

## OUR FAMILY STRUCTURE

Our beautiful and creative God brings order out of chaos. Through the work of Jesus Christ, God calls us out of isolation and into a new community known as the church. For many of us, the church has been marked by dysfunction, abuse and neglect. This deeply grieves the heart of God. We affirm that the sinful tendencies of the heart of mankind threaten the unity and vibrant love that should characterize the church of Jesus Christ. We believe God has structured the church to bring about growth and change that is rooted in love, unity, mercy and truth.

**WE SUBMIT TO JESUS CHRIST,  
THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH.**

Jesus Christ is the eternal God made flesh. Through Him all things have been made and in Him all things hold together. In Christ, the fullness of God is seen and draws near to a broken world, takes on our broken state and brings radical change through His life, death and resurrection. Jesus reigns over all things and waits for the final consummation of the Kingdom of God. The life, character and purpose of the church is to reflect the life and character of Jesus Christ. We submit to Him as the authority of the church – surrendering to the Word of God and the power of the Spirit who leads the church to display the heart of God and to continue the work of God in this world. (Col, 1:16-17, 2:9; John 1:1-14, 17:5; Heb. 1:3; Eph. 1:22, 4:8-12)

From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. When they arrived, he said to them . . . .  
“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. (Acts 20:17,28)

Christ is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. (Col.1:18)

**WE AFFIRM THAT GOD, IN HIS GOODNESS, HAS ESTABLISHED A PLURALITY OF LEADERSHIP AMONGST A DIVERSE AND EQUAL COMMUNITY.**

God has established leadership within the church that He has tasked with the responsibility to instruct, equip, guide and care for each member of the local church.

We affirm that the biblical pattern of leadership in the church is a plurality of men who display the humility and character of Jesus, surrender to the authority of the Word, depend on the power of the Spirit and submit to the accountability of the Christian community.

(Acts 6:4; 14:23, 20:28, 1 Tim. 3:1-7, Heb. 13:17)

## WHAT DOES THE SCRIPTURE SAY ABOUT ELDERS?

1. They will give an account to Jesus for how they cared for you. (Heb. 13:17)
2. It is better for them to drown in a lake than to lead you foolishly. (Mark 9:42)
3. They are to watch over each member of the church and care for their souls. (Acts 20:28)
4. They must live a life worth modeling. (1 Pet. 5:2-4)
5. They are called to manage and lead the church. (1 Tim. 3:4-5, 5:17)
6. They are responsible to teach the bible correctly. (2 Tim. 2:16)
7. They are raised up and established in the church to protect the members from false teachers. (Acts 20:17-31; Titus 1:9)
8. They are called to discipline unrepentant Christians. (Matt. 18:15-17)

The term 'elder' is a synonymous word for pastor and describes a man of character, able to teach, protect, and lead the church.

## FAQs

### **How many elders should be in the Church?**

The scripture does not give us a formula, but we know that all new testament church were under the care of a plurality of elders who were tasked by God with the ministry of the Word and Prayer and will give an account before God for how they shepherd the Souls of God's people.

### **Who can be an Elder?**

Men, called by God, qualified by God and affirmed by the congregation of believers. (Acts 6:4, 14:23; 1 Tim. 3:1-7, 4:14, 5:17; Titus 1:5-9; James 5:13-15; Heb. 13:17)

### **Is an Elder different than a Deacon?**

Yes. The term 'deacon' literally means 'servant.' A deacon is raised up and established as a pacesetter of charity, service and love. A deacon is not tasked with oversight and doctrine but the practice of doctrine in regular, sacrificial service.