

Grace Community Church

The Ministry of Elders

We give thanks to God for His leadership in the history of Grace Community Church. Through the Scriptures and by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Lord has led us in various decisions that affect our church life. One of the major decisions our church makes periodically is the selection of new elders.

This information sheet is designed to share with the congregation basic biblical teaching on the ministry of elders, the role of elders at Grace, and the process of selecting elders to serve our church. As you read this information and study the Scriptures, pray that God will be honored in the leadership of Grace.

The concept of leadership in the Bible has to do first and foremost with service. Leaders may be called such, but their primary function is to serve the church of God in her spiritual growth and service. No discussion of leadership is ever appropriate without the proper understanding of and commitment to service. At Grace, when we refer to leaders/elders we are referring to servants of the church.

The Ministry of Elders

I Timothy 3:1-7 and 5:17, Titus 1:5-9, and I Peter 5:1-10 are passages that deal with the leadership of the church and elders in particular. To sum up these passages, elders are men who are filled with the Holy Spirit and wisdom, have a character which is godly and Christlike, walk with integrity with their families and in their communities, have a desire to serve, and who can lead and teach in the church. The job description given to elders is to provide spiritual oversight and to minister the word in the church. You will find it helpful to read these passages to discover the qualifications and responsibilities of elders.

The Ministry of Elders at Grace

The church government of Grace can best be described as congregational in nature and led by a plurality of elders. The pastor is an elder of the church. He both leads within the elder body and is accountable to the elders. The pastor/ elder relationship includes shared ministry and mutual encouragement and accountability.

A team of elders leads the church. The elders serve the church by giving spiritual oversight and direction to the church. The scope of responsibility includes church doctrine, vision and strategy for ministry, the selection and training of future elders, oversight of deacons, church ministries, accountability for leadership, the shepherding of the congregation through prayer and the ministry of the word, restoration of church members, and major decisions affecting the life of the church. Elders are selected based on the criteria of I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. They are selected by a process involving both the congregation and the existing elders.

The congregation also has input into the life of the church. All decisions of church life will not need to come before the congregation, but congregational affirmation will be sought on major decisions and the selection of elders. The church government of Grace

allows for congregational involvement in church matters while at the same time providing for biblical leadership through the service of elders. This approach frees the entire congregation from many time-consuming and potentially distracting decisions in order to focus on the calling of Christ to follow him and to minister in the world.

General Requirements for Elders at Grace

1. A commitment to a personal, growing relationship with Jesus Christ.
2. A commitment to Grace through membership, prayer, ministry involvement, financial support, and support of the church vision and strategy.
3. A calling to the ministry of elder evidenced by,
 - a. A desire to serve as elder.
 - b. Meeting the qualifications for elder in I Timothy 3:1-13, and Titus 1:5-9.
 - c. Confirmation of the elder team.
 - d. Confirmation of the congregation.
4. To serve as an elder with honesty, unity, confidentiality, and maturity.
5. To attend and give input at elders meetings. These meetings are designed to give general spiritual oversight and direction to the ministry of the church as well as make decisions related to the ongoing work of the church. These meetings will be at least once a month.
6. To provide for the pastoral care ministry of prayer, spiritual encouragement, and teaching.

Elder Selection Process

1. The members of Grace will submit the names of men who meet the qualifications for the ministry of an elder as outlined above.
2. These names will be prayed over and considered by current elders.
3. With unanimous agreement among the elders, an appropriate number of men will be asked to consider serving as an elder.
4. When there is agreement among the elders and the men being asked to serve as an elder, a process of discipleship will begin to prepare men for service as an elder.
5. After a final selection of potential new elders by the current elders, the congregation will be asked to give affirmation of these men.