

# ELDERS & DEACONS

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## INTRO.

- The church is a big deal to Christ – Eph.5:22-33
  - o Loves the church (v25)
  - o Gave himself for it (v25)
  - o His own body. He is the head (v23)
  - o His bride that he will present to himself on the last day (27)
  - o Nourishes and cherishes it (v29)
  
- Two official roles in the church
  - o Elders and deacons
    - Phil.1:1
    - 1 Tim.3:1-15

## ELDERS

### The terms for elders

- There were Jewish elders in the synagogue before there were Christian ones in the church
  - o Matt.21:23
  
- Different terms are used for the same role
  - o \_\_\_\_\_ (Gk. 'presbyter')
    - Acts 20:17; Titus 1:5
  
  - o \_\_\_\_\_ (Gk. 'episkopos')
    - Acts 20:28; Titus 1:7
    - Phil.1:1; 1 Tim.3:1
  
  - o \_\_\_\_\_
    - Christ is the chief Shepherd and overseer of his people
      - 1 Pet.2:25; 5:4
    - Elders are under-shepherds / overseers
      - Eph.4:11 pastor-teacher
      - 1 Pet.5:1-2 shepherd the flock, exercising oversight
      - Acts 20:28 the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God
      - Heb.13:17 keeping watch over your souls

### The function of elders

- Lead
  - o Leading
    - Heb.13:7,17 remember / obey your leaders
    - 1 Thess.5:12 those who are over you in the Lord
    - 1 Tim.5:17 rule

- Managing – 1 Tim 3:5 if someone doesn't know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?
- Modelling / setting a godly eg – 1 Tim.4:12
- Feed
  - Eph.4:11 pastor-teachers
  - Heb.13:7,17 leaders are those speak the Word of God to you and watch over your souls. The church are to submit to and obey them
  - Teaching in 1 Tim is the public, official teaching of the church gathering
    - 1:10 \_\_\_\_\_
    - 2:4 \_\_\_\_\_
    - 2:12 \_\_\_\_\_
    - 3:2 \_\_\_\_\_
    - 4:6 \_\_\_\_\_
    - 4:11 \_\_\_\_\_
    - 4:13 \_\_\_\_\_
    - 4:16 \_\_\_\_\_
    - 5:17 \_\_\_\_\_
    - 6:2 \_\_\_\_\_
  - But the teaching that goes on in a healthy church is broader than this
    - Women are to teach and train women – Titus 2:3-4
    - Men and women are to teach children – Prov.1:8
    - All of us are to teach one another – Col.3:16; Heb.5:12; Acts 18:26
- Care
  - Acts 20:28 the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God
  - Heb.13:17 keeping watch over your souls
  - 1 Tim.3:5 parallel with managing / caring for a family
  - Acts 6:4 pray
- Fish
  - 2 Tim.4:5 do the work of an evangelist

### The plurality of elders

- Plural, not just one
  - Acts 11:30 relief money sent to elders of ch in J/salem
  - Acts 15:2,4,6,22,23; 16:4; 21:18 Jerusalem church
  - Acts 20:17 elders of the ch in Ephesus
  - 1 Tim 4:14 the council of elders
  - 1 Tim 5:17 the elders who rule well
  - Titus 1:5 to appoint elders in every town
  - James 5:14 call the elders of the church
  - 1 Pet 5:1 the elders among you
  - Probably appointed by the laying on of hands by the other elders – 1 Tim.4:14; 5:22; 2 Tim.1:6
- To train up other elders
  - 2 Tim.2:2

## The gender of elders

- 1 Tim 2:11-15 I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man <sup>1</sup>
- 1 Tim 3:2 the husband of one wife (Titus 1:5-6)
- 2 Tim 2:2 entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also

➔ Appointment of elders

➔ Teaching by elders

➔ Leading by elders

## **DEACONS**

### The language of deacon

- general service
  - o Gk 'diakonos' = a servant (John 12:26 where I am there my servant will be also)
  - o Gk 'diakonein' = to serve (Luke 4:39 she rose and began to serve them)
  - o Gk 'diakonia' = service (Eph.4:12 to prepare God's people for works of service)
- specific office
  - o Phil.1:1 to the overseers and deacons
  - o 1 Tim.3:8 deacons likewise must be...
- unclear which
  - o Col.1:7 Epaphras
  - o Eph.6:21; Col.4:7 Tychicus
  - o Rom.16:1 Phoebe

### The role of deacon

- 1 Tim 3:8-13 not required to be able to teach, unlike elders
- Heb.13:7 not leaders of the church (the leading role involves teaching)
- Acts 6:2-6 looking after the physical / financial / practical / administrative side of church life
  - o Serve tables, rather than serving the Word - but not referred to as deacons (v2)
  - o Concerned with practical things, but a spiritual ministry (v3)
  - o Working for unity in body (v1)
  - o Supporting ministry of the Word (v4)
- But unclear what the dividing line was between a deacon and any other member of the body using their gifts to serve

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<sup>1</sup> For further reading on this passage, see John Woodhouse paper on 1 Timothy 2 at [https://paa.moore.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/1Timothy2\\_What\\_does\\_it\\_teach\\_JWW\\_full\\_notes.pdf](https://paa.moore.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/1Timothy2_What_does_it_teach_JWW_full_notes.pdf)

## The gender of deacons

- 1 Tim 3:11 deaconesses, or wives of deacons?
  - o why mention wives of deacons but not of elders in v1-7? Implies deaconess
  - o though seems to be part of the qualifications to be a deacon, speaking about the deacons' wives, not a one line parenthesis about female deacons
- Rom 16:1 Phoebe a deacon? Word could also be translated simply 'servant' rather than the office of 'deacon'
- in the absence of clear textual evidence to the contrary, and given the significant part women play serving in NT churches, we are assuming for now that deacons can be men and women
  - ➔ The Barge committee is currently fulfilling a deacon role. This 'diaconate' also acts as a sounding board for decisions of the elders. And gives check and balance on decisions, not least financial ones
  - ➔ Other people in the church family, not on committee, also fulfil a deacon role, serving on the various teams. We propose to extend the 'diaconate' to include the heads of serving teams and other ministries. And to broaden the focus of the meeting to include training and encouragement of deacons in biblical service
  - ➔ We are in the process of setting up a clearer structure, to encourage church members in using their gifts in different areas of service. Each deacon heading up an area / team will have an elder assigned to meet with them to provide care, support and accountability

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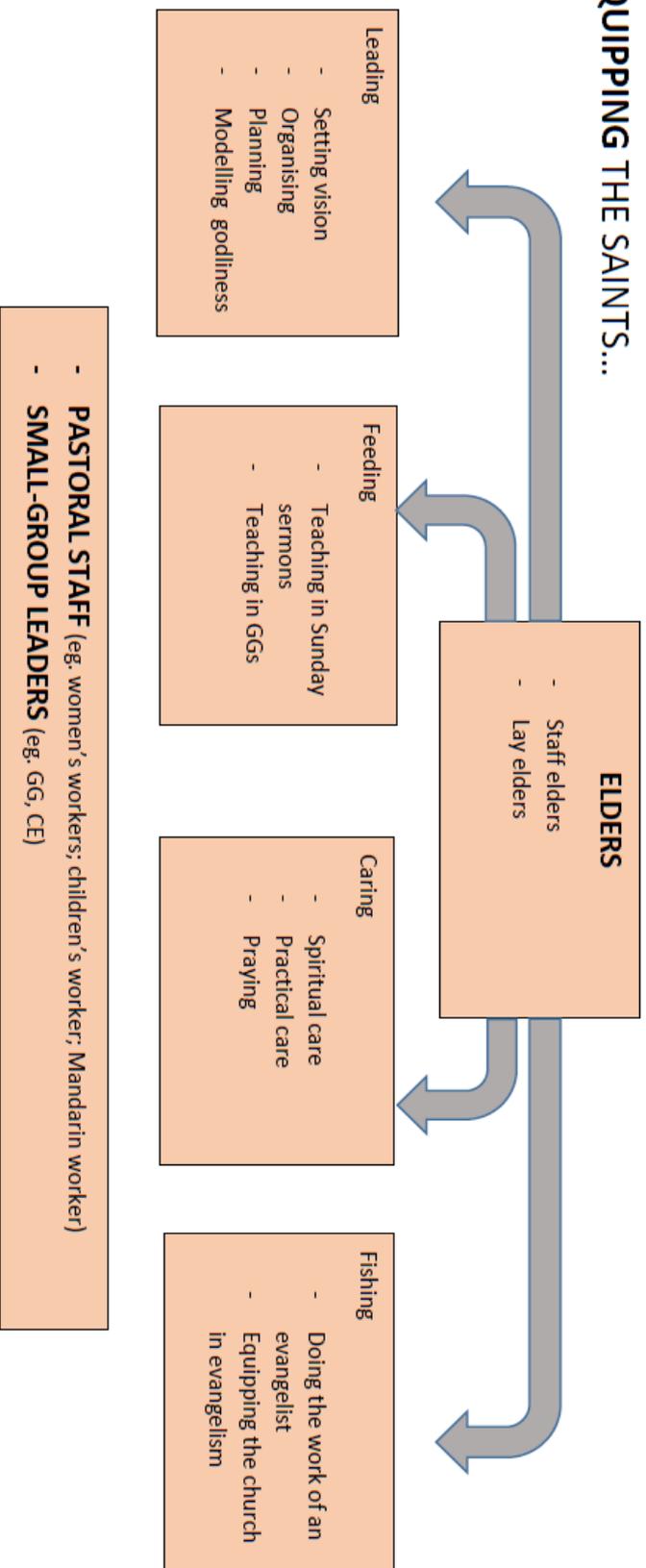
## APPENDIX 1 - Healthy biblical complementarianism <sup>2</sup>

- God has something to say about manhood and womanhood which is rooted in how he has designed us. Men and women are created by God equal in worth and dignity but with different roles and functions in the home and the church
- We joyfully affirm this vision and design for men and woman as good and beautiful and best, even if we may disagree about where exactly lines are to be drawn in some instances
- Our complementarianism should be thoughtful, based on the exegesis and application of Scripture, not the clumsy default position of cultural traditionalism
- The core convictions of complementarianism will not magically seep into our churches or children. The cultural breeze is blowing too stiffly against us. Biblical manhood and womanhood must be taught as well as caught
- We want women in our church to read the Bible, study the Bible, and help others understand the Bible. We want them to go deep and get good theology
- The Bible is not saying that women are less gifted to teach or lead and that men are better. It's simply saying that because of a God-given order in creation there are certain roles and functions in the church family that God wants men to do – just as in marriage, gender roles do not reflect a difference in ability or intelligence but simply a difference in God-given role. The ultimate model of this equality but difference is that of the Godhead, in how Father, Son and Spirit relate

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<sup>2</sup> Taken from Kevin De Young '9 Marks of Healthy Biblical Complementarianism'. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/9-marks-of-healthy-biblical-complementarianism/>

## EQUIPPING THE SAINTS...



## ...FOR THE WORKS OF MINISTRY

**DEACONS & TEAMS**

- Formal serving teams

**ALL CHURCH MEMBERS**

- Informal loving, caring, teaching one another, hospitality, giving, welcoming, sharing, etc

