



Hope Church is committed to the Bible's teaching that men who hold the offices of Elder and Deacon are to oversee various functions of the local church. The Bible's teaching on the subject of two church offices is found in 1 Timothy 3:1-16 and Titus 1:5-9. Although there are three terms used for the offices of the church: bishop, elder, and deacon, analysis of these terms indicates that bishop and elder are used interchangeably.

## ELDERS

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The Scriptures show that the elders serve by leading and that their responsibility involves the spiritual oversight of the congregation. All elders are equal in authority but not necessarily equal in influence.

### ELDER QUALIFICATIONS (TITUS 1:6-9)

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Above reproach

Able to teach

Husband to one wife

Not addicted to wine

Temperate

Not antagonistic

Prudent

Uncontentious

Respectable

Free from the love of money

Hospitable

Manage own household

Not a new convert

### THE ELDERS' PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

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**Doctrine:** Ensuring that the doctrine of the church is biblical; all doctrinal issues in the church will be settled by the Board of Elders.

**Direction:** Ensuring that the direction of the church is consistent with the Hope Church statement of purpose and the Five Values.

**Discipline:** Administering in love and humility the process of church discipline as outlined in Matthew 18:15-20; Galatians 6:1-4; Titus 3:10; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:17-25; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11, and Romans 16:17.

### PLURALITY OF ELDERS

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The Scriptures teach that a plurality of elders governed individual New Testament churches (Acts 14:23; Acts 20:28; Titus 1:5; Philippians 1:1). The Scripture does not mention any congregations featuring a stand-alone pastor and leader. A plurality of godly elders, exercising their individual giftedness, squares with the Scripture's teaching that wisdom is found in a multitude of godly counselors (Proverbs 11:14; Proverbs 12:15; Proverbs 15:22; Proverbs 19:20; Proverbs 24:6). This truth does not eliminate the possibility and likelihood that one or more elders will stand out from the others as more public in their ministries or more influential in their workings on the Elder Board.

### LEAD PASTOR

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The Hope Church Lead Pastor automatically serves as an elder and, because of his public presence and responsibility before the congregation, may be considered first among equals as a member of the Elder Board. The Lead Pastor should be gifted primarily as a preacher/teacher and as a leader.

## **DEACONS**

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The Bible teaches that deacons lead by serving (Acts 6). The qualifications for elders and deacons are the same regarding an individual's character, but they differ in aptitude. The elders are to be able to teach while the deacons are to be able and proved as servants.

### **DEACON QUALIFICATIONS (1 TIMOTHY 3:8-12)**

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**Individual of dignity**

**Above reproach**

**Not double tongued**

**First tested as servants**

**Not addicted to wine**

**Spouses must be faithful**

**Temperate**

**Not fond of sordid gain**

**Holding to the mystery of faith with a clear conscience**

**Husband of one wife**

**Manages household well**