

CHURCH GOVERNMENT

This proposed model of church government was developed as part of a real-life exercise while the author was part of a constitutional committee for a Baptist church. It was the professed desire of the church to seek a Biblical model by which the church could be structured and administered, acknowledging that the traditional Baptist model was flawed and in need of replacement.

While this study incorporated scriptural and historical materials, it also attempted to outline a practical means of implementation. The sections entitled 'application' are merely a suggested means of applying each section in way that could be established in a modern church constitution.

For identification, this model is called 'Elected Eldership Government', a name that points to the believed autonomy of the local church. From a constitutional perspective, it is the local body of believers that establishes its leadership and then submits itself to them.

The order of establishment is...

- (1) God: Who brings together believers in a specific geographic location.
- (2) Church Membership - "The church of God in _____" (i.e. 1 Cor 1:2, Rev 2:1, 8).
- (3) Board of Elders - "The elders of the church" (i.e. Acts 20:17)
- (4) Board of Deacons - "Deacons" (i.e. Phil 1:1)

The order of authority in administration is...

- (1) God: Who alone sets the standards as revealed in His written word.
- (2) Board of Elders
- (3) Board of Deacons
- (4) Church Membership

Summary Definitions:

Church Membership: All believers in Jesus Christ, of a specific geographic area who have joined themselves together in a local fellowship, willing to submit themselves to each other and to the leadership of the church. It is presumed that the voting membership of the church is comprised only of those who...

- (a) attend regularly (Hebrews 10:25),
- (b) are not in unrepentant sin (those being so, to be under church discipline. 1 Corinthians 5:11-13), and
- (c) are capable of making adult (mature) decisions (1 Corinthians 13:11, 14:20).

Board of Elders: Qualified and called men responsible for the spiritual and general leadership of the church, including oversight and direction for the overall ministry and specific emphasis on Biblical instruction and doctrinal purity.

Board of Deacons: Qualified and called men and women responsible for the direct administration and implementation of temporal affairs of the church; including missions,

finances, social functions, distribution of charitable giving, and trustee functions concerning facilities and property, if applicable.

OUTLINE

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1 Church Administration

The administration of the "local church" (e.g., 1 Corinthians 1:2, 1 Thessalonians 1:1, Titus 1:5) was given by God, as defined in the Bible, to provide order (1 Corinthians 14:40), spiritual accountability and leadership (2 Timothy 3:5). Two offices are established (Philippians 1:1); firstly (detailed in Section 2), the Elders -- also called Overseers or Bishops -- and secondly (detailed in Section 3), the Deacons. No member of the church shall hold, or establish, any office (perceived or defined) that usurps the authority and function of these two offices as defined by scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16).

2 Elders

2.1 History: The office of elder, in the New Testament, appears to be modeled directly after the Old Testament office as utilized in Israeli society. This in no way minimizes the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in the establishment of the church, as God could have chosen a completely new form of government if it had been His will. General knowledge and common understanding of the office of elder in the early church was demonstrated by casual usage of

the term. Notice Luke's usage, without definition or establishment, in its first appearance in the New Testament narrative regarding the local church (Acts 11:29,30).

Common pre-church usage can be derived from passages such as Luke 22:66. Luke references a Jewish governing body of "elders", based loosely upon what was first established by Moses in Exodus 18:21, 25... "Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers... And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people... " Historical sources record that much of the Gentile world (Roman empire), which had come in contact with Judaism, held similar usage of the terms elders and overseers in their societal structure and government. Notwithstanding, the Holy Spirit provided additional clarification of the qualifications for this office in the church, primarily through writings to the Gentile churches -- who would be less familiar with the scriptural Judaic model (i.e.. Titus, 1 Timothy).

2.2 Office Title and Scriptural Variance: "Bishops" and "Overseers" are two translations of the same word providing no variance in the original text pertaining to these two terms. From common substitution and synonymous usage of the titles Overseer and Elder, it must be held that the two terms reference the same office and individuals. Compare usage in 1 Timothy 3 & 1 Timothy 5:17, Titus 1:5,7 and especially note Acts 20:17,18,28 where the apostle Paul sent for the "elders" on his way to Miletus and then addressed them as "overseers"... "From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. And when they had come to him, he said to them... "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood." Following the example of scriptures, either the title of "Elders" or "Overseers" shall be used for this office.

Application:

2.2.1 Whereas the term "elder" emphasizes the dignity of the office and the term "overseer" points out the function or duty involved, the office shall be called "Elder"

2.3 Selection of Individuals to the Office: Placing an individual into the office did not make him an elder. Rather an individual known to be of the proper spiritual character and stability was recognized and invited to join the elders. In the infant New Testament church, the spiritual discernment to recognize such men rested initially with the apostles... "So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. " (Acts 14:23). Later this task was entrusted to others working to establish new churches, like Titus... "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you--" (Titus 1:5) Finally, with the completion of scriptures and the detailed qualifications set forth therein, the eldership within the church has been given the means to add unto themselves. Truly, any man in the church can desire the office of "Elder" but cannot assume that office without the recognition of meeting the qualifications set forth in scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1).

Application:

2.3.1 A man recognized by the eldership of the church as meeting and having the qualifications befitting an elder -- all established upon diligent examination, especially his doctrine -- shall be recommended to the church. An individual having once been an elder in this church, having resigned, may again be reinstated to this office by the same procedure.

2.3.2 Doctrinal Examination shall include, but not be limited to, the statement of faith of the church.

2.3.3 Upon receiving a minimum 75% vote of the Active Membership, the individual shall be publicly commissioned into the office of Elder.

2.3.4 Any Pastor (utilizing this term in its common usage to designate a paid eldership position), having met the qualifications of an elder prior to his calling (examined by the elders), shall become an elder upon his acceptance of the call of the church. The vote on any call should, at a minimum, reflect the percentage established in 2.3.3.

2.4 Term of Eldership: No limit is set forth in scripture affecting the term of any individual in this office. It may be held that as long as a man remained spiritually and mentally strong he continued to be an elder. Failure to continue to meet the requirements of the office effectively becomes grounds to withdraw the office from the individual.

Application:

2.4.1 Upon being commissioned as an elder of the church the individual shall remain an elder until (any of)...

2.4.1.1 Death

2.4.1.2 Resignation - Normally should be in writing two months in advance, unless otherwise mutually agreed to by the Elders

2.4.1.3 He is dismissed by the other Elders for (any of)...

(The following require the Elders to act, but at all times the Elder being examined shall be given ample opportunity to present his defense)

2.4.1.3.1 No longer meets qualifications of the office

2.4.1.3.2 Gross immorality

2.4.1.3.3 Moves from the area

2.4.1.3.4 No longer an example by his attendance.

2.4.1.3.5 Failure to uphold integrity of the office by example.

2.4.1.3.6 Unsound doctrine

2.4.1.3.7 Scriptural just cause being brought individually and/or corporately by church members (in accordance with scriptural procedure), having been examined and found to be true by the other Elders.

2.4.2 Special Considerations for Pastoral Staff

2.4.2.1 The Pastor shall serve until such time as he tenders his resignation, providing a minimum of thirty (30) days and maximum of (60) days notice, unless otherwise agreed upon by the Senior Pastor and the Elders.

2.4.2.2 The Pastor must tender his written resignation in advance to the Elders; prior to the church.

2.4.2.3 Understanding that a pastor must lead by example and valuing the integrity of the office, should the Pastor enter in to gross impropriety, sexual immorality, or such actions that would scriptural disqualify him from ministry, he must tender his resignation.

2.4.2.4 Should the Pastor find himself unable or unwilling to work together with the other Elders he must tender his resignation.

2.4.2.5 The Pastor shall be accountable to the Elders, welcoming their encouragement, direction, instruction, admonition and discipline. The Pastor shall acknowledge the Elders' right to remove him from instructional ministry on physical, spiritual or moral grounds.

2.5 Quantity of Elders: No maximum limitation is provided by scriptures as to the number of elders necessary for the local church. The stringent criteria by which an individual is recognized effectively restricts the number available; while understanding that God will provide and equip sufficient number in each church (Acts 20:28). As to a minimum, throughout the New Testament: "Elders", in regards to the office, are never spoken of singly; always in plural. (Some examples, Acts 14:23; 20:17, Philippians 1:1, 1 Timothy 5:17). The care and oversight of the church was never to rest on a single individual.

Application:

2.5.1 The church shall endeavor to have a minimum of two elders plus a pastor (three total).

2.5.2 As the church grows and as God provides additional qualified individuals, the church will add to the elders assuring that the needs of the ministry are met.

2.6 Gifting for the Office: God has given gifts, as He wills, sufficient for every church. (1 Corinthians 12:18). There are no specific gift, or gifts, directly associated with the office of elders. 1 Timothy 3:2, "A bishop then must be... able to teach", does not imply the gift of teaching. This is shown in 1 Timothy 5:17, "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching" (NAS). Obviously some elders did not preach and teach -- each exercised the gifts they had been given. "Able to teach" meant only that the elder should have sufficient knowledge of the Word to instruct those who might need help and also to guide him in making the decisions of an overseer (Titus 1:9) -- not that he necessarily may have the gift of expounding the Word in public assembly. As with any office or calling, it is God who calls and God who equips.

Application:

2.6.1 It is, as God provides, desirable for the Elders to represent a diversity of gifting necessary for the overall administration of the church.

2.7 Duties of the Elders: The scriptures are quite general as to the duties of Elders. Primarily they are in charge of the spiritual oversight of the assembly. In 1 Peter 5:1-4, elders are shown to be under-shepherds who must give account to the Chief Shepherd (technically making all elders pastors by definition!) -- examples to the flock (v. 3). Being an example would automatically stem from their way of life (shown by meeting the criteria of the office)

and also from their example of service to the church in ministry. Ultimately elders are shown to be responsible for the testimony of the assembly before God and the world. The writer in Hebrews 13:17 describes it in this fashion... "Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you." (Hebrews 13:17)

Likewise, A pastor is one who cares for the flock. The word translated "pastor", as found in Ephesians 4:11, is defined as "a shepherd (literally or figuratively)". In this regard a pastor must first be one who meets scriptural requirements concerning an elder. Biblically there is no requirement that a "pastor" be a teacher more than any other elder. Once again, elders serve in their office according to the gifting God has given them. Yet, as to our modern usage of the word, a pastor is generally an elder of the church who has been entrusted with much of its preaching and teaching ministry, often in a paid capacity (- an elder who preaches or teaches; 1 Timothy 5:17).

Whereas the responsibility of the office is always given in plurality (i.e. elders), the elders should work together in giving direction to the church. Each elder is equal in terms of authority and position.

One specific duty of the elders, given in scripture, is to visit and pray for the sick. James 5:14, "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." Again, by stating "elders" (plural) it was assumed that more than one would be involved in this ministry -- in harmony with Matthew 18:20; "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

Application:

2.7.1 The Elders...

- 2.7.1.1 Are to oversee, administrate, and rule the church by precept and example.
- 2.7.1.2 Are to exercise their wisdom in discerning what is edifying to the Church.
- 2.7.1.3 Are to love, pray, and care for the church body.
- 2.7.1.4 Are to teach, instruct, and disciple.
- 2.7.1.5 Are to protect the Church from doctrinal error and heresy.
- 2.7.1.6 Should be students of the Word.
- 2.7.1.7 Are to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with authority and patience in conjunction with sound doctrine.
- 2.7.1.8 Are to lead, without partiality and favoritism.
- 2.7.1.9 Shall annually review and establish objectives to accomplish the church purpose. The elders shall regularly review and evaluate the total program of the church to determine that objectives are met.
- 2.7.1.10 Shall establish and maintain public records of policies, as necessary, to guide the church toward its objective.
- 2.7.1.11 Shall consent to the hiring of non-pastoral staff by the Board of Deacons.
- 2.7.1.12 Shall establish and approve any changes in job descriptions for all church employees.

- 2.7.1.13 Shall call meetings of the church as required.
 - 2.7.1.14 Are strongly encouraged to attend weekly worship services as an example to the congregation.
 - 2.7.1.15 Shall administer the ordinance of the Lord's table.
 - 2.7.1.16 Shall approve all candidates for water baptism and admission to church membership.
 - 2.7.1.17 Shall be responsible for membership dismissal and church discipline.
 - 2.7.1.18 Shall elect from their ranks a chairman. A pastor shall not be eligible to be chairman.
 - 2.7.1.19 Shall elect from their ranks a secretary who will keep minutes of all meetings for a permanent record.
 - 2.7.1.20 Shall insure that doctrinally sound speakers are available to fill the pulpit in the absence of a pastor or teaching elder.
 - 2.7.1.21 Shall examine proposed candidates to the office of Deacon as to their understanding and adherence to the scriptural truths of the faith (per 1 Timothy 3:9-10).
 - 2.7.1.22 Shall be ex-officio members of all boards and committees connected with the church and/or any of its affiliated organizations.
- 2.7.2 The Elders and Deacons...
- 2.7.2.1 The Elders, together with two representatives of the Deacons Board, shall act as pulpit committee for the hiring of any pastors.
 - 2.7.2.1.1 The Elders solely are responsible for doctrinal examination.
 - 2.7.2.1.2 The Candidate shall be a believer in, and a preacher of, the doctrines of faith as set forth in the Scripture and as reflected in the church's statement of faith. The Candidate's wife, if any, shall also be a believer in the doctrines of faith as set forth in Scripture and as reflected in the church's statement of faith.
 - 2.7.2.1.3 The Elders must be satisfied that the Candidate meets the spiritual requirements of an Elder.
 - 2.7.2.1.4 Unanimous recommendation of the committee is required.
 - 2.7.2.1.5 The church will consider the presented Candidate at a properly called meeting of the church, with a quorum of active members present, and will be called upon receiving a 75% majority in a secret ballot vote of the church.
 - 2.7.2.2 Are to appoint qualified members from the Church body to participate in the various ministries and committees of the Church. (The Elders and Deacons may chose to form a subcommittee of their ranks to accomplish this task which must include a minimum of 1 deacon and 1 elder. Notwithstanding, both boards must approve their selections).
 - 2.7.2.3 Shall represent the Church in all legal matters. The Elders may grant approval for the Chairman of the Board of Deacons or any Elder to have authority to sign official documentation as a legal representative of the Church.
- 2.7.3 Duties of a Pastor
(All duties of a Pastor may be shared with any or all of the Elders at their discretion).

2.7.3.1 General - As an Elder, a Pastor shall have the general oversight of the spiritual life, regular and special services, and the administration of the ordinances of the church. He shall be responsible to preach the Word regularly at the Church, look after the spiritual welfare of the members, and perform various other duties pertaining to his office as Pastor.

2.7.3.2 Specific Duties

2.7.3.2.1 Worship

2.7.3.2.1.1 Planning and executing the regular services of worship.

2.7.3.2.1.2 Overseeing and conducting the communion service and baptism services as needed.

2.7.3.2.1.3 Organizing other meetings, services, or gatherings to benefit the body of believers.

2.7.3.2.2 Preaching and Teaching

The primary ministry of a Pastor shall be the public preaching and teaching of the Word of God. Preaching ministry must include proclamation of the whole counsel of God to the Church, seeking to strengthen the body of believers.

2.7.3.2.3 Evangelism and Outreach

Evangelism is here defined as "the whole process of bringing persons to Christ from the proclamation of the Gospel, through to conversion leading to full incorporation into the local church." While a pastor may not be specifically gifted as an evangelist, he should facilitate, train, and promote evangelism. Evangelism shall include the following elements:

2.7.3.2.3.1 Proclaiming the Gospel to the unsaved (something that all believers should be encouraged and trained to be involved in).

2.7.3.2.3.2 Counseling and assisting seekers after Christ.

2.7.3.2.3.3 Arrange the teaching and encouragement of converts, with a goal of Christian growth.

2.7.3.2.3.4 Preparation of new converts for baptism and church membership.

2.7.3.2.4 Counselling/Visitation

A Pastor shall:

2.7.3.2.4.1 Provide for the counsel, encouragement, and comfort, of members and adherents of the Church.

2.7.3.2.4.2 Visit, or coordinate the visitation of, members and adherents of the Church; giving priority to special cases of need.

2.7.3.2.4.3 Train and encourage others to do visitation; wherever expedient.

2.8 Qualifications for the Office:

Implicit in scriptures.

2.8.1 A born-again, Bible believing, Christian

2.8.2 A member of the church in good standing

2.8.3 No member of a secret society or organization shall be eligible for the office of Elder. (2 Corinthians 6:14)

2.8.4 1 Timothy 3:1-7

- v. 1 The office is defined for men
He will desire to be an elder -- as God will call Him.
- v. 2 Must be blameless (above reproach)
Husband of one wife
Temperate, Sober-minded, Of good behavior
Hospitable
Able to teach (at least individually) and will have good knowledge of scripture and sound doctrine
- v. 3 Not given to wine (drunkenness)
Not violent
Not greedy for money
Gentle, Not quarrelsome
Not covetous
- v. 4 One who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence
- v. 5 This is especially emphasized as a criteria for a man's ability to take care of the church.
- v. 6 Not a novice, i.e. not a new Christian, not a Christian showing lack of spiritual depth, not new to the church, not having first been involved in other ministry -- yet may be younger, by age, if spiritually mature (See 1 Timothy 4:12-13)
- v. 7 Must have a good testimony among those who are outside.

2.8.5 2 Timothy 2:24-26

- v. 24 A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all.
Able to teach, patient.
- v. 25 In humility correcting those who are in opposition

2.8.6 Titus 1:5-9

- v. 6 Office is defined for men
Must be blameless
Husband of one wife
Having faithful children; not accused of being wild and disobedient
- V.7 Must be blameless
Not self-willed, Not quick-tempered
Not given to wine, Not violent
Not greedy for money
- v. 8 Must be hospitable
A lover of what is good
Sober-minded
Just, Holy, Self-controlled
- V.9 Holding fast to the faithful word of scripture; having sound doctrine (must be examined in this) and able to use scriptures to exhort and convict those who oppose.

2.9 **General Instructions:**

2.9.1 1 Timothy 5:17-22

- v. 17-18 Elders should be looked after materially; especially those who preach and teach
- v. 19 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses.
- v. 20 Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of everyone so that the rest also may fear. This maintains the integrity of the office and shows the great responsibility of those holding it.
- v. 21 Perform this discipline without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality - the same rules apply to all elders.
- v. 22 Do not quickly commission anyone for service (ministry)

2.9.2 Acts 20:28-30

- v. 28 Elders must watch out for each other and for the whole flock
Elders must shepherd the church - shepherds lead sheep, never drive them, shepherds teach sheep to follow with patience.
- v. 29 Elders specially cautioned to watch out for wolves among the flock as they are entrusted with the protection of the church from error.
- v. 30 Elders are warned to watch out for wolves among the elders as they are entrusted with integrity of the overall office of elder.

2.9.3 1 Peter 5:1-3

- v. 2 Shepherd the flock of God (in this local church), do it willingly, not like you have to and not for dishonest gain. To remain as an elder because you're being paid (materially, or for honor, or prestige), not willingly, is being dishonest.
- v. 3 Don't "lord it over" those in your care, rather be examples to the flock - in conduct, in service, in all ways.

3 Deacons

3.1 History: "Deacon" is a transliteration of the Greek word diakonos which is shown by general usage in scripture to mean "servant". The office of deacon was new to the Christian church and carries no direct counterpart in pre-church Judaic worship. Matthew 22:13 and John 2:5 are representative of many passages showing this word having a common non-technical (i.e. non-office) usage, where it denotes a servant who executes the commands of a master. The establishment of this office has been historically held to have been shown in Acts 6:1-6. Although men are referenced as being the recommended recipients of this office (Acts 6:3, 1 Timothy 3:11-12), historically Romans 16:1 which references a woman by the term diakonos has been held to show that some women have held this office... "I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant (diakonos) of the church in Cenchrrea" (Romans 16:1).

Application:

- 3.1.1 It is scripturally preferable that a majority of deacons shall be men.

3.1.2 Should a woman be found eligible for this office, and recommended by the church, she shall be permitted to hold this office with the following scriptural provisos that she shall not be placed in authority over men (1 Timothy 2:12) and her duties shall foremost pertain to those matters concerning women and children (Titus 2:3-5).

3.2 Office Title: This office is consistently referenced by the title "Deacon" throughout the New Testament.

Application:

3.2.1 In keeping with scriptural usage, and designation, this office shall be called "Deacon".

3.2.1.1 Men holding the office of Deacon shall be referred to by the title of Deacon.

3.2.1.2 Women holding the office of Deacon shall be referred to by the title of Deaconess.

3.3 Selection of Individuals to the Office: Placing an individual into the office did not make one a deacon. Rather an individual known to be of proper spiritual character and stability was recognized and appointed to the office. Specific spiritual gifts were not in view concerning this office, allowing a diverse range of spiritual individuals to employ their God-given gifts as required by the church. In the case of Stephen, at least one deacon is shown as possessing the gift and ability to teach with great wisdom (Acts 6:10). Even in the infant New Testament church, the apostles entrusted the spiritual discernment to recognize such individuals to the body of believers (i.e. the local church membership)... "Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business" (Acts 6:3) Only those individuals who have been tested and proven to fulfill the scriptural qualifications are eligible for this office (1 Timothy 3:8-10).

Application:

3.3.1 An individual recognized as fulfilling the qualifications befitting a deacon, tested and recommended by the church, -- and spiritually agreed to by the elders -- shall be appointed to the office.

3.3.2 Spiritual examination of the candidate shall include, but not be limited to, the statement of faith of the church.

3.3.3 The church shall signify their recommendation of the individual candidates by a minimum 75% vote of the active Membership.

3.3.4 Upon being accepted to the office of deacon, the candidate shall be publicly commissioned to the office, by the elders, in the presence of the church (per Acts 6:6).

3.4 Term of the Deacon or Deaconess: No term is set forth in scripture limiting the duration of any individual in the office. Failure to uphold the requirements and duties of the office would become the absolute grounds by which the office must be withdrawn. Due to the physical nature of many duties carried out by the deacons (Acts 6:2), and the changing temporal needs of the body of believers, it may be practical to limit the terms of deacons,

wherein the congregation can reassess and call individuals based upon the present requirements of the church body.

Application:

3.4.1 A deacon or deaconess shall be appointed to office for a term of one, two, or three years, or until (any of)...

3.4.1.1 Death

3.4.1.2 Resignation - Normally should be in writing two months in advance, unless otherwise agreed to by the Elders or the church.

3.4.1.3 Dismissal by the Elders for (any of)...

3.4.1.3.1 No longer meets the qualifications of the Office

3.4.1.3.2 Gross immorality

3.4.1.3.3 Moves from the area

3.4.1.3.4 No longer an example by attendance

3.4.1.3.5 Unsound doctrine

3.4.1.3.6 Scriptural just cause being brought individually and/or corporately by church members (in accordance with scriptural procedure), having been examined and found to be true by the Elders.

3.4.2 The church body may appoint a deacon or deaconess to another subsequent, and consecutive, term as deemed necessary. Notwithstanding, the same appointment procedure and examination must be employed.

3.5 Quantity of Deacons (office): Only the passage in Acts 6:3 stipulates a fixed number of office holders -- the number given was seven. It may be assumed that the number chosen was equivalent to what was thought necessary to carry out the tasks at hand. It also may be implied from scripture that the number should be small in proportion to the size of the fellowship -- as the number chosen by this early church was small (i.e. 7) in comparison to the vast numbers being added to the church (i.e. Acts 4:4 "five thousand").

Application:

3.5.1 The church shall establish the number of deacons necessary, after considering the tasks at hand, and shall establish a maximum number by 75% vote of the congregation.

3.5.2 The maximum shall be reviewed at least once every five years.

3.5.3 There shall not be more deaconesses than deacons.

3.6 Duties of the Deacons: The duties of the deacons are shown in scriptures to pertain to the temporal well being of the church and the distribution of its finances and material goods (Acts 6:1-2). As servants of the church, they direct and implement temporal affairs following the purpose of the church, under the guidance of the elders, on behalf of the congregation and for their benefit. This office holds a scriptural blessing to all those who serve the church well... "For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 3:13)

Application:

3.6.1 The Deacons shall...

- 3.6.1.1 Cooperate with and be under the supervision of the Board of Elders.
 - 3.6.1.2 Annually formulate an itemized budget for presentation to the Church body at an Annual Meeting. Upon approval by the Elders and the Church, the Deacons shall administrate the budget for the entire fiscal year.
 - 3.6.1.3 Provide written reports for presentation to the Church body, at least annually.
 - 3.6.1.4 Hire employees (other than pastoral staff) as deemed necessary.
 - 3.6.1.5 Meet periodically to conduct the routine business affairs of the Church. The Deacons shall appoint one amongst themselves to be their Chairman.
 - 3.6.1.6 Supervise the maintenance and improvement of any Church facilities.
 - 3.6.1.7 Provide prior approval for the expenditures of all funds and authorize payment of all bills received by the treasurer (who shall either be a deacon or directly accountable to the deacons).
 - 3.6.1.8 The Deacons shall supervise the use of all Church property and buildings.
 - 3.6.1.9 Shall endeavor to be examples of leadership to the congregation -- including by their attendance at weekly meetings of the church.
- 3.6.2 Deacons and Elders shall...
- 3.6.2.1 On an as-needed basis, develop and implement policies defining and regulating various functions, facilities, activities, and committees within the church.
 - 3.6.2.2 Appoint qualified members from the Church body to participate in the various ministries and committees of the church. (The Elders and Deacons may chose to form a subcommittee of their ranks to accomplish this task which must include a minimum of 1 deacon and 1 elder. Notwithstanding, both boards must approve their selections).
 - 3.6.2.3 Represent the Church in all legal matters. The Elders may grant approval for the Chairman of the Board of Deacons or any Elder to have authority to sign official documentation as a legal representative of the Church.
 - 3.6.2.4 Oversee the missions program of the church including budgeting and distribution of funds or goods. The Elders shall be responsible for ascertaining that all missions organizations or missionaries supported are in agreement with the beliefs and goals of the Church.

3.7 Qualifications for the Office:

Implicit in scriptures.

- 3.7.1 A born-again, Bible believing, Christian
- 3.7.2 A member of the church
- 3.7.3 No member of a secret society or organization shall be eligible for the office of Deacon. (2 Corinthians 6:14)
- 3.7.4 1 Timothy 3:8-13
 - v. 8 Must be reverent
Must be honest -- keep their word
Not given to alcoholic drink (drunkenness). Not greedy.
 - v. 9 Must understand and hold completely to the truths of the Christian faith.

- v. 10 First to be tested regarding temporal things (i.e. v. 8) and also things of the faith (i.e. v. 9). When tested and found blameless they are then eligible for the office conditional upon the following provisos.
- v. 11 Their spouse must be also reverent, not be a slander, and likewise temperate and faithful in all things
- v. 12 Must have only one spouse and must maintain the scriptural authority of their position within the family and household; especially pertaining to their children.

3.7.5 Acts 6:3,5

- v. 3 Must be of good reputation
Full of the Holy Spirit as exhibited by Galatians 5:22-24
Must possess scriptural wisdom
- v. 5 Must be chosen by the body of believers (the church membership).