

# NCF Church Polity

## Government & Practices

Leadership of NCF is primarily by plurality of Eldership which includes: Pastor(s) (Grk. poimena) and Elders (Grk. presbuteros); “Overseers”

### ELDERS

#### **ELDERS: CALLED BY GOD AND APPOINTED BY MAN**

It is our belief that Elders are called by God and ordained by the church. God prepares and the Church confirms. (Acts 20:28)

The practice in the N.T. is for church leaders to recognize God’s calling and equipping upon an individual and confirm and appoint that person to serve God in the church in the capacity of leader. Thus, God and the church are in cooperation to determine His plan for overseeing the flock. 1 Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-7 sheds light on qualifications and functions.

#### **CALLED TO SERVE**

Elders are to conduct the affairs of NCF, to provide pastoral oversight and care and to train and equip the saints to:

1. be “complete” in Him (Col. 1:28)
2. “grow up into Him” (Eph. 4:15)
3. be built up in the body for “works of service” (Eph. 4:11-16)

God clearly places His leaders in the body to coordinate and lead His work under Christ, the head of the body. From the beginning of his labors in church planting (Acts 14:23) to the end (Titus 1:5), the Apostle Paul placed the care and oversight of each church under a body of ruling Elders. They are to sense the Holy Spirit’s direction according to the word of God and lovingly shepherd His people.

Humility and Servanthood are two distinct marks of Biblical Leadership in caring for Christ’s Church.

In order for the Elders of NCF to be effective, they must:

- \*exercise humble servanthood
- \*have mutual regard for one another
- \*submit themselves to one another
- \*wait patiently upon one another
- \*genuinely consider one another’s interests and perspectives
- \*prefer and defer to one another

## **CALLED TO LEAD--AUTHORITY**

The humble servant character of church elders doesn't mean that they lack authority.

Terms that describe their position and work are:

*God's stewards	Tit. 1:7
*Overseers	Phil. 1:1
*Leaders	Heb. 13:17
*Teachers & Admonishers	I Tim. 5:15
	I Thes. 5:12

The greatest example of leadership is found in Christ. Elders are to "follow in His steps".

Submission to god-given authority is essential to the health and well-being of the church family.

- I. The source of Authority – GOD THE FATHER  
"For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God." (Rom. 13:1)
- II. The channel of all authority – JESUS CHRIST THE SON  
"All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth." (Matt. 28:18)
- III. Pastors/Elders are His representatives, His ambassadors, His "shepherds" as appointed by God, confirmed by the church, and led by the HOLY SPIRIT.

New Covenant Fellowship is not a:

1. Democracy  
-whereas elders gather, confer and receive input from the church body for major decisions, the direction of the church is not determined by voting or the opinion of the majority.  
-Leadership does not depend on the will of the people or the will of the majority but on the will of God.
2. Autocracy – a government type in which one person possesses unlimited power.  
(This is to preclude one individual, who by their personality, will and intellect would rule and manipulate for his own purpose.)

New Covenant Fellowship is:

An Eldership under the headship of JESUS CHRIST who is the Chief Shepherd and Lord.

JESUS CHRIST is the final authority, and scripture, God's word, is the final and sufficient authority to which all must conform and submit.

Since the Elders are Christ's undershepherds, they have been given the authority to guide and protect the flock by means of His precious word.

The terms leaders, overseers, stewards and shepherds imply that the Elders have authority to direct the church, protect it from evil, and care for its overall welfare.

This does not imply that the Fellowship members are to be passive or uninvolved in church decisions.

- \*reciprocal relationship: Elders must always seek the counsel and mind of those they lead.
- \*"brethren": All members are equal brethren, however, there are leaders and followers in a horizontal relationship. The priesthood of believers.
- \*congregational interaction: discussions, proposals, feedback and prayer. NCF is to corporately seek the Lord's mind in all major decisions. Elders are responsible to guide the fellowship in this process.

## THE RESPONSE TO AUTHORITY

A. Hebrews 13: 17      submit – inward attitude  
   obey – outward attitude

1. Emphasis on followship rather than leadership.
2. Generally, churches have more problems with independent and rebellious spirits than with too much authoritarianism.
3. Believers need to be taught from scripture their God-given responsibilities of submission "as unto the Lord".

B. What Submission is not:

1. It does not mean "blind" obedience, passivity or resignation.
2. Submission is not a mindless act, but rather an expression of love and trust, done in faith.
  - a. It is voluntary and from the heart.
  - b. It is not out of fear.
  - c. It is designed to produce security in Christ.
  - d. It is meant for release not bondage.
3. Submission is not dependence. We are only dependent on Jesus Christ and promptings of the Holy Spirit as it agrees with His word.
4. Submission is not natural. It is a work of the Spirit, thereby making it supernatural.

SUBMISSIONS IS: An attitude and action of obedience.

## **SAFEGUARDS**

- A. God's word is the final authority to which all submit.
- B. A plurality of leadership protects the scriptural balance of authority.
- C. NCF Leadership often seeks and thrives on input from other gifted members of the body and is open to dialogue.
- D. The purpose of authority is Christian maturity.
  - 1. To glorify God.
  - 2. To be conformed into the image of Jesus Christ.

## **DEACONS**

### **THE MINISTRY OF DEACONS**

As you will find below, the deacon ministry is a necessary part of church life. Paul asked that elders and deacons be appointed in the New Testament churches to see that the Ministry of the Word, by the elders, and the Ministry of Works of Service, by the deacons, excelled in the church so that she might display the glory of God on the earth. Though these positions clearly differ in function, the NCF Leadership view Elders and Deacons as a Ministry Team striving to obtain the same goal and purpose-to Exalt God, Edify the saints and Evangelize the world.

We desire that all men would desire to serve the church in these noble capacities.

#### **Process for Becoming a Deacon:**

- There is a particular process for becoming a deacon at NCF.
- First- Elder Recognition.
- Second- Consider the Call.
- Third- Family Recognition.
- Fourth- Elder & Congregational Approval.
- Fifth- Ordination as Deacon.
- Sixth- A Time of Testing.
- Seventh- Routine Evaluation.

### **General History:**

The Greek word “diakonos” is usually translated “servant,” and sometimes as “minister” and sometimes as “deacon.” It can refer to general acts of service (Acts 1:17, 25, 19:22, Rom 12:7, 1 Cor 12:5, 16:15, Eph 4:12, Co 4:17. It can refer to rulers (Rom 13:4 and to caring for physical needs (Matt 25:44, Acts 11:29, 12:25, Rom 15:25, 31. It is also used to describe service performed by women (Matt 8:15, Mark 1:31, Luke 4:39, Matt 27:55, Mark 15:41, Rom 16:1, John 12:2), and all disciples, as when Jesus said in John 12:26 “Whoever *serves* me must follow me, and where I am my *servant* will also be. My Father will honor the one who *serves* me.”

In the Early Church distinctions of serving God as elders and deacons formed. When mentioned in Scripture the elders are mentioned first with the deacons following. This is due to the fact that the elders served God primarily by the ministry of the Word and the deacons primarily by meeting needs and assisting the elders.

### **Biblical History: Acts 6**

The clearest Biblical picture of the function of a deacon is found in Acts 6.

### **The Deacon’s Candidacy- those actively serving the body**

In this passage we notice that these deacons were men that were already desirous to serve Christ and His body in this capacity. 3 *“Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.*

### **The Deacon’s Purpose:**

First, deacons are to care for the physical needs of the church body.

Second, deacons are to promote the unity of the body.

Third, Deacons support the Ministry of the Word

### **Ways Deacons Serve at NCF**

Deacons are a vital part of the NCF Church family. Deacons are expected to serve in the following ways:

Communion:

Baptisms:

Worship Services:

Building and Grounds

Ushers:

Church Administration:

Widows and the Poor:

Assisting Elders:

Training Future Deacons:

### **The Deacons Qualifications**

In 1 Timothy 3:8-13 the apostle instructs “pastor” Timothy on the qualifications of deacons.

- Men of Dignity- to have an overarching honorable character, worthy of respect
- Not Double Tongued-to be sincere, sincerely meaning what you say
- Not addicted to Wine-staying clear of the negative effects of alcohol
- Not fond of Sordid gain-practicing honest financial gain, respecting the money you manage.
- Holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience-do not use your service or ministry position to manipulate or gain dishonestly.
- Tested-tested service and character that is already engaged in the practice of serving and ministering to the saints in your god-given capacity
- husband of one wife-this emphasizes moral purity
- good managers at home-must be a faithful husband, father, provider.