

What is an Elder?

Elder is another name for what churches have traditionally referred to as the office of Pastor. In the Bible, those that shepherd the congregation are referred to interchangeably as Pastors, Bishops or Overseers, and Elders. We have chosen to use the term Elder because it encompasses both the pastoral and leadership functions of the office.

Who can be an Elder?

An Elder is a man that fits the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and has been called by God and his congregation to the office. The calling of a man to be an Elder in our church is confirmed by congregational vote.

Why do you have multiple Elders?

It is apparent in the New Testament that the churches of Acts had multiple Elders (Acts 20:17, 15:6), and it is an assumption in the epistles that when Elders are referred to that there is more than one (a plurality). (See 1 Tim. 5:17, Philip. 1:1, 1 Pet. 5:1, Titus 1:5). Although we see no command to the church for a specific number of Elders, we believe the ideal practice is plurality. This protects the church from one Elder abusing his power, and also blesses the church by having men gifted in different ways all leading the church together.

Are all Elders equal?

Among the plurality of Elders, we have a Senior Pastor. Although all Elders have equal authority, the Senior Pastor acts as the voice of the Elders and serves in the bulk of preaching, teaching, and everyday administration of the church. In our church, we have a distinction between Staff Elders, who are paid employees of the church, and Non-Staff Elders, who serve voluntarily and receive income from jobs outside of our church. Staff and Non-Staff Elders together have equal authority.

What is the relationship between the Congregation and Elders?

We believe that scripture shows the Congregation as holding ultimate authority in the church, under Christ. The role of Elders is to lead the Congregation to use their authority well, but it is the primary responsibility of the Congregation to protect the Church's doctrine and practice church discipline. In the scripture, The Congregation is commanded to submit to the Elders and should follow the Elders' leadership unless the ultimate mission of the church and gospel will be compromised.

What about Deacons?

Deacons are servants of the church. They should fit the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The office of Deacon is distinct from that of Elder and they serve under the Congregation and Elders.