

# **CHURCH GOVERNMENT MODEL**

## **The Summit Church**

### **October 30, 2003 Revision**

#### **I. OUR FOUNDATION**

- Jesus Christ is the Head of His church (Ephesians 1:22-23) and the source of all authority and power (Matthew 28:18).
- He is the Chief Shepherd who cares for His sheep (I Peter 5:4; John 10:1-18).
- He exercises this care by giving each local church a plurality of men to lead the church who are variously called “elders,” “pastors/shepherds,” and “overseers.” (Acts 14:23; 20:17-28; Ephesians 4:11; Philippians 1:1)
- The elders’ responsibility is to lead the church as the Spirit of God through His Word leads them. God gives these men and His church a safeguard by establishing a plurality of men (Proverbs 11:14) who always operate in total unanimity (Acts 15:25).
- The elders are assisted by “deacons” who are spiritually qualified to aid the elders in practical service to the church body (Acts 6:1-6; Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:13-18.)

#### **II. OUR FORM**

##### **A. ELDERS**

##### **1. QUALIFICATIONS**

- a. Calling: Elders are men who have received a calling from God for their task. Therefore, there should be a strong, inward compulsion or desire. (I Timothy 3:1). In reality, God is the One who appoints elders and the church recognizes and acknowledges God’s selection. (Acts 14:23; 20:24)
- b. Character: An elder “must be” a man who exhibits the following character:
  1. Above reproach
  2. Husband of one wife
  3. Temperate
  4. Prudent
  5. Respectable
  6. Hospitable
  7. Able to teach
  8. Not given to wine
  9. Not pugnacious
  10. Gentle
  11. Uncontentious
  12. Free from the love of money
  13. Manages his own house well

- 14. Not a new convert
- 15. Has a good reputation with outsiders
- 16. Not self-willed
- 17. A lover of good
- 18. Just
- 19. Devout
- 20. Self-controlled
- c. Confirmation: Not only should an elder have an inward call, but there should be such outward, visible signs of his calling, gifting, and service that it is recognizable to others. (Acts 14:23)
- d. Competency: An elder must have the skills necessary to fulfill his responsibilities. (see “Responsibilities” below)
- e. Commitment: An elder must be willing to commit the necessary time and energy to fulfill the task.

## **2. RESPONSIBILITIES**

Elders are called by God to perform a function, not merely hold an office or position. They are responsible to care for and lead the flock through the following service:

- a. General oversight of the church (Acts 11:29-30; Acts 15-16:4; Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17; I Thessalonians 5:12)
- b. Teaching the church (Acts 20:20,27; I Timothy 3:2, 5:17; I Thessalonians 5:12; Titus 1:9)
- c. Protecting the church (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17)
- d. Praying for the church (James 5:14)
- e. Equipping the church (Ephesians 4:11-16)
- f. Modeling godliness to the church (I Timothy 3:1-7)

## **3. TERM**

Elders will serve continuously as long as they possess the character qualities and fulfill the standards of leadership and service described above. Each Elder shall be periodically reviewed by the Elder team to re-evaluate character and effectiveness.

Any elder may resign by written notification to the remaining Elders. Any Elder(s) may be removed by the unanimous decision of the remaining Elders for any of the following reasons:

- a. Physically or mentally incapacitated
- b. Spiritually or morally disqualified or fails to fulfill the responsibilities or meet the qualifications outlined above.
- c. Doctrinally disqualified (fails to agree with The Summit Church doctrinal statement)

Any elder who is in sin and refuses to repent should be “rebuked in the presence of all so that that the rest may be fearful of sinning” (I Timothy 5:20)

#### **4. NUMBER**

- a. There shall at all times be a plurality of elders (Acts 14:23; Philippians 1:1).
- b. There shall be no maximum limit.
- c. At all times, the church shall seek to have at least as many non-salaried Elders as salaried Elders.
- d. The Elders shall consistently seek to identify and develop others as future Elders.

#### **5. SELECTION**

- a. The Elders shall continuously evaluate whether new elders are needed or qualified men are evident.
- b. If, after prayer and fasting, a potential Elder is identified, he shall be contacted and interviewed by the Elders.
- c. Nominees shall be presented to the church. The church members shall be requested to...
  1. Pray for the nominee
  2. Submit any concerns regarding his eligibility or qualifications to the Elders.
- d. If, in the unanimous opinion of the Elders, the nominee has been affirmed by the Lord through the above process, he shall be appointed to serve by the Elders.

### **B. DEACONS**

#### **1. RESPONSIBILITIES**

Deacons are responsible for particular and specific areas of ministry, help, and service as designated by and under the oversight of the Elders. Their primary responsibility is to assist the Elders in administrating and serving in practical areas and to be an example of servanthood to the church body. Since they are not responsible for the general oversight of the church, they shall not meet separately as a group unless it is under the direction of the Elders and is essential for fulfilling the task(s) assigned.

#### **2. QUALIFICATIONS**

A Deacon “must be” a man who exhibits the following character (I Timothy 3:8-13):

- a. Reverent
- b. Not double-tongued
- c. Not given to much wine
- d. Not greedy for money
- e. Maintaining a clear conscience
- f. Tested and proven
- g. Above reproach
- h. Husband of one wife

- i. Manage their own children and household well

### **3. TERM**

Deacons will serve continuously as long as they meet the biblical qualifications and are actively serving the church body in a servant- leadership role.

“Active” deacons are those who have been selected by the elders and are serving in a leadership role. If a deacon steps down or is removed from a leadership role and is not reassigned to a leadership role by the end of the church year (August 31<sup>st</sup>), he will be considered an “inactive” deacon. If, at a later time, he assumes another leadership role, he will be eligible to be considered for reinstatement by the elders as an “active” deacon

Any Deacon may resign if he is unable or unwilling to meet the above qualifications by written notification to the Elders.

Any Deacon may be removed from office by the unanimous decision of the Elders for any of the following reasons:

- a. Physically or mentally incapacitated
- b. Spiritually or morally disqualified or a fails to fulfill the responsibilities or meet the qualifications outlined above.
- c. Doctrinally disqualified (fails to agree with The Summit Church doctrinal statement)

### **4. NUMBER**

There shall be no specified number of Deacons. The number will be determined by the number qualified and the need of the church as determined by the Elders.

### **5. SELECTION:**

- a. The Elders will identify potential deacons who seem qualified through their character and service.
- b. The Elders will interview the nominees and their wives
- c. Qualified individuals will be appointed to serve as deacons.
- d. New deacons will be presented to the church.