

THE ROLE OF ELDERS AT GRACE

There are two governing documents that outline the role of elders at Grace:

- The Bylaws of Grace Evangelical Free Church (Section 2.2.5)
- Policy of the Elder Board – Oversight Process (OP #1, #2a)

The Constitution contains the high-level function of the elders, and the Oversight Process serves as the “job description” for the elder board. The following is the information from each portion of these documents needed to understand the role of elders at Grace.

The Bylaws of Grace Evangelical Free Church (Section 2.2.5)

5. Function

The Elders will have essentially a three-fold function: (1) To build and develop their own families in the Lord (1 Timothy 3:4-5); (2) To feed, shepherd and pray for the flock of God (John 21:15-17; Acts 10:17-32; Acts 6:1-4). This involves positive impartation of truth, refutation of error, and administration of discipline; and (3) To oversee and manage the entire ministry of this Local Body (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2-3). This involves assessing the needs of the entire body, planning, evaluating, and appointing those to assist in various areas of responsibility.

Policy of the Elder Board – Oversight Process (OP #1)

The purpose of the Elder Board, on behalf of GEFC’s body, in subjection to God and led by the Holy Spirit, is to see to it that GEFC’s ministry ends, as defined in the *Ministry Ends* policy, are accomplished. They shall do this by ensuring that GEFC:

- Achieves results in a Biblical way
- Uses its God-given resources wisely
- Avoids unacceptable situations (as prohibited in the Elder Board’s *Senior Pastor Expectations* policies)

We consider the above commitment to be an appropriate summary of our biblical obligations as overseers and shepherds of the flock. THE ROLE OF ELDERS AT GRACE

Policy of the Elder Board - Oversight Process (OP #2a)

The Elder Board is responsible to fulfill the biblical requirements of overseeing and shepherding the GEFC community (I Peter 5:1-4).

Accordingly:

1. The Elder Board will establish an overarching vision for GEFC that is biblically sound, outwardly focused, strategic, and proactive.

2. The Elder Board will oversee GEFC in the achievement of appropriate ministry performance through:

- a. Creation of written oversight policies that address the broadest levels of all church decisions and situations.
 - i. *Ministry Ends* – Defines the desired biblically sound results for GEFC Ministries with an appropriate use of resources.
 - ii. *Senior Pastor Limitations* – Constraints on staff authority which establish the prudence, ethics and doctrinal boundaries within which all staff and ministry activity and decisions must take place.
 - iii. *Oversight Process* – Specifies how the Elder Board conceives, carries out and monitors its own tasks.
 - iv. *Elder-Staff Relationship* – Outlines how decision-making authority is delegated and its proper use monitored; the Senior Pastor's role, authority and accountability.
- b. Assurance of ministry compliance with the Elder Board's Ministry Ends and Senior Pastor Limitations policies.

3. The Elder Board will shepherd collectively by taking direct responsibility to:

- a. Maintain doctrinal purity among all ministry entities directly related to GEFC and encourage sound doctrine among all attendees (Titus 1:9).
- b. Be servant leaders, modeling Christ-likeness to the GEFC community (I Peter 5:3) and ensure that this is accomplished through mutual accountability within the Board.
- c. Pray for the GEFC community and for the healing of the sick, including anointed prayer for those who request it of the Elder Board (James 5:14).
- d. Review and approve membership applications from those who meet GEFC membership qualifications.

- e. Provide for continuity of leadership by prayerfully selecting those that should be presented to the membership for election as required by the By-Laws.
- f. Act on discipline and conflict resolution issues in which due process has been exhausted at the staff level. In acting on these issues, the Elder Board must:
 - i. Approach discipline and conflict resolution matters in a spirit of gentleness and humility (Galatians 6:1-2) and without bias or partiality (I Timothy 5:21).
 - ii. Continue to ensure proper application of the biblical process for discipline and conflict resolution matters as commanded in the New Testament (Matthew 18:15-20).
 - iii. Forego direct involvement unless and until the staff is unable to resolve the issue, at which point the Elder Board will assign at least one elder the responsibility to see the issue through to resolution at the Elder Board level. The assigned elder(s) represent(s) the Elder Board in meetings with the parties involved in the issue, within constraints determined by the Board. The elder(s) responsible also acts as a communication conduit between the Board and the individuals involved, including the staff member(s), in the discipline or conflict resolution issue.
 - iv. Make a final binding decision on discipline and conflict resolution issues that remain unresolved after the above process has been exhausted at both the staff and Board levels.

4. In order to protect GEFC from the consequences of the departure of the Senior Pastor, whether by sudden loss or planned transition, the Elder Board shall, in cooperation with the Senior Pastor:

- a. Identify persons responsible for assuming the following roles in an emergency:
 - i. *Preaching*
 - ii. *Ministry management*
- b. Prepare for a long-term succession