliefs.
- **Changes:** The 1963 version included more detail on social and ethical issues and a more expansive view of church doctrine. It also emphasized the importance of individual liberty and the autonomy of the local church.

2000 Version

- **Revision:** This revision was led by a committee chaired by Dr. Adrian Rogers and included other prominent Southern Baptists. **Note:** One of the members who served on this committee was Max Barnett, whose career spanned over 37 years as the Baptist Student Union Director at the University of Oklahoma. At the time of his appointment to the BF&M committee, Mr. Barnett was one of five active elders serving at Trinity Baptist Church (member of the SBC) in Norman, Oklahoma. Present day, [Mr. Barnett is still an elder at Trinity Baptist Church](#).
- **Changes:** The 2000 version included updates on gender roles in church leadership, a reaffirmation of traditional views on marriage and family, and a clearer articulation of the Southern Baptist stance on various social and moral issues.

Key Themes Throughout History

- **Authority of Scripture:** A consistent emphasis on the Bible as the authoritative word of God.

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- **Autonomy of the Local Church:** The belief that each church governs itself independently.
- **Salvation through Faith in Christ:** Centrality of personal faith in Jesus Christ for salvation.
- **Baptism by Immersion:** Belief in believer's baptism by immersion as a testimony of faith.

The BF&M has evolved to reflect changing theological, cultural, and social contexts while maintaining core Baptist principles.

The current version of the BF&M can be found at: <https://bfm.sbc.net/>

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Baptist Faith and Message Requirements and Prohibitions

The Baptist Faith and Message (BF&M) outlines several vital requirements and prohibitions related to doctrine, church practices, and ethical behavior. Here's a summary based on its various versions, particularly focusing on the 2000 revision:

BF&M Requirements

1. Authority of Scripture:

The Bible is upheld as the inspired, infallible, and authoritative Word of God. Members and churches are expected to adhere to its teachings.

2. Salvation:

Salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. The BF&M requires that believers have a personal relationship with Christ and accept Him as Lord and Savior.

3. Baptism:

Believers must be baptized by immersion as a public declaration of faith. Baptism is seen as an ordinance rather than a means of salvation.

4. Church Governance:

Churches are to be autonomous, meaning they govern themselves independently. However, they must operate under the Lordship of Christ and adhere to scriptural principles.

5. Church Membership:

Members must be baptized believers and are expected to live according to biblical standards. Each member is responsible for maintaining personal and corporate faithfulness to the teachings of Scripture.

6. Two Ordinances:

The BF&M requires observance of the two ordinances instituted by Christ: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

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BF&M Prohibitions

1. Non-Biblical Doctrines:

The BF&M prohibits the adoption of doctrines that contradict or undermine the teachings of Scripture. This includes liberal theology and modernist interpretations that conflict with traditional Baptist beliefs.

2. Unscriptural Practices:

Practices or beliefs not supported by the Bible are prohibited. This includes the denial of key doctrines such as the deity of Christ, the resurrection, and the necessity of personal faith for salvation.

3. Gender Roles:

According to the 2000 version, the office of pastor/elder/overseer is restricted to men, as qualified by Scripture. This reflects a traditional view on gender roles in church leadership.

4. Social and Moral Issues:

The BF&M takes a conservative stance on social and moral issues. For example, it upholds traditional views on marriage and family, and prohibits practices like abortion and homosexual behavior as defined by its interpretation of Scripture.

5. Interference with Local Church Autonomy:

Any external control or interference with a church's autonomy is prohibited. Each church is to make its own decisions based on its understanding of Scripture and its context.

These requirements and prohibitions reflect the core beliefs and practices upheld by the Southern Baptist Convention as outlined in the BF&M.

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Southern Baptist Convention Requirements and Prohibitions

The [Southern Baptist Convention](#) (SBC) has various requirements and prohibitions outlined in its guiding documents, including the Baptist Faith and Message (BF&M), resolutions, and policies. Here's a summary:

SBC Requirements

1. Adherence to the Baptist Faith and Message:

SBC churches and entities are expected to align with the doctrinal positions outlined in the BF&M. This includes affirming the authority of Scripture, the necessity of personal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, and the observance of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

2. Autonomy of the Local Church:

Each church is autonomous and governs itself. However, churches are expected to operate under the Lordship of Christ and in accordance with biblical principles.

3. Cooperation and Mission Support:

Churches are encouraged to cooperate with the SBC in its mission endeavors, including support for the Cooperative Program, which funds various SBC ministries and missions both domestically and internationally.

4. Church Membership Requirements:

Members must be baptized believers. Churches are responsible for maintaining the integrity of their membership by ensuring that members live in accordance with biblical standards.

5. Respect for Biblical Leadership:

Churches are expected to adhere to biblical standards for leadership, including the roles of pastor/elder/overseer and deacon, as outlined in the BF&M.

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SBC Prohibitions

1. Unscriptural Practices:

The SBC prohibits practices that are not in line with biblical teaching. This includes prohibitions against theological liberalism, modernist interpretations, and practices contrary to the traditional Baptist understanding of Scripture.

2. Gender Roles in Pastoral Leadership:

As per the 2000 BF&M, the office of pastor/elder/overseer is restricted to men. This reflects the SBC's traditional stance on gender roles within church leadership.

3. Interference in Church Autonomy:

The SBC prohibits interference in the autonomy of individual churches. Each church is free to govern itself and make decisions based on its understanding of Scripture.

4. Unapproved Doctrines:

The SBC prohibits the adoption of doctrines or practices that contradict or undermine the BF&M. This includes theological positions deemed inconsistent with traditional Southern Baptist beliefs.

5. Social and Moral Issues:

The SBC takes a conservative stance on social and moral issues, prohibiting practices and behaviors that are considered contrary to biblical teaching, such as abortion and homosexual behavior.

These requirements and prohibitions help guide the practices and beliefs of SBC churches and entities, ensuring consistency with the Convention's theological and doctrinal standards.

New Model Presentation

Resolution from SBC Convention

Southern Baptist Confessional Heritage of the Office of Bishop/Elder/Pastor

Date: June 15, 2023

Event(s): [2023 Annual Meeting](#), New Orleans

WHEREAS, The New Testament uses all three titles that the Baptist Faith and Message has used to describe the one office of bishop/overseer (episkopos, Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7), elder (presbuteros, Acts 14:23, 20:17; 1 Timothy 5:17, 19), and pastor (poimen, Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 5:1–5), thus demonstrating that from its first expression in 1925 through its revisions in 1963 and 2000, the Baptist Faith and Message has affirmed that, along with deacon, the only other office in a New Testament church is that of bishop/elder/pastor; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana, June 13–14, 2023, affirm that the only officers of a local church that the New Testament recognizes are that of deacon and of bishop/elder/pastor; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we reaffirm our confessional heritage, grounded in Scripture, and recognize that these are the only two offices appointed by Christ to serve along with all the members of a New Testament church, and we encourage our churches to uphold all the biblical qualifications that the New Testament requires for all those who would hold either office of bishop/elder/pastor or deacon.

Note: According the [FAQ on the SBC website](#), it states the following:

What is the SBC's stance on a church having elders?

As stated earlier in other questions related to local church autonomy, whether a church has elders is addressed and determined by the local church.

Appendix - Greek Reference to Elders

The term "elder" in the New Testament is translated from the Greek word "πρεσβύτερος" (presbyteros), which means "older" or "senior." The concept of elders has deep roots in Jewish tradition and carries significant weight in the early Christian church, where it was adapted into a formal role of spiritual leadership.

Biblical Background of "Presbyteros"

Jewish Roots:

In the Old Testament, elders were leaders and representatives of the people. They were often involved in decision-making and governance within the community (e.g., [Exodus 18:12](#), [Numbers 11:16](#)). These elders were typically older men, respected for their wisdom and experience, who helped guide the people in matters of faith, law, and governance.

This tradition carried over into the New Testament, where the term "presbyteros" was used to describe leaders within the Jewish community (e.g., [Luke 22:66](#), [Acts 4:5](#)).

Christian Adaptation:

In the early Christian church, the role of elders became more defined as one of spiritual leadership and oversight. Elders were appointed to oversee local congregations, providing guidance, teaching, and pastoral care.

[Acts 14:23](#): Paul and Barnabas appointed elders (presbyteroi) in every church they established, indicating that this role was vital for the governance and spiritual health of the early Christian communities.

[Timothy 5:17](#): Paul further outlines the duties of elders, stating that "the elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching." This passage emphasizes both the administrative and teaching responsibilities of elders.

Additionally the reference to double honor for those who teach and preach has traditionally been used as the reason the church provides full financial support to their pastors. However it also suggests that there are Elders who do not receive financial support from the church. Instead, like the apostle Paul, some Elders may choose to "make tents" for their financial support. The result is the local church may have both vocational Elders and lay Elders.

[Titus 1:5-9](#): Paul instructs Titus to appoint elders in every town, providing a list of qualifications that mirror those in 1 Timothy. These qualifications emphasize moral integrity, sound doctrine, and the ability to provide spiritual leadership.

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Related Terms:

"Episkopos" (Overseer/Bishop): Another term often associated with elders is "ἐπίσκοπος" (episkopos), meaning "overseer" or "bishop." In some contexts, "episkopos" and "presbyteros" are used interchangeably, suggesting that the roles may overlap or be complementary (e.g., [Titus 1:7](#)). The term "episkopos" emphasizes the supervisory role of the elder, particularly in safeguarding doctrine and overseeing the church's operations.

"Poimen" (Shepherd/Pastor): Elders are also seen as shepherds, or "ποιμήν" (poimen), responsible for tending to the spiritual well-being of the congregation. In passages like [1 Peter 5:1-4](#), elders are exhorted to "shepherd the flock of God" willingly and eagerly, not for personal gain but as examples to the believers.

Implications for the Role of Elders

The Greek term "presbyteros" highlights the role of elders as wise, experienced leaders entrusted with the spiritual oversight and care of the church. Their responsibilities include teaching, guiding, and protecting the congregation, ensuring that the church remains faithful to its mission and doctrine. The use of related terms like "episkopos" and "poimen" further underscores the multifaceted nature of this role, encompassing oversight, pastoral care, and shepherding. Elders are essential to the health and growth of the church, serving as both spiritual leaders and protectors of the faith.

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Appendix - The Role of The Church in Acts

Scriptural Teachings

The believers in [Acts 2:42-47](#) devoted themselves to the teachings of their spiritual leaders with the ultimate goal of attaining unity of faith and gaining true, experiential knowledge of Christ. This process of continued devotion is integral to their journey towards sanctification, which is the process of becoming more like Jesus.

Fellowship

God's design for humanity includes fellowship, emphasizing that it is "not good" for man to be alone. This principle extends to the church, where believers are born into the family of God. In this spiritual family, we encounter people with various personalities and backgrounds, yet we are called to live together, learn together, and grow together. The church is where we practice the teachings of love, tolerance, and unity, sharpening our faith as we learn to love those who may be difficult to love. The Holy Spirit guides us in this journey, constantly reminding us of the teachings we have heard and read in the scriptures.

However, fellowship in the church goes beyond merely being together; it involves actively doing life together. Jesus commanded His followers to make disciples, care for the needy, and embody the church by engaging in daily acts of love and service. Martin Luther encapsulated this idea by saying, "Share the Gospel at all times, and when necessary, use words."

Breaking of Bread Together

Breaking bread together symbolizes the need to fuel our entire being—body, soul, and spirit. While food nourishes our bodies, regular connection with other believers nourishes our souls and spirits. Sharing meals provides a space for communication and service, reinforcing our unity and spiritual growth. For example, in our family, we would share the best and worst parts of our day during dinner, always beginning with a prayer to acknowledge God's provisions and invite His guidance.

In the church, similar practices of sharing and communication are vital for building unity and fueling the spiritual lives of others. Gathering together allows us to experience the dynamics of Christian life, including the unity that binds us as members of Christ's body.

Prayer

Prayer is a profound privilege and a gift from God, inviting us to build an intimate relationship with Him through regular communication. Just as the physical relationship between a husband and wife fosters a deep connection, prayer fosters a deep spiritual connection with God. The Psalms give us a glimpse into the intimate conversations between David and God, demonstrating the power and significance of prayer.

Prayer is also powerful in shaping the world. As Paul Billheimer suggests in his book "Destined for the Throne", God often initiates His work on earth through human prayer. While God is

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sovereign, He chooses to involve us in His plans by prompting us to pray for His will to be done. [James 5:16-18](#) illustrates this principle, showing how Elijah's prayers influenced the natural world. Prayer is essential for the church, which is described as the body of Christ, with each member in constant communication with the Head, Jesus. This ongoing communication, both conscious and subconscious, is vital for the proper functioning and spiritual health of the church.

Importantly, we are not created to be alone. God desires to be part of our daily lives, just as He walked and talked with Adam and Eve in the garden. [Proverbs 3:5-7](#) encourages us to trust in the Lord, acknowledge Him in all our ways, and rely on His wisdom. This process of continual spiritual growth, known as sanctification, requires the power of the Holy Spirit, which Jesus promised to His disciples. Prayer, therefore, is intended to be a continuous part of our lives, both consciously and subconsciously. However, this requires discipline, as our busy schedules can easily distract us from our commitment to prayer.

Appendix - Greek Reference to Deacons

The term "deacon" in the New Testament is derived from the Greek word "διάκονος" (diakonos), which generally means "servant," "minister," or "attendant." The word appears numerous times in the New Testament and is used in both a general sense, referring to any servant or minister, and in a more specific sense, referring to an official role within the church.

Biblical Background of "Diakonos"

General Meaning (Servant/Minister):

In many New Testament passages, "diakonos" simply refers to someone who serves or ministers to others. For example, Jesus used the term to describe the nature of true greatness in the Kingdom of God: "...Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant (diakonos)" ([Matthew 20:26](#); [Mark 10:43](#)). This use emphasizes humility and service as central to Christian discipleship.

Specific Church Office:

The role of a deacon as a specific office within the church is more clearly outlined in passages like [Acts 6:1-6](#) and [1 Timothy 3:8-13](#). Although the word "diakonos" itself isn't explicitly used in Acts 6, the account describes the appointment of seven men to oversee the distribution of food, allowing the apostles to focus on prayer and the ministry of the Word. This passage is often seen as the origin of the deacon's role, emphasizing practical service and support for the church's ministry.

In [1 Timothy 3:8-13](#), Paul provides specific qualifications for those who would serve as deacons, highlighting qualities such as dignity, honesty, temperance, and faithfulness. This passage suggests that deacons not only serve in practical matters but also play a significant spiritual role, supporting the church's ministry and maintaining the integrity of its witness.

Implications for the Role of Deacons

The Greek term "diakonos" underscores the essential nature of service in the role of a deacon. Whether through managing practical needs or providing spiritual support, deacons are called to embody the servant leadership that Jesus exemplified. This role is vital for the functioning of the church, ensuring that both the practical and spiritual needs of the congregation are met, and that the church operates effectively in its mission.

Appendix - Greek and Hebrew Reference to Pastors

The role of a "pastor" in the church is rooted in both the Hebrew and Greek languages, where the term is closely associated with the concept of a shepherd who cares for and guides a flock. This imagery is used throughout the Bible to describe spiritual leadership, particularly in relation to God's care for His people and the role of leaders in the Christian church.

Hebrew Background

Hebrew Word:

The Hebrew word "רְאֵה" (ra'ah) means "to shepherd" or "to pasture." It appears frequently in the Old Testament and is often used metaphorically to describe God's relationship with His people. For example, [Psalm 23:1](#), "The Lord is my shepherd (ra'ah), I lack nothing," highlights God's role as the protector, provider, and guide of His people.

The concept of shepherding is also used to describe human leaders appointed by God, such as in [Ezekiel 34](#), where God condemns the leaders of Israel for failing to shepherd (ra'ah) the people properly.

Shepherd as a Leader:

In the Old Testament, leaders like Moses and David are depicted as shepherds. David, who was literally a shepherd before becoming king, is often portrayed as the ideal leader because of his care and guidance of the people (e.g., [2 Samuel 5:2](#), [Psalm 78:70-72](#)).

The metaphor of the shepherd emphasizes leadership that is compassionate, protective, and self-sacrificial, reflecting the qualities expected of those who would later be called pastors in the Christian church.

Greek Background

Greek Word:

The Greek word "ποιμήν" (poimen) directly translates to "shepherd" and is used in the New Testament to describe both literal shepherds and those who spiritually care for others. The word appears in key passages that outline the role of spiritual leaders in the church. In the New Testament, "poimen" is explicitly linked to church leadership in [Ephesians 4:11](#), where Paul mentions "pastors" (poimenas) as one of the roles given to the church for the building up of the body of Christ. Here, the term "pastor" (poimen) is synonymous with "shepherd," indicating that the role involves guiding, feeding, and protecting the spiritual flock.

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Pastor as a Spiritual Shepherd:

[John 10:11-16](#): Jesus refers to Himself as the "Good Shepherd" (poimen), laying down His life for the sheep. This passage sets the ultimate example for pastoral leadership, where the pastor is called to selflessly care for the well-being of the congregation, even at great personal cost.

[1 Peter 5:1-4](#): Elders are exhorted to "shepherd the flock of God" willingly and eagerly, with the understanding that they will one day give an account to the "Chief Shepherd" (Archipoimen), who is Christ. This passage emphasizes the pastor's role as a caretaker of God's people, responsible for their spiritual growth and protection.

Overlapping Roles:

In the New Testament, the roles of "pastor" (poimen), "elder" (presbyteros), and "overseer" (episkopos) often overlap. While "poimen" focuses on the pastoral, caring aspect of leadership, "presbyteros" and "episkopos" emphasize the governance and oversight functions. These roles, while distinct, are complementary and often embodied in the same individuals within early Christian communities.

Implications for the Role of Pastor

The biblical terms "ra'ah" (Hebrew) and "poimen" (Greek) underscore the pastor's role as a shepherd, emphasizing care, guidance, protection, and sacrificial leadership. A pastor is called to feed the spiritual needs of the congregation, protect them from false teachings, guide them in their walk with Christ, and model the selfless love and commitment that Christ Himself demonstrated as the Good Shepherd. This role is both pastoral and authoritative, requiring deep spiritual maturity and a heart committed to serving others in the likeness of Christ.

Appendix - New Model Illustration Diagram

