

Models of Eldership

Reading for Better Church Elders online video series Episode 3: Models of Eldership

<http://www.lifelonglearning.nz/elders>

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This document contains information from various public sources, showing firstly the guidance from the Baptist Union of New Zealand about leadership and governance, and then examples from three New Zealand Baptist churches showing how they publicly define their eldership or governance groups (from their websites).

If you are from a different denomination, church tradition, or country, it is likely the wider family of churches your local church is part of will have some sort of documentation readily available that gives guidance around the construction of eldership or board groups. If you are in an independent church, there are likely to be signs of particular traditions or ecclesiology (theology as applied to the nature and structure of church) that could be explored to find out why things are done in certain ways.

The first 19 pages are from the Baptist Union of New Zealand Administration Manual and include sections on:

- Church Leadership
- Governance of a Baptist Church
- Why Do Some Boards Manage More Than Govern?
- Focus of the Board Meetings
- Creating a Governance Board
- Ministry Led Leadership Model General Guidelines
- Ministry Led Model Position Descriptions (Senior Pastor and Elder)
- Traditional Model Position Descriptions (Pastor and Elder)

The pages following these sections contain samples from three New Zealand Baptist Churches showing how they publicly define and/or organise their eldership or governance board:

- South West Baptist Church, Christchurch
- Taupo Baptist Church
- Hamilton Central Baptist Church

This document is to aid discussion through example. The information is not intended to be set up as the best or only ways of doing things.

Church Leadership

The Pastor and Paid Staff

The Pastor or Pastoral Team are responsible to the congregation generally through the elected representatives groups mentioned below. Besides having responsibility for spiritual leadership they are equippers, working alongside the wider leadership team.

Registration of Ministers

The Baptist Union recognises the need for Churches to have some standards for their ministerial leadership so has developed a system for Registration of Ministers. This takes into account our theology that ministry is function and not status and recognises the call of God to an individual for pastoral ministry.

In part this means relating with, and being accountable to, brothers and sisters in ministry. Equipping, relating and accountability can, and must, take place at the local level and Registration encourages those relationships as well as encouraging the individual pastor's commitment to personal growth, and development in spirituality.

→ Full details are found Registration of Ministers "Rules for Registration of Ministers" in Chapter 3, page 67

Appointed Unpaid Workers

Most churches rely heavily on unpaid workers and in some instances people agree to be appointed to roles for which they receive no financial compensation. In all cases, lines of accountability should be made clear at the time of appointment. Consideration should be given to agreeing on a job description so that expectations and responsibilities are clear from the outset.

The Elected Representatives

At least once a year at a properly constituted Members' Annual Meeting, in accordance with the constitution, leadership positions (e.g. elders and ministry leaders) or Board are appointed. The importance of prayerful consideration of, approaching and seeking agreement of individuals with the right qualities before the meeting cannot be over-emphasised. Elders and other potential ministry leaders should be given a job description and asked to pray, seeking what God is saying to them about the role. Details of job descriptions should be negotiable—a new appointee may wish to fine tune them to suit their particular gifts, abilities and vision.

The elders are responsible for upholding and developing the boundaries and outcomes agreed by the church Annual General Meeting, setting policy and providing spiritual oversight. The ministry leaders are responsible to action their ministry plans.

Governance in a New Zealand Baptist Church

The Role of the Board/Elders

The awareness of 'governance' has increased since the introduction of 'Tomorrows Schools' and their Boards of Trustees. The idea of having a board that focuses on the ends rather than the means is at the basis of governance. It allows any organisation to be vision-driven and to have a clear direction and purpose.

Churches are finding they can operate more efficiently and effectively if there is a clear distinction between "big picture" matters (governance) and every day operations (management).

Defining the Terms

Governance is dealing with the "big picture."

The Concise Oxford Dictionary describes the concept of governing as "ruling with authority, conducting the policy, action and affairs."

Governance has the concern for the **purpose** of the church, being focused on the “big picture” rather than the details of its parts. “Why” questions are central. Why do we exist? Why are we doing this? Why are things going well (or not going well)? The governance group sets policies that are in line with and assist the mission of the church.

Management, on the other hand, is responsible for the ways or the means that these ends are reached. While management has a concern for long-term goal, it is primarily involved with day-to-day operations, coordinating events and ensuring good utilisation of resources. Management has to involve itself in the detail.

All leadership groups tend to drift towards management. It has more instant results. It deals with the “now.” But unless clear governance underpins it, management tends towards simply keeping the machine going smoothly. A strong sense of purpose diminishes and the church loses direction and increasingly becomes focussed on programmes.

Governance of a Baptist Church

If a church is to achieve its mission to a lost world, then it needs a good leadership structure. This requires an effective governance group. They may be called “Elders.” That name may carry some unfortunate baggage in some churches. In which case it may be better to dispense with that name and find something with less prejudice. In this paper the term “Board” is used.

It is essential that the Board focuses on governance.

“It is too easy to drift into management issues. Traditional approaches to the work of boards of non-profit organisations perpetuate a number of deficiencies, such as: time on the trivial, short-term bias, reactive stance, reviewing/rehashing/redoing, leaky accountability, and diffuse accountability”.

(John Carver, ‘Boards that make a Difference’)

The role of the Board is, keeping the ‘big picture’ in mind, to:

- pray
- determine, before God, the vision and direction of the church
- oversee the health of the church, regularly reviewing the state of the church and its achievements against the church’s mission and vision statements
- establish policies
- appoint key ministry leaders, on the recommendation of the pastor
- oversee the annual performance review of the Senior Pastor, holding him/her accountable for the performance of the staff team
- protect the pastor from unwarranted pressures from church members.

“The Board governs through making policy and monitoring performance, not through granting approvals.”
(Carver)

Note that the Board’s role is **not**:

- administration and financial detail
- property
- direct oversight of ministries.

These are management matters. In the ‘Ministry-led’ model these roles are delegated to Staff and Ministry Leaders who are accountable, through the pastor, to the Board for these ministries. It is not necessary to have another committee to oversee each area of ministry. (management). Rowland Croucher says, about church life, “the best committee is a committee of one”. The staff (paid or voluntary) does the ministry (management). The Board focuses on governance.

Why Do Some Boards Manage More Than Govern?

- Management, more than governance, creates an immediate sense of accomplishment and gratification—in part because ministry/management issues are often more amenable to decisions and actions. Matters of strategy and policy, by comparison, often require extended discussions, in-depth analyses and a considerable understanding of the nature and purpose of the church. Decisions do not have immediate observable results.
- If the Pastor or chairman does not present the board with a governance agenda, and instead asks the board to deal with management issues - they will comply!
- Where the board's confidence in the pastor wanes then they can feel they should become more involved in overseeing the day-to-day ministries.
- Board members are personally involved in ministries and they are unable to separate their functions as board members from their ministry involvement.
- In periods of crisis, boards are likely to intervene to restore normality. Then they can neglect to return to governance mode.
- A rough 'rule of thumb' is that governance does not involve dealing with issues or events occurring within the next three months. That's management.

Focus of the Board Meetings

The meetings need to have a clear agenda that focuses on:

- Prayer
- Governance
 - Strategic matters
 - A longer term rather than short-term focus
 - Oversight review of each ministry's plans and goals.
- Monitoring the direction and performance of the church against the vision and goals.
- Seeking to discover ways to enhance and strengthen the church.
- Dreaming the dreams for the future.
- Working on, not in the church.
- Developing policies to provide the parameters in which ministries can operate.
- Empowering and supporting the Pastor.

Creating a Governance Board

There must be clearly defined expectations and structures that underlie a strategically focussed board. The Board should be taking steps to govern more and manage less. In many ways they complement the efforts taken by the pastor and ministry leaders.

1. Create Clear Expectations for the Board

It is helpful for the Board to have a concise written statement that highlights a board's governance purpose: to pursue and attain the stated mission of the church and to ensure the long-term growth and health of the church. This statement should be put before the board members often to remind them of their role. One group recites a summary pledge before each meeting.

This requires training for the board members. New members require an orientation programme to bring them up to speed as to the functions and priorities of the board.

2. Create Clear expectations for the Senior Pastor

The board must clearly convey to the pastor its intention to devote its energies to matters of strategic import to the mission and vision of the church. Thus the board will expect the pastor to furnish the board with strategic discussion questions, matters for policy development and ongoing performance indicators as to how the church is progressing towards its objectives.

They will expect the pastor to be making the management and ministry decisions in line with the vision and policies of the church and not be routinely bringing these matters to the board meetings for decisions.

3. Structure Meetings to Deal with Matters of Policy and Strategy

Board members receive a written agenda prior to the meeting that covers two areas.

- **Information**

This keeps the board informed on what is happening in the ministry areas of the church. This includes how various ministry leaders are performing, staff needs, financial overview, programme plans etc.

These are not items for discussion or decisions.

A board member can ask for any of these items to be placed on the “decision” part of the agenda, but this requires the consent of rest of the board.

- **Items for Decision**

The first item of this part of the agenda could be to ask, “Which items on the agenda should not be here?” This is to identify matters that are related to management or ministry. Or they should be under the “Information” section.

This part of the agenda should be prioritised and sorted. Related items are dealt with together. Less important items are put down the list to ensure that major matters get the necessary time and attention.

4. Board’s Self Evaluation

A Board can slip unwittingly into day-to-day management areas. To counteract this tendency it needs to evaluate its meetings and functions.

Occasionally the board should undertake self-evaluations. For example, at the end of a meeting each board member can do a written review rating the meeting on the following:

Issues covered today were

Trivial	1	2	3	4	5	Essential
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Worthless	1	2	3	4	5	Indispensable
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Our discussions were primarily concerned with

Management	1	2	3	4	5	Policy and Vision
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What Can Be Gained?

1. In the long run the church will be healthier and more likely to achieve its vision and mission. Studies of non-profit organisations show that boards attentive to the core components of governance are typically associated with successful, effective organisations. Churches are no different.
2. Because of the more meaningful nature of discussion, board meetings are more interesting and satisfying. Meetings are also a lot shorter!
3. Prayer becomes an essential and significant component of the meetings.
4. Board members are likely to have a deeper appreciation of the complexities and constraints facing the pastor and the ministries of the church.
5. The intellectual engagement required of Board members means they are more likely to have a heartfelt commitment to the church that will lead to greater moral and financial support.

[Back to contents](#)

Ministry Led Leadership Model General Guidelines

Background

One of the key areas to be addressed in helping churches become healthy and move into mission is that of leadership and the decision making processes that go with it.

To help with the above, a model of leadership is being encouraged, based on principles that identify and separate out the responsibilities of leaders, and give priority to the work of ministry and the call to mission. This is called the 'Ministry-led Church Model'.

Where to Begin

Build a model based on principles before you decide on structures. Structure comes second, and can take whatever shape is most helpful in fulfilling the principles.

The Principles

1. Understand the difference between governance, leadership and ministry

There is a governance role for the whole church (church members meetings), of agreeing to the 'boundaries' e.g. doctrine, vision, leadership, finance, property

There is a governance role for a group of leaders of upholding the boundaries and outcomes agreed to by the whole church, development support and protection of the mission and vision, setting policy and providing spiritual oversight. (See Acts 15:6-29 as an example of the above)

There is a leadership role for the pastor in bringing vision and as team leader of the church ministries.

There is a leadership role for each of the ministry leaders to form teams, set vision and goals and ensure the outcomes of that ministry are happening.

There is a ministry role for every person in the church as they participate in the various ministries. These include core ministries of the church gathered, and in being a follower of Jesus in the midst of the work place, neighbourhood and society at large.

2. Clearly define the lines of responsibility, authority and accountability

Responsibility without authority creates bureaucracy. Many Baptist churches work on this structure. The person doing the work has responsibility to do it but has no authority. This is 'safe' but it is not effective.

Responsibility with authority but no accountability creates authoritarianism. It is a common structure in independent churches where the pastor runs the church and is not answerable to anyone. This is effective but it is not safe. Too often things go off on a tangent or power becomes an issue.

Responsibility married with authority and accountability is a safe and effective model for the fulfilling of ministries. The person is set free to do the task for which he/she is responsible and has the authority to do it in the best way possible but is accountable for the outcomes. (See Luke 12:42f and 16:1f for examples of management of God's resources)

3. Empower people and place ministry at the centre

The first two principles are designed to enable people to get on with the work of ministry effectively and efficiently. They also create an expectation that the church is serious about what it does, and wants to see the Kingdom advanced. The majority of the effort and the participation of people needs to be at the ministry level.

People need the freedom to take risks, explore new ventures and engage in their passion and giftings.

4. Expect Mission Outcomes

The Western church has become institutionalised. The vast majority of time, money, energy and personnel is spent on itself. This is a call to re-prioritise the call to mission. This is a call to be outwardly focused and not inwardly as the primary orientation. The major component in determining the effectiveness of a church's ministry will be in the achievement of mission outcomes. These need to be written into the goals of each ministry in appropriate ways.

Descriptions

1. Governance Leadership Group

Called primarily to govern the Church by providing spiritual oversight, and development, support and protection of the mission and vision of the Church. They take the 'boundaries' agreed to by the church and empower the Pastor and Ministry Leaders in achieving the mission and vision of the Church. They also hold them accountable. The Governance Leadership Group is accountable to the Church members. Some churches continue to call them elders, while others call them board or oversight team.

2. Pastor

Called primarily to be the visionary and pastoral leader of the Church. The Pastor is part of the Governance Leadership Group.

3. Ministry Leaders

Called and equipped to serve the Church by establishing and leading a variety of 'core' ministries that the Pastor and Governance Leadership group has put in place.

Anyone who fills a Ministry Leadership role is generally accountable to the Pastor.

Ministry Leaders can be paid or volunteer, full or part-time. Structures within each ministry area will be determined by the needs of the Church.

There could be anywhere from 5 – 10 core ministry areas. These areas relate to the normal expectations of what a church needs to provide to both grow disciples and engage in effective mission.

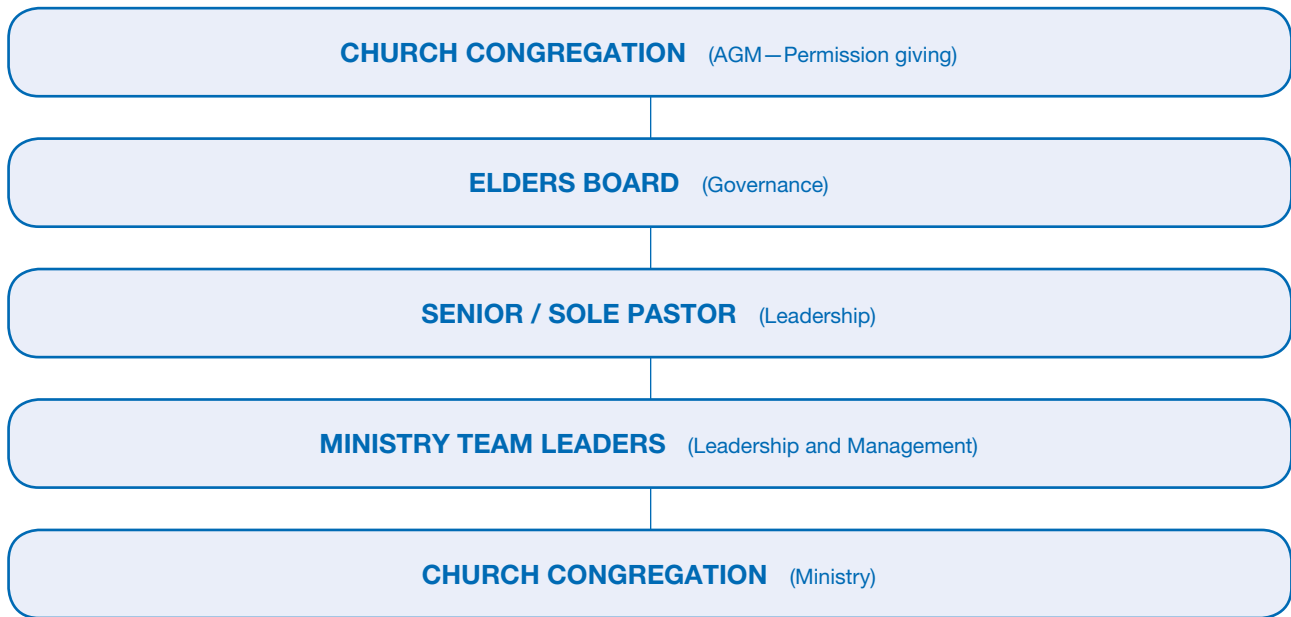
Sample of the Core Areas:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. Worship Services | 6. Small Groups |
| 2. Inclusion—care for new people, general church care | 7. Discipleship and Mission |
| 3. Children and Family ministries | 8. Preaching and Teaching |
| 4. Youth Ministries | 9. Prayer |
| 5. Facilities | 10. Finance and Administration |

One person could be the ministry leaders of several areas or the areas may be grouped together under fewer headings. The Senior Pastor would normally be the ministry leader of one or two areas e.g. worship services and preaching and teaching.

They have responsibility and authority (within the vision, budget and guidelines) to get on with deciding how these ministry areas will function and who will be involved.

Church Structure



Church Members

- Appoint the elders
- Appoint the (senior) pastor
- Affirm the vision
- Approve the budget
- Make major directional, staffing and property decisions
- Receive reports from Elders and Pastor

Elders

- Comprises 3-5 people
- No ministry portfolios (may have separate responsibilities)
- People of mature godly character
- Practically committed to vision through giving and ministry involvement
- Ideally should not be ministry leaders, but ok to be in a ministry team

The (Senior) Pastor

- Sets the vision with the Elders
- Selects ministry leaders (with Elders)
- Leads the ministry team and holds them accountable for the agreed goals
- Is the primary caster of the vision
- Answers to the Elders for the vision and mission of the church

The ministry leaders

- Head up ministry areas
- Authority to function within goal and budget guidelines
- Recruit their own team
- Accountable to the pastor

Practice

Step 1

Prior to the church AGM, the ministry leaders write up their Ministry Plans for the coming year, and talk these through with the pastor. Goals and objectives must be measurable and specific.

They should cover a 3yr and 12 month plan.

They should outline financial and non-financial resource requirements. The pastor combines the goals of the staff into an overall church plan.

Step 2

The church plan is presented to the Elders by the pastor. The Elders may want to respond to the goals and objectives in the plan and, once agreed, to make appropriate budget recommendations.

The ministry plan is then presented to the church AGM. Once accepted it is passed back to the pastor for action with the ministry leaders.

Step 3

The ministry leaders get on with the job. Any evaluation of progress occurs regularly in meetings with the pastor and through the reporting system used to communicate to the elders. The pastor's role is to coach each ministry leader to enable them to achieve the goals.

The elder's role is to monitor outcomes of the goals and objectives.

Step 4

At the end of the year, all ministry leaders present a written evaluation to the pastor, of how they have achieved the goals. The pastor presents these, along with his/her own evaluation, to the Elders.

Step 5

The Elders review how the goals have been met by the pastor and ministry leaders. The Elders determine any appropriate courses of action for the pastor to take.

Step 6

Ministry leaders start step 1 again. If a leader has struggled to meet their goals, all other leaders include in their goals, for the next year, at least one way of regularly helping that person.

Step 7

If a ministry leader or pastor does not achieve their goals for a second year, this is a good indication that they may not have the gifts and qualities required for the task. The Elders support the Pastor in asking that person to relinquish that responsibility and seek another area of ministry. Where the Pastor is not achieving, the Elders are responsible to act.

The Other Dimension

The description above covers the organisational functions of a church leadership structure.

In reality the church is first an organism before it is an organisation. It is the Body of Christ. Those in the leadership roles of the local church need to understand how to create community, how to impart life and encouragement, how to take up the task of prayer and discernment of the voice of the Spirit, how to empower others for their work of ministry and create a culture of mission and transformation.

This means:

- Development and sustaining of right relationships and partnerships. The elders must not become purely governors of an organisation. They need to form a matrix of relationships with people at various levels of responsibility. They are to develop as ‘team’ among themselves and encourage this among others.
- Actively participating in the cultural climate of the church: publicly and behind the scenes.
- Creating opportunities for effective communication.
- It is about ‘journey’ and ‘story’ as well as destination.
- The makeup of the elders group needs to include those with process (detail) and people skills as well as purpose (big picture) thinking.

[Back to contents](#)

Ministry Led Model Position Descriptions

APPENDIX 3-K Senior Pastor

Your Name and Logo

_____ Baptist Church

Position:	Senior Pastor (in a Ministry-Led Model Church)
Title:	Senior Pastor / Pastor (or a title that reflects the makeup of your church)
Responsible to:	Eldership / Board (delete one)
Status:	Full-time Staff / Part-time Staff / Voluntary Staff (delete two)

Leadership of the Ministry-Led Model

Within the context of the Ministry-led model of Church Leadership, the Senior Pastor is the key visionary leader for the church, and manager of its ministry leaders.

This includes:

- Leading the church to achieve its vision and mission.
- Oversight and management of the Ministry Team Leaders.
- Primary preacher and teacher
- Integral member of the governance body, known in this Church as the Board (or change to the name given in your church)
- Accountability to the Board for all activities the church is engaged in
- A commitment to and participation in the Baptist stream of churches, policies, standards and practices.
- Accepting and abiding by the articles of faith, policies and protocols of the (your name) Baptist Church.

Primary Purpose of the Role

To provide the key leadership role in the achievement of the church's mission and vision.

Major Areas of Responsibility

The major areas of responsibility for this role include:

- Develop, execute and evaluate a Ministry Plan for the Church by [This will require Board sign-off]:
 - Developing in conjunction with the Board the **Vision, Mission & Values** of the Church
 - Developing a long-term Strategic Outlook for the Church
 - Developing the **3 Year Strategic Goals** for the Church taking into account the current needs, growth patterns, and future development of the Church.
 - Developing the **12 Month Ministry Objectives** (including financial and non-financial resource requirements).
 - Monitor, with the Board (elders), the **Competency Profile** for this role

- Recruit and develop an appropriate team of Ministry Team Leaders to execute the Church Ministry Plan.
- Set and review individual objectives for each ministry team leader in alignment with the Church Ministry Plan, including any learning and development requirements as appropriate.
- Provide effective leadership to and management of the Ministry Leadership Team.
- Provide the primary teaching and preaching ministry of the Church (therefore normally the Ministry Team Leader for the Teaching & Preaching Ministry as well)
- Responsibility for the provision of community service including:
 - Weddings
 - Dedications
 - Baptisms
 - Funerals
- Be an active member of the Board.

Scope/Authority

- Budget: As approved by the Board
- Voluntary Staff: Recruitment of appropriate voluntary team members to fulfil this ministry.
- Paid Staff: Recruit as approved by the Board

Key Working Relationships

Most Frequent Contacts	Description / Purpose
Board	Leadership and accountability
Ministry Team Leaders	Team members

Personal Skills and Attributes

Essential:

- A devotion to Jesus Christ and His purposes in this world
- Strong Visionary Skills
- Strong bible-based teaching and preaching skills
- Strong Servant Leadership and Team Ministry skills

Desirable:

- Have successfully worked in this area before

Ministry Skills and Attributes

Essential:

- Theologically Trained
- Sound knowledge of the Baptist Ethos in a New Zealand setting
- Team player
- Excellent management skills

Desirable:

- Experience in growing church environments

[Back to contents](#)

APPENDIX 3-L Elder

Your Name and Logo

Baptist Church

Position:	Elder (in a Ministry-led Model Church)
Title:	Elder (or a title that reflects the makeup of your Church)
Responsible to:	Church Members / Eldership Board
Status:	Voluntary

Governance of the Ministry-led Model

Within the context of the Ministry-led Model of Church Leadership, an Elder is a member of the Governance Group of the Church after being constitutionally elected to the position at an Annual General Meeting.

The ministry of the Eldership includes:

- Spiritual oversight of the Church
- Prayer
- Support and encouragement of the Church and its ministries
- Keepers of the Vision and dreamers about the future
- Oversee the health of the Church

Primary Purpose of the Role

To provide key spiritual and governing leadership in the achievement of the church's mission and vision.

Major Areas of Responsibility

The major areas of responsibility for this role include:

- Oversee the development, execution and evaluation of a Ministry Plan for the Church including:
- Clear Mission, Vision & Values for the Church
- A long-term Strategic Outlook for the Church
- 3 Year Strategic Goals for all ministries within the Church taking into account the current needs, growth patterns, and future development of the Church.
- 12 Month Ministry Objectives (including financial and non-financial resource requirements) for all ministries within the Church
- Conducting an annual ministry review with the Pastor as appropriate
- Ensure that all activities are fully aligned to Vision, Mission and Values of the Church
- Establish and ensure policies that enable Ministry to effectively operate and assist in removing obstacles that could hinder effectiveness
- Provide effective leadership to the Church by empowering the Pastor and Ministry Team Leaders, ensuring that all authority and responsibility given is balanced with the appropriate levels of accountability

- Be an active member of the Eldership Board
- Effective communication and reporting to the Church

Scope/Authority

- Budget: As approved by the Church AGM
- Voluntary Staff: Delegated authority to Pastor
- Paid Staff: As approved within the budget

Key Working Relationships

Most Frequent Contacts	Description / Purpose
Eldership Board	Team Members
Pastor	Leadership, support and encouragement
Ministry Team Leaders	Support and encouragement

Personal & Ministry Skills and Attributes

Essential:

- A devotion to Jesus Christ and His purposes in this world
- Clearly able to differentiate between Governance & Management
- Excellent cognitive decision-making from a Governance perspective
- Demonstrate strong competence in all the character attributes of 1 Timothy 3:10-12
- Strong Visionary Skills
- Able to think at a strategic level
- Demonstrate Servant Leadership attributes

Desirable:

- Have successfully worked in this area before

[Back to contents](#)

Traditional Model Position Descriptions

APPENDIX 3-X Pastor

Purpose:

- To give leadership, under God, to the people of _____ Baptist Church
- To care for the spiritual and pastoral health of the people of _____ Baptist Church

Responsible to:

- Elders

Responsibilities:

Provide leadership by

- working with the elders and pastoral team to ensure visionary leadership and efficient management of the church
- supporting and encouraging pastoral team members, deacons and elders
- convening weekly pastoral team meetings
- being involved in the selection of, and review process with, staff members
- being involved in equipping people for ministry in their daily life

Co-ordinate the corporate worship through

- planning the teaching / preaching programme for the services
- exploring breadth of worship
- enabling a wide participation of people in the running and leading of services
- liaison with musicians and others involved in the leadership of services, encouraging opportunities for the development of gifts

Encourage the mission of _____ Baptist Church by

- stimulating mission thinking and action as part of the strategic approach of the church
- working closely with those directly involved in the strategising for, and leading of, mission
- being prepared to be a spokesperson for God, exercising a prophetic role
- ensuring the provision of training, and development of appropriate skills, for mission
- developing strategies for working with students and young people
- showing servant leadership in mission

Encourage the pastoral care of the Church by

- being committed pastorally to individuals who have specific needs
- liaison with others involved in pastoral care of the congregation
- acting quickly to meet with people in times of crisis
- encouraging personal faith development and depth of spirituality within the congregation

Equipping personally for ministry by

- being in touch with God through giving time to prayer, reading, reflection and spiritual direction
- having an awareness of the current social and theological situation in New Zealand
- attending relevant conferences, retreats and local associations
- making good use of study leave

Performance measures

There will be a full discussion of all aspects of this position as defined in this job description at the annual review to be carried out by those appointed by the leadership. Particular attention should be given to

- time given for personal equipping of the minister
- the quality of relationship with the pastoral team and lay leadership
- the growth, under God, of the congregation individually and corporately
- the love and sense of community that the congregation people have for each other

Liaison responsibilities

- the pastoral team
- leadership (including elders and deacons)
- those involved with this congregation
- those involved with the wider church community

[Back to contents](#)

APPENDIX 3-Y Elder

Objective:

- To be the spiritual leaders in the church

Responsible to:

- Church members

Responsibilities:

Pastoral leadership

- establishing and maintaining a structure that will ensure all members of the congregation receive appropriate levels of pastoral care. This includes pastoral care of other Elders, pastoral staff and their families
- each Elder will be involved in at least one specific form of ministry within the church
- each Elder will be responsible for oversight of at least one ministry team. This will involve :
 - support of the ministry team leader
 - checking on their personal well-being and they way in which the ministry team is achieving its aims
 - ensuring the ministry team leader has the support needed to fulfil their role

Pastoral problems

- pray together over, and take necessary action regarding, any important pastoral problem (e.g. church discipline, false teaching, prayer for healing, etc.)
- Planning for the future
- establishment and on-going development of ministry teams
- review and evaluate the church's progress over the past year and plan for future development as God leads
- evaluate the effectiveness of each ministry team in its contribution to the overall objects of the church and make appropriate recommendations
- set priorities for continued growth and development in regard to :
 - adequate staffing (full-time, part-time and voluntary)
 - programs
 - facilities to cater for needs
- to present to the AGM each year an annual projection of the church's needs in the above areas and also a long range projection of needs
- communication of goals/vision to the congregation

Personnel development

- to seek people for positions throughout the church. In particular, to prayerfully seek out scripturally-qualified people for leadership positions. To encourage the development of any potential leaders

Prayer

- to meet together for prayer for the church, members, programs, evangelism, discipleship, church planting and for faith and vision as God leads the church forward

Preaching and teaching

- being sensitive to the needs of the congregation, and in light of the direction of the church, oversee the preaching and teaching to ensure that God's word is taught and his will is done in the church

Notes

Elders:

- oversee the health of the church, keeping their finger on the pulse
- determine, before God, the direction of the church
- establish policies for the church
- regularly review the state of the church and its achievements against the church's mission and vision statements
- recommend the appointment of key ministry leaders to the church
- deal with difficult pastoral and disciplinary issues
- oversee the annual performance review of the staff
- deal with staffing matters where appropriate
- are the 'legitimisers' for the visionaries in the church

[Back to contents](#)

South West Baptist Church, Christchurch

<https://www.swbc.org.nz/about-us/our-teams/elders/>

ELDERS

Elders operate under the delegated authority of the church members to undertake the governance role for the body. This is primarily a Relational Governance Role (undertaken through close relationships with church leaders, staff, the Core Leadership Team and the Senior Pastor).

Elders are a non-partisan consultative group. They do not have specific portfolios or act as representatives of, or advocates for, specific ministries or activities of the church.

They key roles of the Elders are:

1. Holders of the Vision:

- Elders bring a 'global' perspective to the evolving vision of the church (but not in a restrictive way which shackles us to the past and limits new opportunities but inspires us to embrace new expressions of the church's vision)
- Elders are responsible for the process of discerning and casting of vision. Elders seek to discern, in consultation with others, particularly the Core Leadership Team, the direction the Holy Spirit is leading our church. We look to establish a broad vision for the church, while always acknowledging that God will raise people of vision and opportunities for growing God's kingdom will occur which may alter or expand our vision
- Elders set the 'chalk lines' on the field which define, in principle, where we jointly discern the broad vision of the church and the Core Leadership Team operate within these lines. The lines are principles rather than methodology. The focus of elders is on the principles (goals, outcomes and character concerns) the focus of the Core Leadership Team is more methodological (How do we do this best? How do we achieve this?)
- Elders reflect the 'mood' of the church to the Senior Pastor and Core Leadership Team (and vice versa)

2. Financial:

- Overseeing budgets and outcomes of key goals
- Financial accountability (budgets/accounts etc) – ensuring allocation of resources aligns with the vision
- Reporting back/communicating to the church (AGM, Vision Night etc)

3. Pastoral:

- Pastoral support and availability for prayer in services, for the sick, dying and those in extreme crises

- Listening to concerns of people within the church, channelling these concerns to appropriate people and if necessary picking up individuals' concerns if they are unable to make progress through normal channels
- Handle difficult pastoral situations where it is most appropriate that the elders of the church be involved
- Meet with Core Leadership Team members to support, encourage and be aware of concerns (not an annual review or line-management role)

4. Relationship with Senior Pastor:

- A key eldership responsibility is to support, encourage, protect and hold accountable the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor is responsible for enacting and operationalising the vision
- Involvement in and approval of staff appointments to the Core Leadership Team (and their recommendation to church members as per the South West Baptist Church constitution)
- Involvement in employment/staffing/conflicts of interest issues (generally at the Senior Pastor level)

5. Relationship with the Core Leadership Team:

- Elders need to 'filter' the vision of individual Core Leadership Team members for their specific areas of ministry responsibility through the over-arching SWBC vision
- Elders have a pastoral role with the Core Leadership Team (not a governing, accountability role as this rests with the Senior Pastor)
- Elders should be available for Core Leadership Team to have direct access and not just via the Senior Pastor (formally by scheduled visits and informally at other times)
- Click [here](#) to view our 'Elders – Core Leadership Team Dynamic' document.

6. Relationship with each other:

- Support for each other as elders – the elders group is not expected to be the primary support group in the church but they should support each other in their role as elders and are aware and supportive of other personal issues happening for them as individuals

7. Membership of the Elders:

- Need to bring together a mix of skills (people, passion and process) and experience on the eldership to effect any changes to the way they operate
- Elders need to look to form structures for the eldership which will allow for future growth of the church

Taupō Baptist Church

<http://www.taupobaptist.org.nz/constitution.html>

Constitution

5.2 Elders

5:2:1 Appointment Process:

Recommendation: Names of possible Elders are to be recommended in writing by anyone in the church to the whole leadership team (Elders and Ministry Leaders as set out in 3.2). An elder must be a member, who has been baptised as a believer.

Discernment: The leadership team shall go through a discernment process when considering each of the persons recommended. This process shall consider character (1 Timothy 3:1-7), skills, and calling. The discernment process will also involve discussion with the candidate. At least 75% of the leadership team must be in agreement in order for any of the recommended persons names to be brought before a church meeting for consideration for appointment as an Elder.

Approval: The names brought to the church meeting by the leadership team must be approved by not less than 75% of the votes cast. Votes cast shall be by secret ballot.

5:2:2 Size of Eldership

The maximum number of Elders (including the Senior Leader shall be 7 and the minimum number (including the Senior Leader) shall be 4.

5:2:3 Term of Eldership

An Elder shall be appointed for a term of two years. At the end of this term an Elder may be re-appointed for another term. The same three step appointment process is to be followed (i.e. recommendation, discernment and approval.) The Elder in question is excluded where appropriate from the discernment process.

5.2.4 Responsibilities

The Elders, along with the Senior Leader are responsible for the governance and direction of the church seeking to bring into reality the vision and mission of the church. The Elders can set and change policies from time to time for church life that will be available to all members in a separate document.

5.2.5 Meetings

The Elders shall meet (where possible) at least monthly with the Senior Leader.

Hamilton Central Baptist Church

<https://hcbc.nz/engage/how-were-governed/>

How We're Governed

As a Baptist church we are governed by what is known affectionately (. . . and sometimes otherwise!) as “congregational government.” In short, this means that the ultimate human authority for our church is the congregation of members who meet to collectively discern the mind of Christ. As distinct from other forms of church polity, our church is not subject to the direction of bishops or dioceses or a wider presbytery, or even the direction of a national headquarters.

Congregational government means that every congregation (or local church) is competent to discern the will of God for themselves, rather than being told what to do by a higher authority.

In theoretical terms we prefer to say that we are led or governed by Jesus Christ as the head of His church. But that is what all forms of church would claim also. In practical terms it means the highest decision making (discernment) body is the membership as a whole, who have meetings from time to time throughout the course of a year.

Major decisions are voted upon as a means of testing the congregations consensus around a particular course of action, having brought to bear our best sense of prayerful discernment. This process is sometimes incorrectly perceived as being purely democratic, and therefore prone to opinions and the will of the people. We prefer to think of it more in terms of a spiritual discernment process, and that every member of the church (i.e. the priesthood of all believers) is capable of discerning God's will and having a voice in our decision making process.

Congregational government, however, does not mean the leadership of all, or the management of the church by every member. It also does not infer the leadership of none. We believe the Bible speaks clearly about the appointment and follower-ship of appointed leaders. In our context one of the most important decisions a church meeting makes is the appointment of a senior pastor and the election of elders. Having carefully processed these appointments we expect our leaders to lead.

In effect our elders (of which the senior pastor is a member) give functional governance or oversight to the affairs of the church, and also accountability back to the members. Major decisions around issues like property or significant capital expenditure, and the approval of an annual operating budget (i.e. vision) are brought before the members. Thereafter the business of running or managing the church is delegated to the senior pastor and the staff team (paid and volunteer) who carry out the various ministry responsibilities. Effective congregational government has been described in these terms: The congregation owns (under God); the elders govern; the senior pastor leads; the staff and ministry leaders manage; and the congregation members minister.

We also like to say that the defining constitution for our church is the Bible. The Bible offers parameters for acceptable practice and direction, and if there is ever anything the Bible prescribes that we are not doing we assume the Bible to be correct and we amend our practice.

Of course, the Bible sometimes speaks more in terms of principles than exact practices, and so a Baptist church is typically governed by its adopted constitution. This document defines a number of practical issues around things like when and how members' meetings are conducted, processes for membership and appointment of leaders, and other significant policy decisions that define our church and its charitable status. A church's constitution is a living document and can change from time to time.