

## **Roles and Functions of Elders, Deacons and Pastoral Staff at Hilltop Community Church**

Ken Boa writes (page 443 of Conformed to His Image): “God has appointed certain people for places of shepherding and leadership in churches and ministries. These are people whose gifting and character demonstrate a level of maturity that makes them models for others to follow (1 Cor. 11:1, 1 Tim. 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Pet. 5:1-5, Heb. 13:17). Such leadership in the body is learned through training and experience, earned through service, and discerned by the community. **“Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith”** (Heb. 13:7). These servant leaders develop a vision for what God is doing in the lives of others and enjoy helping them mature and reach their potential. They are more interested in discipling people than in directing programs. As these leaders model, teach, train, and develop new leaders, they serve people by helping them move from a self-centered to an others-centered and Christ-centered orientation. In this way, they are involved in healing the wounded, maturing the healing, and releasing the maturing.”

### **Background**

This paper is intended to clarify the respective roles of Elders, Deacons and Pastors at Hilltop and explain how the various parts of the leadership at Hilltop are supposed to interact and work together, for the good of the Body and the Glory of God.

It should be stated at the outset that at Hilltop we believe that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church (Col 1:8; Eph 1:9, 22-23; Eph 4:15; Eph 5:23). He is the One who builds His Church (Matt 16:18), and is the Chief Shepherd who oversees the Church (I Pet 5:4).

At Hilltop, in all matters of church life including leadership, we subscribe to the authority of Scripture and New Covenant teaching. While Scripture may be silent in actually prescribing a single form of church government, the New Testament makes it clear that church leadership should be different from leadership in the surrounding culture (Luke 22:24-27), and the core leadership structure of a local church is a plurality of Elders, also called Overseers and Shepherds (Acts 20 and 1 Pet 5).

The church is not therefore a democracy, but rather a theocracy where Christ rules through His Word and through the Elders He raises up to lead the church. The core decisions regarding the direction and conduct of the church are to be taken by Elders working as a plurality, always subject to the Lord and His Word. Elders will be held accountable by the Lord Himself for how they have led the church (I Peter 5: 1-4). The roles and functions of Elders are discussed in more detail below.

The word ‘Deacon’ essentially means ‘one who serves’ and could apply to every serving Christian. However, Deacons in the New Testament church had to be recognized and appointed, after suitable testing in accordance with certain criteria, indicating they were to be distinguished from the rest of the serving members of a church.

Hilltop Community Church employs paid Pastoral Staff. The roles and functions of the Pastoral Staff at Hilltop are discussed in more depth below.

## New Covenant Ministry

Jesus is Lord, Head of the Body.

The Bible is the plumb line, the straightedge.

The Spirit is the only One who can empower and produce.

The whole Body is involved in ministry and building up.

**New Covenant Scriptures:** 2 Corinthians 2:14-7:1; Hebrews 8:10-12

Blueprint for ministry is New Testament: Ephesians 4:1-16,

1 Corinthians 12:4-6, Romans 12:4-8, 1 Peter 4:7-11

### Authentic Christianity

Based on the new creations we are in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17):

Walk in line with the Word of God

by the power of the Spirit of God

for the purpose of the glory of God.

1 Peter 4:7-11

### Authentic Christianity Template (ACT)

What we  
do

- **Walk in line with the Word of God**
- What does God say about this situation/pursuit/thought/action?
- How are Jesus' life and truths being reflected through our choices/actions/speech?

How we  
do it

- **By the power of the Spirit of God**
- Which characterizes us in this decision:  
trying to obey the Law in our own strength  
**OR** allowing the Holy Spirit to empower us?

Why we  
do it

- **For the purpose of the glory of God**
- How is it evident that we are focused on Jesus and His ways?
- How do our personal responses to the results reveal that our motive was for God's glory and not our own?

### How does Jesus want to express His life through HCC?

#### **Mission Statement:**

(Based on God's giftedness & needs of the body)

HCC exists to worship God, learn His truth,  
love and serve others, and proclaim Jesus as Lord.

#### **Vision Statement:**

We want to be intentional about relational discipleship.

## BIBLICAL SERVANT-LEADER

### CHARACTER OF A BIBLICAL LEADER

1 Tim. 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9, 2 Cor. 2:14-3:3, New Identity in Christ

### WORKS OF A BIBLICAL LEADER

Titus 1:9 (uses word to exhort & refute)

1 Peter 5:1-3 (shepherds, is an example)

Acts 20:28-32 (oversees, shepherds, is on guard for the flock)

Ezekiel 34:1-16 and John 10:3-14 (God's kind of shepherding, a model for all)

Mark 10:42-45 (Jesus' kind of leader)

2 Corinthians 4:5 (bondservants, see note below\*)

1 Corinthians 4:1-2 (Paul considered himself a lowest-deck galley-slave and trustworthy steward)

1 Timothy 5:17 (manages, see note below\*\*)

Hebrews 13:17 (keeps watch over souls)

Hebrews 3:7 (leads, by speaking the word of God)

<b>THE <u>ROLE</u> OF A BIBLICAL LEADER</b>	<b>THE <u>STYLE</u> OF A BIBLICAL LEADER</b>	<b>THE <u>FOCUS</u> OF A BIBLICAL LEADER</b>
<p style="text-align: center;">2 Corinthians 2:14-3:3</p> <p>New covenant person - thankful, led in triumph by God, fragrant aroma of Christ, transparent, letter of Christ</p> <p>2 Timothy 2:24-26 The Lord's bond-servant, not quarrelsome, kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Shepherd Servant Example Overseer (to watch over)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Exercising oversight voluntarily and with eagerness</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Not lording it over the flock</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Mark 10:42-45</p> <p><u>Jesus is the example to follow:</u> Not lording it over, not exercising authority over, but serving and being slave of all</p> <p>Moves alongside body member to help him/her succeed in using their Spirit-given gifts in their Jesus-directed ministry, trusting the Father for the results 1 Cor. 12:4-6</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Jesus as Head</u> Eph. 1:22-23, 5:23 <u>Bible as plumb line</u> 2 Tim. 3:16-17, Heb. 4:12 <u>Spirit as strength</u> Eph. 3:16, Gal. 5:16-25</p> <p><u>The body, the people God has brought together,</u> who are living out who they are in Christ, operating by the Spirit's strength, reaching out, using their Spirit-given gifts Acts 20:28-32, 1 Pet. 5:2-3</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>The gifts and ministry needs of the body</u> 1 Cor. 12:4-27</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>The glory of God</u> 1 Pet. 4:11, 1 Cor. 10:31</p>

\*2 Corinthians 4:5 (we preach Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants)

\*\* 1 Timothy 5:17 "Rule" means literally "to stand before," the Spirit-given ability to stand before and lead. It conveys the picture of someone, with care and effectiveness, standing before others so that they naturally follow Jesus. Leaders encourage/teach/equip God's people in such a way that they voluntarily and harmoniously work together. Also, this word is translated as "maintain" or "engage" in Titus 3:8, 14. In 1 Timothy 3:4-5, this word is used with a family and a church, and is translated as "manage" and equated with "take care of," which involves "forethought and provision." In Romans 12:8, the word is used for the spiritual gift of leadership.

## **Elders at Hilltop**

The qualifications that Elders have to meet are well documented in Scripture. A list is attached to this paper but not discussed further.

First and foremost, it must be recognized that being an Elder is an important responsibility within the church; it is not merely a title or filling a seat on a board. It is an office and is work, and Elders must be careful not to be driven by motivations of power, recognition and financial gain (see I Tim 3:1-7, 5:17, and 1 Pet. 5:2-3). Each Elder is an individual with specific gifts and his gifting should help him as he carries out his shepherding role.

Some tasks of Elders are shared while others are specific to the individual Elder. Based on passages such as Acts 20 and I Pet 5, the shared core tasks of Elders are:

- To shepherd the flock (including feeding, protecting and keeping them healthy);
- To lead by speaking God's truth (Heb. 13:7), by example or conduct (Heb. 13:7, 1 Pet. 5:3), and by being servants of all (Mk. 10:43-44); and
- To oversee the church.

The following is a more detailed list of the roles and functions of Elders. Elders are to:

- Shepherd and care for the church (Acts 20:28, I Tim 3:5, I Pet 5:2);
- Keep watch over the souls of the Christians in the church as those who will have to give account (Heb. 13:17);
- Be alert to protect the church from attacks, both from within and without (Acts 20:29-31);
- Seek to restore believers who have been overtaken in any sin (Gal 6:1);
- Effect church discipline as and when necessary and in keeping with Scripture for the purpose of restoration (Matt 18:15-17, I Cor 5:1-5);
- Pray – especially with and for the sick (Acts 6:4, James 5:14-15);
- Be involved in the care of the poor saints (Acts 11:30);
- Share in the commendation of gifted men and women to the work to which God has called them (I Tim 4:14);
- Act as an example to the flock by their lives (Heb 13:7, I Pet 5:3);
- Share God's words, teach sound doctrine, and refute those who contradict it (Heb. 13:7, I Tim 3:2, 5:17, Titus 1:9-11, Acts 20:29-31);

- Work diligently, help the needy and be generous (Acts 20:35);
- Moderate and arbitrate in doctrinal and ethical matters, and promote peace in the Church (Acts 15:5-6, 16:4, Matthew 18:15-17, Phil 4:2-3, I Cor 1:10);
- Lead and rule but by guiding and as servants, not by driving or domineering others (Mark 10:43-44, Titus 1:7, I Thess 5:15, I Tim 5:17, Heb 13:7, 17, I Pet 5:3). This would include ultimate responsibility for Deacons, Pastoral and other church staff, and church operations;
- Be grounded in the Word and to grow spiritually in the Lord (2 Peter 3:18 – for all Christians).

Being an Elder, or Eldership, is not in itself a spiritual gift. Elders desire the office (I Tim 3:1). They are suitably qualified, and are appointed by the Spirit of God to the work outlined above. While Elders will be gifted men and will want to use their gifts as they go about their work, not all Elders will be gifted Pastor-Teachers as in Eph 4:11, but will be able to share God’s truth.

The above list of tasks is long and the work of an Elder is endless, sacrificial and demanding. Usually, the Elder Board meets every month for a regular meeting. Sometimes, it is necessary to hold additional meetings. The Elders endeavor to be more visible to and known by the Body. As shepherds of the flock, Elders actively look for opportunities to serve and minister, and should be especially supportive and encouraging to all church staff. At Hilltop, each Elder shepherds one or more paid staff and relates to the staff on a regular, one-on-one basis. As a team of leaders, Elders desire input from pastoral staff as they move forward toward decisions. They accomplish this through a system of accountability, encouragement and cooperation with the Elders, Pastoral and Administrative staff members.

Presently the Elder Board is made up of seven men, two of which are paid Pastoral Staff. They are there, not to represent the church staff, but because they are Elder-qualified, appointed by the Spirit of God, selected by the Elders, and confirmed by the Body to serve as Elders of Hilltop Community Church, in addition to their normal duties as paid Pastoral Staff (see below).

At Hilltop, Elders are mostly volunteers with so-called “day jobs” in addition to their church work. To effectively carry out their roles and functions, it is essential to prioritize their activities, and delegate some of their functions to suitably qualified individuals. The early New Testament Church Apostles found this also as reported in Acts 6: 1-4.

## **Deacons at Hilltop**

Acts 6 details the appointment of seven men to meet a specific need that arose in the early church that threatened to distract the Apostles from their main tasks of prayer and ministry of the Word. The men are not specifically called Deacons, although the corresponding verb is used. The example may be helpful in understanding the role of Deacons as they provide a historical baseline for the office.

As with the Elders, Deacons have to be suitably qualified - see the list attached to this document. (1 Tim 3:8-13). In Acts 6, a very high standard of conduct and character was demanded of those chosen by the Apostles. They were to be of honest report (i.e. reputable, full of faith and full of power). Full of the Holy Spirit, they were to be spiritual. Full of wisdom and common sense, they were to be practical. While Elders and Deacons have similar character qualifications, their ministries, while different, must complement each other.

Deacons work alongside the Elders, devoting themselves to necessary and vital tasks that would otherwise prevent the Elders from focusing on their own priorities.

The duties of the Deacons in a local church often include:

- Church Administration;
- Financial Management;
- Infrastructure;
- Technology;
- Communications;
- Data Management;
- Legal/Compliance;
- Human Resources;
- Safety Concerns, etc.

However, they should not be limited to such roles. At least two of those appointed in Acts 6 (Stephen and Philip) developed key ministries of preaching and teaching. At Hilltop, women may serve as Deacons - something that was practiced in the early New Testament church (1 Tim. 3:11, Rom. 16:1).

In general, Deacons manage the practical aspects of Hilltop. Elders oversee the practical aspects, but focus primarily on the spiritual aspects. Deacons at Hilltop serve at the direction of the Elders. They

meet monthly or as often as needed. They make decisions within their areas of responsibilities/expertise, collaborate extensively with the Body, and bring reports and major decisions to the Elders for approval and ratification as needed.

Deacons find replacements to fill vacancies on the Deacon Board. Potential Deacon Board members (names) will be provided to Elders and Staff prior to person serving as a member of the Deacon Board.

### **Pastors at Hilltop**

Many Elders in New Testament times seem to have held down secular employment of some kind (Acts 20:34-35). By working hard both in employment and church leadership, Elders serve as powerful examples to the rest of the church, and to society as a whole, of what it means to love and serve God and people. The volunteer ethos is particularly important given that the vast majority of those who serve in the church will not be financially remunerated for their service.

However, to insist that all servants of the church must operate as volunteers is neither Biblical nor helpful to the growth and development of a local church.

Paul indicates in I Tim 5:17-18 that those who rule well, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching, should not be constrained by having to earn a living outside the church. Particularly as a church grows numerically or takes on new challenges, some Elders may need to become paid staff, in accordance with their gifts. Likewise, Hilltop through its Elders may deem it best to hire other, permanent, paid staff to work alongside the Elders and to facilitate and manage the ongoing development and ministry of Hilltop.

Although Hilltop is an Elder-led church and has several hired pastors, we espouse the concept of Body-life or “every-member ministry”, and it is important to guard against professionalization of the church which could lead to a situation where significant spiritual ministry is only carried out by paid staff. If this happens, we are at risk of denying the roles and gifts that the Holy Spirit has given to all in the Body. For example, discipling others, sharing the faith, preaching, teaching, making music, baptizing, distributing the communion elements at the Lord’s Supper, officiating marriages when licensed, funerals, and visiting the sick and needy are not the exclusive remit of Elders, Deacons and paid Pastoral Staff. Those with gifts in leadership and administration should be encouraged to use them, whether they are on staff or not.

At Hilltop, paid Pastoral Staff are considered equal to Elders in the sense that they are employed to shepherd the flock through their various ministries. In that sense, there is little functional difference between Elders and Pastoral Staff. Pastoral Staff will support and assist the Elders by implementing their “day to day” assigned areas of responsibilities and ministries of the church.

Currently at Hilltop there are eight individuals who are employed by the church as Pastoral Staff. They carry out a range of ministries and activities, and are formally referred to as Pastors. They are:

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Title</u></b>
Joel Berger	Teaching Pastor
Don Baumann	Outreach Pastor
Mark Souder	Music & Worship Pastor
Tammy Brower	Women’s Ministry Pastor
Kurt Katzorke	Family Ministry Pastor (Youth)
Dave Hartman	Ministry Resources Pastor
Tony Kiel	Family Ministry Pastor (Children)
Chis Tomchuk	Administration Pastor

Each Pastor has an area (or areas) of responsibility, and each has a job description and goals and objectives associated with his or her responsibilities. These responsibilities may involve teaching and equipping the saints, practical discipleship, reaching out to the Body and the community in which we live with love and God’s message of grace and forgiveness, supporting mission activities at home and further afield, directing a music ministry, counselling and supporting the needy, supporting and managing spiritually-edifying activities for women, men and co-ed groups in the Body, managing the children’s and youth ministries, and general church administration.

Each Pastor is a leader of his or her area (or areas) of responsibility. All are expected to possess and uphold the same characteristics that Elders are held to in the New Testament, have been carefully selected and chosen for the tasks assigned to them, and each is responsible to the Elders at Hilltop. Paid Pastors are welcomed and encouraged to attend Elder Board meetings and contribute to the decision-making process. Though some may not be serving currently as Elders, all are regarded as an integral and vitally important part of the Hilltop leadership team.

Even though they have the title of “Pastor” at Hilltop, this does not mean all Pastoral Staff have the gift of Pastor-Teacher. However, it does mean they are expected to approach their work as

shepherds, and their functions will be similar to the roles and duties of the Elders and, in some instances, the Deacons.

Finally, all permanent, paid staff at Hilltop, including Pastoral Staff, are assessed and evaluated annually by the Elders, in terms of their job descriptions and annual objectives, and are given guidance on how to maximize their output and effectiveness.

Attached are two appendices:

- A. Elder Qualifications
- B. Deacon Qualifications

## **Appendix A: Elder Qualifications: Hilltop Community Church**

### **1 Timothy 3:1-7**

Temperate  
Gentle  
Able to manage his household  
Not a new convert  
Well thought of by outsiders/respectable

### **Titus 1:5-9**

Above reproach  
Husband of one wife  
Have believing, obedient children  
Not self-willed  
Not quick-tempered  
Not addicted to wine  
Not pugnacious/uncontentious  
Not a money lover  
Hospitable  
Lover of good  
Sensible/prudent  
Just  
Devout  
Self-controlled  
Hold fast the Word  
Able to teach sound doctrine  
Able to refute objections

### **I Peter 5:1-4**

An Elder is to:

Serve willingly, not under compulsion  
Not look for shameful gain  
Not lord it over the flock  
Be an example  
Be accountable to the Chief Shepherd

## **Appendix B: Deacon Qualifications: Hilltop Community Church**

### **Acts 6:1-6**

Have a good reputation  
Full of the Spirit and wisdom

### **I Tim 3:8-13**

Person of dignity/respectable  
Not double-tongued (not hypocritical or spreading stories in the Body)  
Not gossips  
Not addicted to much wine  
Not fond of sordid gain  
Hold to the faith with a clear conscience  
Husband of one wife  
Good manager of his/her children and household  
Tested and if found above reproach, to serve