

Appendix
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Biblical Principles of Church Government

Who is the Head of the Church?

“Christ is the head of the church, which is His body. He is the first of all who will rise from the dead, so He is first in everything.” Col. 1:18

Christ is head of the church. He is the true source of all the church is and does, and His glory is to be the objective of every act, function and motive of the body, both individually and corporately. (Eph. 1:22-23, Col. 2:19)

Where does the church receive its guidance?

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God's way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do.”
2 Tim. 3:16-17

God has provided His thoughts and His direction for the body in His Word. The Bible reflects and contains His commands, His counsel and His purpose for the church and for every believer. (2 Tim. 2:15; Matt. 22:37-39; Psa. 119)

What is the source of the church's power?

“But when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power and will tell people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8

The Holy Spirit is the source of the Church's power. The Holy Spirit's role is to indwell and control believers in order to conform them to the character of Christ. (Rom. 8:10-11; Eph. 1:13; 5:18; Gal. 5:16)

Membership

“And all the believers met together constantly and shared everything they had. They sold their possessions and shared the proceeds with those in need. They worshipped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity,”
Acts 2:44-46

The New Testament presents a picture of definable groups of people who, once committed to the Lord, identify themselves with and commit themselves to a particular local body. In order to implement the principles of accountability and commitment to the local body of Christ, as defined in the New Testament and practiced in the early churches, FCC recognizes the need for formal church membership.

Principles of Accountability and Commitment

Membership in the body of Christ requires submission to Christ, a commitment to bring every phase of life under His leadership. Membership involves growth in love for the person of Jesus Christ and obedience to biblical principles of commitment and accountability to the body of Christ.

Personal Devotion... *“Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.”* John 14:6

God saved you by His special favor when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.” Eph. 2:8-10

Membership in the body of Christ rests on one critical issue, personal faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as full payment for your sin. The primary requirement for any person seeking membership in a local church is personal faith in Jesus Christ as the only way of forgiveness.

Time... *Think of ways to encourage one another to outbursts of love and good deeds. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back again is drawing near.”* Heb. 10:24-25

Regular fellowship with other believers is critical to a meaningful Christian life. Believers should give priority to meeting together. Because Christ expended Himself on our behalf, we should desire giving our time to build His kingdom and pursue the things of eternal significance. (Matt. 6:33; Phil. 2:5-7; 2 Cor. 5:15; Rom. 14:7-8)

Talents and Gifts... *“Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ’s body. We are all parts of His one body, and each of us has different work to do. And since we are all one body in Christ, we belong to each other, and each of us needs all the others. God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well.”* Romans 12:4-6a

We recognize that the body of Christ is composed of interdependent members, each uniquely gifted by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of building up the entire body. Each believer should seek to identify, develop and utilize his/her spiritual gifts and abilities and seek a place of service within the body, with the support and affirmation of the body. (1 Cor. 12, 14; Eph. 4:11-13; Matt. 25:14ff)

Treasures... *“Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where they can be eaten by moths and get rusty, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where they will never become moth-eaten or rusty and where they will be safe from thieves. Wherever your treasure is, there your heart and thoughts will also be.”* Matthew 6:19-21

Realizing we have been bought with the price of Christ’s blood, everything we are and have is a gift from God and belongs to Him. His Kingdom should become the true treasure we pursue. In response to Christ’s abundant giving, we should increasingly seek to submit our personal resources to His leadership, displaying a spirit of generosity and cheerfulness, knowing that as we give our lives will be “enriched so that you can give even more generously.” (Lk. 6:38; Phil. 3:7-8; Matt. 6:33, 13:44; 1 Pet. 1:17-19; Heb. 9:11-14; Matt. 23:23; Eph. 1:7; Mal. 3:8-10; 2 Cor. 8, 9; Prov. 3:9-10; Lk. 21:1-4; 2 Cor. 9:11)

Fellowship... *“Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from His love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and sympathetic? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one heart and purpose. Don’t be selfish; don’t live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself.”* Phil. 2:1-3

As members of the body, we should continually seek to develop a spirit of mutual love, concern, encouragement and the bearing of one another’s burdens. We’re to be concerned with each other’s spiritual well being, stimulating each other to a deeper walk and commitment to Christ.

Realizing sin obstructs our walk with the Lord and impedes fellowship, we are commanded to lovingly confront brothers and sisters according to Biblical principles when there is evidence of sin, thus preserving the integrity of the body, the spirit of peace and the body of unity. (1 Cor. 1:9; Psa. 133; Matt. 7:1-5; Rom. 12:10; Gal. 6:1-2; 1 Pet. 3:8-9; Heb. 3:13; Acts 2:42ff; 4:32-34, 1 Jn. 1:7; Lk. 17:3-4; Eph. 4:29-32)

These Scriptural principles of commitment to the Lord and to the church in no way represent the pathway to salvation. Salvation is completely a work of God's free grace, not the result in whole or in part of any human works or goodness. However, the inevitable accompaniment of a genuine saving relationship with Jesus Christ is the desire to grow in obedience and godliness, brought about by the Holy Spirit's working in one's life. Tit. 3:5; Eph. 2:8-10; Rom. 4:5

How is the Church Led?

"We work together as partners who belong to God. You are God's field, God's building—not ours. Because of God's special favor to me, I have laid the foundation like an expert builder. Now others are building on it. But whoever is building on this foundation must be very careful." 1 Cor. 3:9-10

God's plan for leadership is revealed in Scripture. He launched the church by giving certain individuals specific gifts "...apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers." These believers under the direction of the Holy Spirit initiated the Christian movement and brought local churches into existence through their teaching and preaching.

"I left you on the island of Crete so you could complete our work there and appoint elders in each town as I instructed you." Titus 1:5

The Biblical pattern for a leadership in the local church is a plurality of elders. Elders share the responsibilities of teaching, shepherding and oversight. A plurality of elders requires more than one elder.

"And now beware! Be sure that you feed and shepherd God's flock—His church, purchased with his blood—over whom the Holy Spirit has appointed you as elders." Acts 20:28

As churches were established in the faith, and when more than one person became qualified, elders were appointed to continue the leadership in each local church. The elders were given the responsibility for the oversight of that particular church body, and the shepherding of its members. (1 Tim. 3:1-7; 5:17; Acts 14:23; 20:28-32; Tit. 1:5-9)

"Elders who do their work well should be paid well, especially those who work hard at both preaching and teaching." 1 Tim. 5:17

Some elders are called by God to give more time to spiritual leadership. Financial compensation is the privilege and responsibility of the church family in order to allow those called to meet the requirements of ministry and provide family needs.

"So the Twelve called a meeting of all the believers. 'We apostles should spend our time preaching and teaching the word of God, not administering a food program,' they said. 'Now look around among yourselves, friends, and select seven men who are well respected and are full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. We will put them in charge of this business.'" Acts 6:2-3

As necessary, deacons were also appointed to serve the church, particularly in undertaking those areas of need that would otherwise prohibit the elders and other leaders (pastor and staff) from performing their Biblical responsibilities. (Acts 6:1-7)

"Obey your spiritual leaders and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they know they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this joyfully and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit." Hebrews 13:17

In response to the Biblical pattern of leadership, members of the body are taught in Scripture to lovingly support their leaders and to submit to Christ's care for His church through the shepherding of the elders. (1 Cor. 16:16; 1 Thes. 5:12-13)

The Biblical Role of Elders

1. *Shepherd the Flock:* Serving in humility, elders are to guide, direct, guard and protect the members of the body, seeking to meet the needs of the flock, warning against harmful influences and guarding against false teachers. (Acts 20:28ff; 1 Pet. 5:1-3)
2. *Lead through example:* Elders are to live as role models and are to set a pattern before the flock of a rightly ordered life - with a single purpose, to glorify God. (1 Pet. 5:3)
3. *Teach and exhort:* Elders are responsible to see that the flock is fed through insightful and accurate Biblical instruction and encouragement. (2 Tim. 4:2; Heb. 13:7)
4. *Refute those who contradict:* Elders are to confront those teaching what they should not teach or who are continuing in a pattern of behavior contradictory to Biblical truth. The elders are to protect the credibility of the truth of Christ for both the congregation and the community. (Acts 20:29-31; Tit. 1:9)
5. *Manage the church of God:* Elders are responsible to oversee the management of the church. Elders must be men who can "do their work well". (1 Tim. 3:5; 5:17)
6. *Pray for the sick:* Elders are to pray for the spiritual and physical well-being of members in the congregation. (Jas. 5:14)

Biblical Qualification for Elders

"For an elder must be a man whose life cannot be spoken against. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exhibit self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home and must be able to teach. He must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He must be gentle, peace loving, and not one who loves money. He must manage his own family well, with children who respect and obey him. For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church? An elder must not be a new Christian, because he might be proud of being chosen so soon, and the Devil will use that pride to make him fall. Also, people outside the church must speak well of him so that he will not fall into the Devil's trap and be disgraced." 1 Tim. 3:2-7

"An elder must be well thought of for his good life. He must be faithful to his wife, and his children must be believers who are not wild or rebellious. An elder must live a blameless life because he is God's minister. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered; he must not be a heavy drinker, violent, or greedy for money. He must enjoy having guests in his home and must love all that is good. He must live wisely and be fair. He must live a devout and disciplined life. He must have a strong and steadfast belief in the trustworthy message he was taught; then he will be able to encourage others with right teaching and show those who oppose it where they are wrong." Titus 1:6-9

1. **Well thought of** - Elders must be above blame, presenting no patterns of rebellion or grounds for accusation.
2. **Faithful to his wife** - Elders, if married, must be devoted husbands.
3. **Self controlled** - Elders must be self-controlled, enslaved to nothing, free from excess.
4. **Live wisely** - Elders must be sensible, wise, balanced in judgment, not given to quick, superficial decisions based on immature thinking.
5. **Good reputation** - Elders must demonstrate a well-ordered life and good behavior.
6. **Enjoy having guests in his home** - Elders must be unselfish with their personal resources. They must be willing to share blessings with others.
7. **Able to teach** - Elders must be able to communicate the truth of God and exhort sound doctrine in a non-argumentative way. (2 Tim. 2:24; 4:2)
8. **Not a heavy drinker** - Elders must be free from addictions, and willingly limit their freedom for the well-being of others.

9. **Must not be violent** - Elders must be gentle and characterized by patience and tenderness - not having a quick temper.
10. **Peace loving** - Elders must not be given to quarreling or selfish argumentation.
11. **Must not be greedy for money** - Elders must not be stingy or greedy. They must not be preoccupied with amassing material things, but rather should be a model of giving.
12. **Must manage his own home well** - Elders must have a well-ordered household, a healthy family life, and well-disciplined children. (Pertains to those children still under the authority of the parents).
13. **Not a new Christian** - Elders must not be new believers. They must have been Christians long enough to demonstrate the reality of their conversion and the depth of their spirituality.
14. **People outside the church must speak well of him** - Elders must be well respected by unbelievers and free of hypocrisy.
15. **Must not be arrogant** - Elders must not be stubborn, insensitive or prone to force opinions on others. They must be more interested in service than self-fulfillment.
16. **Not quick tempered** - Elders must be able to exercise self-control and patience in difficult situations.
17. **Must love all that is good** - Elders must desire the will of God in every decision.
18. **Must be fair** - Elders must be impartial. The judgments of the elders must be based on Scriptural principle rather than personal preference.
19. **Strong and steadfast faith** - Elders must respect God, the things of God and be stable in faith, continually desiring to be separated from sin. They must be devoted to prayer, personal study and application of the Scriptures, closely guarding their own relationship with God.

The biblical qualifications for elders are all directed to men and closely parallel the leadership pattern for the home. FCC recognizes that God's order for the church is to have male leadership. This is not a matter of giftedness or ability but the sovereign design of God.

Those in positions of leadership should never advance an attitude of superiority. There is equality in Christ among all members of the body. The design of God is to provide order, care and leadership through elders who are corporately entrusted with authority to lead the local church under the Headship of Jesus Christ.

Biblical Role of Deacon/Deaconess

So the Twelve called a meeting of all the believers. "We apostles should spend our time preaching and teaching the word of God, not administering a food program," they said. "Now look around among yourselves, friends, and select seven men who are well respected and are full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. We will put them in charge of this business." Acts 6:2-3

Deacons serve under the direction of the Elder Council, undertaking those areas of service necessary for the church's functioning that would otherwise prohibit the elders and other leaders from performing their Biblical responsibilities. No specific, ongoing roles are mentioned in Scripture, probably because service needs change, and so the role of the deacons should be flexible.

Qualifications Of Deacon/Deaconess

"In the same way, deacons must be people who are respected and have integrity. They must not be heavy drinkers and must not be greedy for money. They must be committed to the revealed truths of the Christian faith and must live with a clear conscience. Before they are appointed as deacons, they should be given other responsibilities in the church as a test of their character and ability. If they do well, then they may serve as deacons. In the same way, their wives must be respected and must not speak evil of others. They must exercise self-control and be faithful in everything they do. A deacon must be faithful to his wife, and he must manage his children and household well." 1 Tim. 3:8-12

1. **Must be respected** - Deacons must be mature, of sound mind and character and yielded to the Holy Spirit.
2. **Must be people of integrity** - Deacons must demonstrate consistency. A deacon must not be prone to saying one thing to one person and something else to another.
3. **Not a heavy drinker** - Deacons must be free from addictions, and must be willing to limit their liberty for the sake of others.
4. **Not greedy for money** - Deacons must be purely motivated in their service.
5. **Committed to the revealed truths of the Christian faith** - Deacons must have a sound knowledge of biblical truth and a lifestyle which is consistent with the truth. They must not be easily swayed from the truth.
6. **Tested character and ability** - Deacons must be proven in areas of service as well as lifestyle.
7. **Respected** - Deacons must display a lifestyle free from on-going patterns of disobedience and rebellion.
8. **Must not speak evil of others** - Deacons must exhibit a pure love for those in the church through their service and in their speech.
9. **Faithful to family** - Deacons must demonstrate proven ministry priority in loving and serving their family.
10. **Manage their household well** - Deacons must have well-ordered households, healthy family life, and well-disciplined children. (Pertains to those children still under the authority of the parents.)

FCC recognizes these qualifications are applied to men and women. The office of deacon may be held by either a man or a woman.

Important evidence for followers of Jesus

Jesus said to the people who believed in Him, "You are truly my disciples if you keep obeying my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:31-32

Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples. John 13:35

My true disciples produce much fruit. This brings great glory to my Father. John 15:8

So you should not be like cowering, fearful slaves. You should behave instead like God's very own children, adopted into His family—calling him "Father, dear Father." For His Holy Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts and tells us that we are God's children. Romans 8:15-16

Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Always keep yourselves united in the Holy Spirit, and bind yourselves together with peace.

We are all one body, we have the same Spirit, and we have all been called to the same glorious future. There is only one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and there is only one God and Father, who is over us all and in us all and living through us all. Eph. 4:1-6

Dear brothers and sisters, you are foreigners and aliens here. So I warn you to keep away from evil desires because they fight against your very souls. Be careful how you live among your unbelieving neighbors. Even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will believe and give honor to God when he comes to judge the world. 1 Peter 2:11-12

Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is born of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God—for God is love. God showed how much he loved us by sending his only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through Him. This is real love. It is not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son

as a sacrifice to take away our sins. Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. 1 John 4:7-11

Adopted . . . 02/25/98