

SANCTUARY CHURCH ROLE OF ELDERS

responsibilities detailed

Section 1. Purpose. The Elder shall be responsible for overseeing the community of leaders, advising the executive team, and providing accountability over all ministries and business affairs of the church. They will partner with the founding pastor, senior pastors and executive team in a shepherding capacity to cultivate, maintain, and oversee the spiritual welfare of the congregation.

Section 2. Composition. The Elders shall be comprised of not less than 2 lay leaders nor more than 10 elders, of which shall be the senior pastors and founding pastor (ex officio).

Section 3. Qualification. Any leader of the church meeting the biblical standards of character and giftedness for elders may be nominated and elected to the Elder Team.

Section 4. Election. Elders will be nominated by the current Elder team and elected by a 80% vote of those leaders voting at a meeting of the congregation called for that purpose. A formal nomination period will be open for leaders to make recommendations to the Elders.

Section 5. Term of Office. Elders shall be elected for a term of 3 years and shall not be elected for more than two consecutive terms. After at least one year off, a person may be eligible for subsequent service, subject again to the terms stated in this article.

Section 6. Vacancies and Removal. An Elder may resign. An Elder may be removed from office by a 80% vote of leaders voting at a meeting called for that purpose. Vacancies created by resignation or removal may be filled by appointment through the 2/3 vote of the Elders.

Section 7. Notification of Meetings. All Elders shall receive a minimum 3-day advance notification of any meeting, including time and place of the meeting. In emergency situations, the 3-day notice may be waived by the 2/3 vote of the entire Elders.

Section 8. Quorum. A majority of Elders shall constitute a quorum.

Section 9. Decisions. The Elders shall strive for unanimity. Matters shall be determined by a majority vote of an Elders quorum, unless on a matter in which the Constitution and Bylaws require a different percentage.

Section 10. Organization.

Elders shall elect from among themselves a chair (founding or Sr Pastor), a vice chair, a secretary and a financial representative.

1. Chair. The chair shall preside at all meetings of the Elders.
2. Vice-chair. The vice-chair shall assume the duties of the chair in the chair's absence, assist in the Chair's duties.
3. Secretary. The secretary shall keep and preserve the minutes of all relevant meetings of the church and of the Elders, conduct and preserve all official correspondence as shall be delegated.
4. Financial Representative. The financial representative shall ensure proper policies, processes, reporting, and reviewing of all matters related to the finances of the church are being carried out by the financial team.

Section 11. Primary Responsibilities of the Elder Team.

Elders will meet as required, usually once a month. Their gatherings will focus on the spiritual life of the movement and the celebration and practice of our covenanted values.

Because there is a clear mandate on the executive side of Sanctuary to lead and resource the church, for which the elders provide accountability and care, the elders are free to focus on the shepherding care of the leaders.

The work of the elders then, expresses itself in 5 areas:

1. EMBODY

Elders lead by example. They are models. They Shepherd the church “not [by] lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock” (1 Pet. 5:3). Not surprisingly, the New Testament lists of elder qualifications focus predominantly on character (1 Tim. 3:1-7, Tit. 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-4). An elder’s most basic job is to say “Imitate me as I also imitate Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1). The mandate to model maturity carries two critical implications. First, modeling means they must guard godliness: “Pay close attention to your life and your teaching” (1 Tim. 4:16). Continue to live close to the Lord, nurture your family as applicable, resist sin, and love people. They are called to open their life to the loving accountability of the other elders. Modeling maturity is a team project.

That leads to a second implication: modeling requires elders to be among the people. It only works if people see them up close. They must open their life to the people at Sanctuary. This is why hospitality is one of the biblical standards for Elders.

Because the elders will at times stand in the place of discipline it is vital that they embody our values and live the highest possible standard as elders. The integrity of the group is important morally as well as structurally. If these leaders are not leading faithfully and humbly, living honest missional lives, their judgment and interpretation could potentially be impugned. The first work of the elders then is to simply live out our values. This role is always a secondary identity and never primary.

2. SHEPHERD

“I exhort the elders among you: shepherd God’s flock” (1 Pet. 5:2; see also Jn. 21:15-16 and Acts 20:28). Elders serve the Good Shepherd by providing his local flocks with spiritual oversight. Elders feed, lead, protect, and nurture church members like shepherds do with sheep.

a. Teach

An elder must be “an able teacher” (1 Tim. 3:2; see 5:17). They must hold “to the faithful message as taught, so that they will be able both to encourage with sound teaching and refute those who contradict it” (Tit. 1:9). Jesus’ shepherds feed Jesus’ sheep with Jesus’ word. Teaching includes training and discipleship. As Paul said to Timothy, “What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to the faithful who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2).

b. Lead

Just as shepherds lead their flocks, so elders lead leaders and partners. The biblical writers also call elders “overseers,” a title that highlights their role as leaders (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:1; Tit. 1:5, 7). Hebrews instructs Christians to “obey your leaders and

submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account” (Heb. 13:17).

When challenges arise in the church, they must help face them proactively and plot a course forward to the true destination. The goal isn't to lead a church to become an efficient organization, as important as that may be. Rather, elders should lead church members toward maturity in Christ. Jesus gave teaching shepherds to the church “to build up the body of Christ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, growing into a maturity with a stature measured by Christ’s fullness” (Eph. 4:12-13). Elders bring the flock to green pastures and still waters when they help members know Jesus more and increasingly reflect his glory together.

c. Pray

Elders should take up the apostolic shepherding mantle and say, “we will devote ourselves to prayer” (Acts 6:4). Ultimately elders are powerless in themselves to mature anyone in Christ; only the Holy Spirit can do that through God’s Word. Listening and interceding for the community of Leaders is a critical aspect of the call.

We choose to sum up an elder’s job description this way: shepherd the church like Jesus shepherds his disciples. Like Jesus, they make the gospel the primary content of their work. In every decision, they seek to lead the church toward knowing and trusting Jesus. The shepherds of Sanctuary Church are at their best when they reflect Jesus, the good Shepherd.

3. COMMISSION

The Elders are the commissioning body. They consider and confer the invitation and inclusion of any leader who has met all the requirements for commissioning. They are tasked with helping identify spiritual authority amongst our partner community and join in their formation (Leader in Training)

4. INTERPRET AND ADJUDICATE

At times our elders are similar the Supreme Court. They do not write laws or enforce them. They are charged with interpreting the constitution and hearing cases that require a final opinion. The Covenant of Leaders is central here. If there is a breach of the covenant, or an accusation of breach by one of our leaders, these elders will consider that case. They will carefully and honestly listen to those involved while simultaneously considering the spirit and the letter of the Covenant. This of course includes our values, the historic creeds and the Bible itself. All matters related to theology, conduct and the representation of Jesus will be finally decided here.

5. DISCIPLINE AND RESTORE

In the case of misconduct or malfeasance, and where the group has adjudicated guilt or error, they will also be tasked with overseeing the process of discipline and restoration. So it is that they will be charged with giving every leader who fails or falls not only a process for correction and restitution but a way back to good standing within the community.

Section 11. Executive Responsibilities of the Elder Team. In addition to being responsible to the congregation for overseeing the community of leaders and advising the executive team, the Elders provide accountability for the business affairs of the church:

- a. In congress with senior pastoral leadership, present annual mission and ministry objectives to the congregation;
- b. Approve church policies;
- c. Be responsible for representing the congregation in certain staff relationships including:
 - 1. Annual appraisal of the senior pastors and of the pastoral staff, and providing Godly counsel or discipline as required;
 - 2. Annual approval of staff compensation and compensation for new staff;
 - 3. Approval of personnel policies;
 - 4. Approval of changes in pastoral job descriptions.
- d. Be responsible for approving a proposed budget for each fiscal year to be presented to the leaders for final approval. The Elders shall have the authority to appropriately adjust budget items and amounts where ministry objectives necessitate.
- e. Hear and respond appropriately to concerns of leaders and partners;
- f. Be responsible for church discipline as outlined in *Article I, Section 5 of these Bylaws*;
- g. Act as the trustees of the church for the advancement and protection of its assets. The Elders shall designate those Elders and any other leaders of the church who shall be authorized to sign legal documents on behalf of the church.

Section 12. Unity. Action by the Elders shall be taken in such manner as to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.