

Elder Information from our By-Laws

This is a compilation of what our by-laws state or directly imply about the role of elders in our church. The purpose is so that we can get a grasp of what the by-laws envision, as elders are enmeshed in several places. Note that these are the individual statements that have been isolated from their context. In some of them, the context clearly explains what is meant. In most cases, I've tried only to interpret them if the interpretation is absolutely clear. The headings are also my interpretation.

Requirements

- Voting male members.
- Member in good standing for at least a year.
- Received appropriate training under board of elders.
- Has served in functions requiring responsible leadership.
- Qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:2-7, and 1 Peter 4:19-5:4.
- Ordained upon the authority of a Southern Baptist Church.

- ### **Number:** Established according to the church needs as recommended by the Sr. Pastor, and approved by active elders or deacons.

Appointment Mechanism.

- Voting members recommend elders/deacons to the board of elders.
- Elders examine them to see if they meet qualifications
- Elders may re-instate a previously certified elder or deacon
- On the Sunday before the election, elders are to publish names of approved candidates.
- Congregation votes by secret ballot for each candidate in favor or against.
- Candidates receiving a majority vote in their favor are elected.
- Elders and Deacons are ordained
- The Senior Pastor is a member of the board of Elders

Term

- Both Elders and Deacons serve for Three Years
- They may be divested of office by church discipline, or by a 2/3 vote of the congregation. They may also resign from office.

Function

Leadership

- Jointly with the Pastor, lead the church in the service of Christ.
- Support the Sr. Pastor's preaching and teaching ministry
- Coordinate and disseminate the vision for the church
- Oversee all matters concerning the conduct of public worship.
- Promote spiritual growth and evangelistic witness of the congregation.
- Final authority on all matters except as are delegated to such other boards herein and subject only to the authority of the congregation.

Trouble-Shooting

- Watch diligently over the people committed to their charge to prevent the corruption of doctrine or morals.
- Evils they cannot correct by private admonition they should bring to the notice of the board.
- Ensure doctrinal integrity.

Nurture

- Visit people, especially sick and mourning.
- Pray with and for the people.
- Choose to reveal information when uncertain how to advise someone, when in imminent danger, when discipline is needed, or when required by law to report suspected child abuse.

Oversee the Membership Process

- Interview prospective members.
- Execute required member discipline
- Oversee exit interview process.

Oversee the Staff

- Establish, maintain, and execute a process whereby the Sr. Pastor and ministerial staff are held accountable for their Spiritual Life, family responsibilities, and overall conduct and behavior.
- Nominate a pulpit committee of seven members to seek a senior Pastor when the office is vacant, and decide whether to recommend candidates to the church.
- Approve all pastoral staff members before they are voted on by the church.
- Vote along with personnel committee and church council to terminate a Pastoral Staff member, which vote must be ratified by the congregation within two weeks.

Oversee the Deacons

- Delegate ministry to the Board of Deacons.
- Certify first time and restored nominees for Deacon or Elder positions
- Publish all approved nominees for voting

Oversee the Church Council

- Church council is subject to the authority set forth in the bylaws to the Board of Elders.
- One at large member of the Church Council should come from the board of elders.
- Church council can be convened at the request of two members of the board of Elders.

Manage the Membership

- Remove people who request to be removed
- Help resolve their problem if they can
- Help them find another church if they can't
- Abstain from removing membership if discipline is in effect
- Remove people who cannot be found, join another church
- Recommend for a church vote people who have been removed upon repentance, reformation, or explanation for restoration.

Manage Church Documents

- Allow members to inspect and copy Church Council minutes, Congregational meeting minutes, congregational rolls, accounting records, articles of incorporation.
- Limit access to any records that contain confidential information.