



ELDERS HANDBOOK

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

2.0 COASTAL ORGANIZATION

2.1 PASTORAL, ADMINISTRATIVE, AND MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP (Article VII)

- 2.1.1 Spiritual Leadership**
- 2.1.2 Servant Leadership**
- 2.1.3 The Lead Pastor**
- 2.1.4 The Leadership Team**
- 2.1.5 Church Elders**
- 2.1.6 Advisory Team**
- 2.1.7 Ministry Leaders**
- 2.1.8 Church Staff**

2.2 Multifaceted Leadership

3.0 WHAT IS AN ELDER

3.1 Definition

3.2 Summary of the definition

4.0 ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF AN ELDER

5.0 ESSENTIAL SKILLSET OF ELDERS

5.1 ABLE TO TEACH

6.0 ELDER PREREQUISITES

7.0 ELDER EXPECTATIONS

8.0 TIME COMMITMENT FOR ELDERS

9.0 AT COASTAL OUR ELDERS:

9.1 SPECIFIC DUTIES

10.0 COASTAL ELDER SELECTION PROCESS

- 10.1 Considerations in Selection**
- 10.2 Term of Elders**
- 10.3 Resignation from Elder Team Service**
- 10.4 Termination from Eldership Position**

11.0 THE SELECTION OF THE LEAD PASTOR

12.0 GENDER ISSUES IN CHURCH LEADERSHIP

12.1 Scriptural Bases For This Conclusion

12.2 Response To Other Interpretations Of Scripture

12.3 Concluding Remarks on Scriptural Concerns

12.4 Our Intention

13.0 Church Ministries

13.1 Ministry values

14.0 METHODS OF MINISTRY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this information is to provide scriptural guidelines for the development of Biblical Elders at Coastal Community Church. It is not intended to replace the authority of Scripture on which it is based. It is solely intended to be a guide for Elders to better understand the meaning and purpose for their leadership role at Coastal. This manual deals with the definition, qualification and selection of Elders.

2.0 COASTAL ORGANIZATION

2.1 PASTORAL, ADMINISTRATIVE, AND MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP (Article VII)

Coastal Community Church is Gift-based, Staff, Advisory and Elder Team led, and member empowered. (Romans 12:4-6, 1 Peter 5:1-2, Ephesians 4:12). As such, we are guided by the Holy Spirit and the truth of scripture.

2.1.1 Spiritual Leadership

The head of Coastal Community Church is Jesus Christ. As an organization, we seek to reflect His priorities in all we do and how we accomplish it. No decision is ever made that would knowingly contradict any of Christ's teaching. In addition, through the guidance of the indwelling Holy Spirit, we endeavor to discern God's will for us as a church. Whenever we implement a plan, we monitor our effectiveness while prayerfully exploring the next step God is showing us.

2.1.2 Servant Leadership

The ideal leader is humble and servant-like in spirit. Leaders at all levels do not see their role as "being in authority" over those in their charge. Instead, they desire to serve the church with their gifts and to build a functioning Christian community.

Members of the church sense this servant-leadership in action and likewise esteem those in leadership. Whether as a leader or a follower, everyone in the church is submitted to Jesus Christ, and we each strive to consider others as more important than ourselves.

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves"

- *Philippians 2:3*

The spirit of cooperation and appreciation is one of the unique features of ministry of Coastal Community Church and is one of God's greatest blessings to our church family. It is a fragile gift, however, and any person desiring to become a member should value and protect it.

2.1.3 The Lead Pastor

The Lead Pastor or designee is primarily responsible for the spiritual life of the church.

It is the Lead Pastor's responsibility to:

- ☐ Provide biblical vision and direction for the congregation
- ☐ Oversee & coordinate the day-to-day ministry of the congregation and administration of Coastal
- ☐ In collaboration with Advisory Team members and Elders, enlist apostolic pastoral and teaching ministries for the healthy spiritual development of the Body of believers
- ☐ Staff the church as necessary to help administrate its affairs.

The Lead Pastor or designee may work with Advisory Team members, Elders, Ministers or anyone serving in the functions or offices as outlined in *Ephesians 4:11-13* in whatever way the Lead Pastor determines is biblical to serve the spiritual needs of the congregation. Additionally, the Lead Pastor, in concert with the Elders, may budget monies, hire staff, develop projects, and create ministries and programs according to the Lead Pastor's convictions and biblical

understanding. The Lead Pastor shall have the authority to appoint and approve any assistants necessary to properly carry out the mission of the church.

2.1.4 The Leadership Team

The Leadership Team at Coastal Community Church is comprised of:

- ☐ The Lead Pastor
- ☐ Church Staff members
- ☐ The Church Elders
- ☐ The Advisory Team

The composition and responsibilities of each of these entities is delineated as follows:

2.1.5 Church Elders

Elders are men and women of the church who have been gifted and called to function in a leadership and pastoral position within the church.

At Coastal, the Lead Pastor serves as the Chief Elder, along with a minimum of 4 other Elders.

The New Testament is clear that the church is to be led by a plurality of godly leaders under the oversight and watch care of elders. The elders are given ultimate responsibility and authority to see that the church remains on a true course biblically, that its members are being appropriately shepherded, that the body is being fed through insightful and accurate biblical teaching, and that the life of the church is being well-managed with the assistance of other competent and godly leaders.

Elders are to care about the spiritual and physical well-being of members, regularly praying for the sick. They are to guard the body against harmful influences, confronting those who are contradicting biblical truth or who are continuing in patterns of sinful behavior. In doing so, they are to keep closing potential entrances for the Adversary, so that the truth of Christ will remain credible to both the congregation and the community.

Scripture references: 1 Peter 5:1-4, Acts 20: 28 –31, Titus 1:9, James 5:14

2.1.6 Advisory Team

The Advisory Team members are appointed by the Elders to oversee the areas of finance, property management and general staff management. This team should function at the request of the Elders and report to the Elder body, which would have final approval of their recommendations. The church's Trustees and Treasurer(s) should be part of the Advisory Team.

2.1.7 Ministry Leaders

Lay ministry leaders are members who have been gifted by God and called to lead others in a specific ministry (e.g. music ministry, drama, adult children's and youth ministry, Life Group leaders, Community Outreach Ministry).

All ministries fall under the overarching authority of the Elder and Advisory Teams, but carry out operations in an autonomous manner with the church staff acting in an advisory and resource capacity (*See section on Ministry and methods of ministry).

2.1.8 Church Staff

Coastal Community Church employs a paid staff selected on the basis of their giftedness and passion for their area of ministry. The Lead Pastor oversees and directs the work of the staff. The Lead Pastor and/or designee is responsible for monitoring staff performance and conducting periodic performance reviews for staff members and a final annual evaluation for each. The Lead Pastor is responsible and accountable to the Elder Team for his performance and the performance of the staff.

The paid church staff manages the day-to-day affairs of the ministries of the church. Their paid status makes it possible for them to devote themselves fully to the goals and objectives of the church, and to serve as resources to the lay leaders of the church. The Management Team, a group of the key leaders on staff, directs the staff as a whole.

The staff supports the strategies and priorities determined by the Leadership Team. Because of the dynamic and diverse nature of the work of Coastal Community Church, positions and associated duties within the staff structure are fluid and can be adapted to meet the current needs of the organization, its members, and the people the church seeks to attract.

2.2 Multifaceted Leadership

The way these groups work together can best be stated as follows:

The Staff directs the ministries of the church with overall leadership provided by the Management Team.

These ministries are supported by the financial resource administration of the Advisory Team.

All the activities of the church are carried out by ministry leaders under the supervision of the Elders.

3.0 WHAT IS AN ELDER

Elders, as spiritual leaders at Coastal Community Church, exist because of the instruction the Lord has provided for His church in Scripture.

3.1 Definition

There are three Greek words in the New Testament used to define an Elder.

PRESBUTEROS (presbuteros) - This term is most often used regarding Elders in the church and has the basic meaning of one who is older and wiser.

"The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders [presbuteros] in every town, as I directed you." Titus 1:5

Other references: Acts 11:30 (first usage), 14:23, 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23, 16:4, 20:17, 21:18, 1Timothy 5:1, James 5:14, and 1 Peter 5:1 and 5.

EPISKOPOS (episkapos) - The basic meaning of this word is to look upon, to consider, having regard for something or someone. It can also mean to inspect, to care for, to watch, or to visit.

"Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers [episkapos]. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with His own blood." - Acts 20:28

Other references: Philippians 1:1, 1Timothy 3:2, and Titus 1:7.

POIMANOS (poimanos) - The basic meaning of this word is shepherd, the one who tends a flock of sheep, for the purpose of equipping them to do ministry.

"It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors [poimainos] and teachers," Ephesians 4:11

Other references: John 21:16, Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:2.

Christ gave the basic definition of a leader in His church in *Mark 10:42-45*:

"You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to be first must be a servant of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many."

3.2 Summary of the definition

By combining each of these terms, an Elder is to be an older, spiritually mature Christian (*1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1*) who is a servant, responsible for the care, equipping and spiritual guidance of church members.

4.0 ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF AN ELDER

The biblical teaching on church leadership begins and ends with the character of the individuals who are called to the Elder team of the church. Our evaluation of individuals who aspire to serve as Elders at Coastal Community Church includes a comprehensive process to evaluate the “**Five Cs**,” with the primary focus on Character.

CHARACTER (scriptural qualifications for elders *1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9*) (Coastal By-Laws Appendix C)

- *Above Reproach* - Elders must lead by example and demonstrate a lifestyle free from patterns of sin.
- *Husband Of One Wife* - Elders, if married, must be devoted spouses.
- *Temperate* - Elders must be self-controlled, enslaved to nothing, and free from excesses.
- *Prudent* - Elders must be sober, sensible, wise, balanced in judgment, not given to quick, superficial decisions based on immature thinking.
- *Respectable* - Elders must demonstrate a well-ordered life and honorable behavior.
- *Hospitable* - Elders must be unselfish with personal resources, willing to share blessings with others.
- *Able To Teach* - Elders must be able to communicate truth and sound doctrine in a non-argumentative way.
- *Not Addicted To Wine* - Elders must be free from addictions and willing to limit their liberty for the sake of others.
- *Not Pugnacious Or Quick-Tempered* - Elders must be gentle, patient, and able to exercise self-control in difficult situations.
- *Uncontentious* - Elders must not be given to quarreling or selfish argumentation.
- *Free From The Love Of Money* - Elders must not be stingy, greedy, or for sordid gain, or preoccupied with amassing material things.
- *Manage Own Household* - Elders must have a well-ordered household and a healthy family life.
- *Not A New Convert/Not A New Believer* - Elders must not be new believers. They must have been a Christian long enough to demonstrate the reality of their conversion and depth of spirituality.
- *Good Reputation With Outsiders* - Elders must be well-respected by unbelievers and free from hypocrisy.
- *Not Self-Willed* - Elders must not be stubborn, prone to forcing their opinions on others or abusing authority. They must be servant-minded.
- *Loving What Is Good* - Elders must desire the will of God in every decision.
- *Just* - Elders must desire to be fair and impartial. Their judgments must be based on scriptural principles.
- *Devout* - Elders must be devoted Christ followers, seeking to be conformed to His image. They must be committed to prayer, worship, the study of Scripture, and the guarding of their spiritual walk.
- *Holding Fast The Faithful Word*—Elders must be stable in the faith, obedient to the Word of God, and continually seeking to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

COMPETENCE: Defined as specific, Holy Spirit-endowed gifts and abilities, combined with skills acquired through training and life experience.

CHEMISTRY: The intangible quality of being able to “fit” within the existing team. The ability to blend into and enrich the current circle of community and relational harmony within the team.

COURAGE: The ability, when needed, to enter into difficult exchanges and defend the faith, the church, and individuals in ways that preserve and maintain the community. The ability to speak the truth in love without destructive results.

CALLING: The ability to sense God’s calling on one’s life for a particular season of service to the body of Christ: “I think God is in this.”

5.0 ESSENTIAL SKILLSET OF ELDERS

Spiritual leaders, in order to be effective, require a set of skills that enable them to effectively carry out the following:

- ☐ Able to keep confidential information
- ☐ Able to communicate sound doctrine
- ☐ Excellent interpersonal skills
- ☐ Excellent communication skills
- ☐ Team player
- ☐ Humility
- ☐ Conflict-resolution skills
- ☐ Spiritual maturity

5.1 ABLE TO TEACH

The church is built on Scripture and those who oversee the community of believers must be able to guide and protect its members by instruction from Scripture. Therefore all Elders must be able to teach, which entails three basic elements; knowledge of Scripture, readiness to teach and capability to communicate. Elders must be able to open their Bibles and instruct others.

This requirement is not the same as having the “gift” of teaching (*Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4: 11*), nor does it have anything to do with preaching. (Some, but not all, Elders will have the “gift” of teaching as is emphasized in *1 Timothy 5:17-18*.)

This qualification specifically relates to the Elders’ ability to understand the Word and clearly and effectively communicate it to others.

6.0 ELDER PREREQUISITES

Coastal Community Church Elders are recommended by the congregation and undergo a robust screening and interview process before they are eligible for appointment to the Elder team.

Before recommendation, the following prerequisites should be considered:

- ☐ Elders must be participating members of Coastal.
 - ☐ Membership at Coastal consists of:
 - Being a sincere follower of Jesus Christ
 - Believers baptism by immersion
 - A graduate of #101 membership class
 - Agreement with church covenant
- ☐ Must meet scripture qualifications for elders.
- ☐ Must have capacity, flexibility and availability to serve in the Elder role.
- ☐ Active in life group.
- ☐ A demonstration of leadership gifting and an ability to function in this role in our church.

7.0 ELDER EXPECTATIONS

- ☐ Understanding of and a passion for Coastal's statement of faith, core values and structure of ministry with an ability to explain\defend each.
- ☐ Protect the church family.
- ☐ Active participation during weekend services
- ☐ Service in keeping with spiritual gifts
- ☐ Demonstrating growth in financial stewardship by regularly contributing to the ministry of the church with your tithe and offerings.
- ☐ Active participation and attendance at monthly Elder Team meetings and other meetings deemed necessary.
- ☐ Ability to keep confidences and practice discretion.
- ☐ Modeling spiritual health and growing spiritually

8.0 TIME COMMITMENT FOR ELDERS

The time requirement varies greatly month to month, but the minimum includes monthly meetings, annual retreat, and committee responsibilities. Examples of time requirements:

- ☐ Elders' meeting—one per month.
- ☐ Elders' retreat—one weekend per year .
- ☐ Four to six hours (on average) per month for review of Elder Team materials, policies, correspondence, meeting preparation, and team conference calls.
- ☐ In addition to the regular Elders' meeting, committee responsibilities may require additional hours each month, depending on the committee's requirements.
- ☐ If serious issues arise that require immediate attention by the Elder Team, additional hours may be required outside of regular Elders' meetings. (This happens infrequently, but is a possibility.)

9.0 AT COASTAL OUR ELDERS:

The Elders, including the Lead Pastor, are tasked with the management and evaluation of existing ministries. They continually monitor the teaching ministry of the church. In collaboration with the Advisory Team, and staff they:

- ☐ Lead strategically and navigate crisis.
- ☐ Carry the ultimate responsibility and authority to see that the church remains on a true biblical course.
- ☐ Ensure members are being appropriately shepherded, and that the body is being fed through insightful and accurate biblical teaching.
- ☐ Safeguard the church as being well managed with the assistance of competent and godly leaders.
- ☐ Guard the body of Christ against harmful influences, confronting those who are contradicting biblical truth or continuing in a pattern of sinful behavior.
- ☐ Shepherd the church by being an example and role model.
- ☐ Care about the spiritual and physical well-being of members; pray regularly for the sick.

9.1 SPECIFIC DUTIES

The Elders of Coastal are responsible for the following, but may delegate to other qualified persons in the body of the church, so these duties are carried out effectively and timely.

Provide Spiritual Oversight

- ☐ Confront false teaching and behavior inconsistent to biblical truth.
- ☐ Facilitate the stages of conflict resolution and implement appropriate church discipline as necessary
- ☐ Implement and monitor compliance with Elder Team policy

Shepherd the Flock

- ☐ Participate (as needed) in a biblical process of conflict resolution outlined by Jesus in *Matthew 18*
- ☐ Direct people into appropriate processes for guidance, assistance, and problem resolution.
- ☐ On-going assessment of our mission effectiveness.
- ☐ Encourage the staff and ministries of Coastal.

Manage the Church

- ☐ Affirm the annual budget
- ☐ Approve Policy
- ☐ Bylaw changes and management
- ☐ Encourage and conduct an annual review of the Lead pastor
- ☐ Work with the congregation to select new Elder Team members
- ☐ Recommend trustees
- ☐ Delegate to qualified assistants, staff, and/or outside experts as needed
- ☐ Manage situations where people, particularly participating members, are experiencing significant relational difficulties or moral failure
- ☐ Approve new ministries and staff positions when appropriate
- ☐ Oversee licensing and ordination process

10.0 COASTAL ELDER SELECTION PROCESS

Coastal Community Church Elders are recommended by the congregation and undergo a robust screening and interview process before they are eligible for appointment to the Elder team. Accepting the volunteer role of Elder is not something to be taken lightly; Elders make extensive time commitments and take on deep spiritual responsibility in leading, and we are grateful for their selfless service on our behalf.

Scripture gives evidence of the first elders being appointed by the founders of the church.

By this example, it is implied that the existing spiritual leadership of a church should be intimately involved in the process of selecting elders to ensure selection based on spiritual rather than superficial qualifications.

Therefore, the following protocol is followed in the selection of Elders for Coastal Community Church:

- ☐ Members of the church bring potential candidates to the attention of the Elder Team.
- ☐ The nomination is investigated and voted upon by the Elder Team.
- ☐ After current elders prayerfully nominate potential elder candidates, the name(s) of said candidate(s) are published to the Church body 30 days prior to the anticipated date of installation. During this 30-day period, members are provided with the opportunity to comment regarding the nomination.
- ☐ After the 30-day period has elapsed, the Elder Team meets to review all comments and make a final decision regarding whether to move forward with the installation process.

10.1 Considerations in Selection

The primary consideration for selecting Elders should be the person's character, capability and chemistry with the rest of the Elder Team.

Character – continuing to strive for and exemplifying the characteristics described in the Elder qualification criteria.

Attendance – faithfully attends Sunday worship and life group studies.

Giving – a faithful, unashamed, tither to the work of Coastal Community Church.

A secondary consideration should be to find an appropriate representation of Elders from each site\location\campus.

10.2 Term of Elders

Since Scripture indicates no fixed term for Elders, each church should be free to assign terms as seems right to that particular body. Coastal asks that, in the absence of extenuating circumstances, its elders to serve a minimum three-year term after which the current Elder Team will evaluate the status and advisability of continued service.

10.3 Resignation from Elder Team Service

Individuals who believe they are called to commit to Eldership should prayerfully consider the depth of commitment in time, emotion, resources, and dedication that is required of Elders. These individuals are strongly encouraged to examine their lives to determine if such a commitment is compatible with their ability to serve fully and effectively.

Once selected and ordained, Elders are expected to make every effort to fulfill a minimum three year term of service. However, because Coastal Community Church values its people; we recognize that our leaders have responsibilities and life experiences outside of and sometimes separate from their church ministries and that life circumstances change. We understand that there are occasions when life demands, illness, stress, and/or other personal issues outside of an individual's control may interrupt his or her ability to fulfill a heartfelt commitment.

In the event that an Elder believes he or she is unable to fulfill his or her term of service, that Elder will confer with the Chief Elder or designee for prayerful counsel to attempt to resolve the conflict. If the conflict cannot be resolved and the Elder decides to resign from the Elder Team, the resignation will be accepted in the spirit of support and care, with focus on helping the resigning Elder seek God's direction for the next phase of his or her life and ministry.

10.4 Termination from Eldership Position

The Elder Team may terminate an individual from his or her Eldership position in the church when, in the considered judgment of the Elder Team, the Elder's life and conduct, behavior, expressed thoughts, or actions severely and negatively hinders the ability of the Elder Team and the church to act as a positive and living witness of Jesus Christ.

Any circumstances that render an Elder unable to function appropriately will be cause for termination. If a spiritual disharmony occurs, action will be in accordance with the biblical discipline outlined in *Matthew 18*. Reasons for dismissal could include, but are not limited to; heresy, neglect of duty, unrepentant sin, divisiveness, or unfulfilled duties (*1Timothy 5:17-21*).

This action is not taken lightly, and is followed only as a very last resort, and only under the discretion of the Elder Team after a thorough investigation, a sincere and active effort to bring about reconciliation and restoration of the Elder, and prayerful consideration of the consequences to the Elder and to the church.

Termination of a Church Elder from the Elder Team shall require the vote of a minimum of two-thirds (2/3) of the remaining Elder Team members. The Elder under investigation will not cast a vote. Procedures for the dismissal of an Elder shall be according to *Matthew 18:16-17*.

11.0 THE SELECTION OF THE LEAD PASTOR

In the event of vacancy in the office of Lead Pastor, the Elders shall be responsible to conduct a search for candidates to fill the position. Once the Elders have selected a candidate, that candidate shall be presented to the Leadership Team and ultimately to the participating members of the body for ratification by vote.

12.0 GENDER ISSUES IN CHURCH LEADERSHIP

The Leadership of Coastal Community Church spent several years formulating the Constitution and By Laws of the church. The process included diligent study, prayer, reflection, consultation, and discussion. During the proceedings, we reached the conclusion not to exclude women from serving on the governing body based solely on gender.

Many Christian churches exclude women from their governing bodies. Those bodies determine the teaching and policies of the church, administer church discipline, and provide accountability for the staff. Though we have substantial respect for this position, we do not find the whole witness and testimony of Scripture sufficiently consistent with the position of male-only governance. Therefore, we felt it unwarranted to exclude women gifted with leadership from serving as a part of the governing body of the church.

12.1 Scriptural Bases For This Conclusion

- ☐ We believe our position is consistent with the following Scriptures:
- ☐ Women in the New Testament church were leaders serving as prophets (*Acts 21:9*), teachers (*Acts 18:26*), ministers (*Romans 16:1-3*), leaders in worship services (*I Corinthians 11:4-5*) and co-workers with the Apostle Paul (*Philippians 4:2-3*);
- ☐ The Holy Spirit empowers both men and women, young and old to speak for God (*Acts 2:17-18*);
- ☐ Men and women are equal recipients of God's gifts (*I Peter 3:7*);
- ☐ In Christ all people, male and female, are to be submissive to one another and to serve one another in reciprocal love and obedience to Jesus (*Ephesians 5:21*; *Philippians 2:3-4*; *Galatians 5:13*);
- ☐ In the Old Testament a woman was appointed by God to be the principal leader of the nation of Israel (*Judges 4-5*).

We believe these passages suggest that no person be disqualified from service in the body of Christ based solely on gender. Moreover, we believe the Bible teaches (and the leadership history of our church supports) that men and women are full partners in ministry in the kingdom of God. Giftedness by the Holy Spirit is the primary basis of qualification for ministry (*Romans 12:1-8*; *I Corinthians 12 & 14*; *Ephesians 4:1-16*; *I Peter 4:10-11*).

12.2 Response To Other Interpretations Of Scripture

Though we base our conclusion on Scripture, we acknowledge that there are other views based on biblical texts that need to be addressed. In *I Timothy 2:11-15*, Paul says, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent" (NIV). We do not hold that this verse prohibits women from leadership but rather prohibits a certain ungodly way of exercising leadership that was prevalent in the specific church Paul was addressing at that time. In respect to this text as it applies to governance, no person, male or female, who is part of the governing body of the church will bear any authority as an individual over any other individual: the authority of the governing body will not be vested in individuals but only in the body as a group of servants dedicated to the good of the church. We will strive to prevent any practice or perception of any person serving on the governing body as having authority in and of himself or herself: leaders are the servants of the ones they lead (*Mark 10:42-45*).

Furthermore, some would question if the husband was head of his wife if she served on the governing body of his church and he did not (*I Corinthians 11:3*; *Ephesians 5:22*). We assert that the overarching principle of submission in the New Testament is one of mutual submission among believers (*Ephesians 5:21*) and not primarily of women's submission to men. We respect that others may interpret this scripture differently. However, since no individual on our governing body bears any individual authority over anyone in the church, the wife in this case cannot be said to "not be in submission to her husband."

We hold the list of qualifications for Elders found in *I Timothy 3* and *Titus 1* (which to some seem to qualify only males for eldership) to be inclusive and neither exhaustive nor prohibitive. A purely literal interpretation of these passages would not only exclude women from eldership, it would also exclude all men except those currently married and who have children. This interpretation of these passages would not seem to be consistent with the whole testimony of Scripture on the issues of gender, marriage, and spiritual maturity (*I Cor. 7:32-35*; *Matt. 16:24 & 19:12*; *I Cor. 12*; *Rom. 12*).

12.3 Concluding Remarks On Scriptural Concerns

Through prayer, study of scripture, review of the works of respected Bible scholars, and discussion; we decided to follow the Scriptural view we found most consistent with the whole teaching of the Bible about God's way of building His kingdom. We concluded that excluding women from serving on the governing body of our church could limit how God wants to do His work in our church. Therefore, in the absence of a clear scriptural mandate to exclude women from this form of service, we have chosen the less restrictive view so that God's Spirit may not be hindered in selecting gifted leadership in our church.

12.4 Our Intention

By our position, we do not intend to identify our church with any churches or Christian leaders who have come to similar conclusions. Our only goal is to be responsive to God's call for our church to be the body He has called us to be. We have prayerfully sought His wisdom on the matter of women in leadership so that we would do nothing that could possibly hinder God's work in our church. We respect those who disagree with our position and we seek to be sensitive to them. It is our hope and prayer that this will not become a divisive issue. We are committed to remaining focused on the primary mission of our church: "To make more and better followers of Christ and Christ following churches."

13.0 CHURCH MINISTRIES

Coastal Community Church sponsors and executes various ministries in the pursuit of making more and better followers of Christ. Infused throughout our different ministry expressions are the core values upon which they are built. The Elders maintain a role of encouragement and support of our ministries. It is imperative that Elders have an understanding of how we enable ministry at Coastal.

13.1 Ministry values

The Bible's Foundation

We believe that God's Word, when taught in a clear, accurate and relevant manner, provides power for salvation and strength for today's living. (*2 Timothy 3:16-17; James 1:22; Matthew 4:4*)

The Love of Jesus

We are regularly overwhelmed by the intimate love God has for us through Jesus Christ. Therefore, we value encouraging God's people to express their appreciation and love to Jesus by coming together as a group to worship Him and through private devotions. (*Matthew 22:37; Psalms 34:1, 3*)

The Family's Health

In our 21st century post-Christian society, families face challenges that threaten to overwhelm them. We are therefore determined to create a "family-friendly" environment in the church, build healthy families and have strategies for strengthening our families as part of our ongoing ministry. (*Ephesians 3:14-16*)

The Gospel's Relevance

Every person deserves to have the Good News of Christ communicated in a way that they can clearly understand and relate to. That communication includes relevant language, culture and music. While the message never changes, the methods must adapt in every generation. Therefore, we are determined to learn how to live out our faith in a culturally relevant way, while building bridges of communication to society for Christ. (*1 Corinthians 9:22-23; Acts 2:11*)

The Holy Spirit's Empowerment

God's Spirit provides the believer with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. Adopting this value causes us to deliberately carve time into our busy schedules for two-way communication with God (prayer and Bible study), and learn how to walk in obedience with Him. (*Matthew 6:33; John 5:17, 19; John 15:5*)

The Leader's Creativity

Creativity and change is needed in every Christian generation as it asks the question, "How can we best capture and express what God is doing in the context of the culture of our day"? We are determined to reward creativity and accept the risk that goes with it in order to allow ministry leaders to fearlessly and responsibly pursue new methods for bringing people to Christ. (*Luke 5:37-38*)

The Member's Flexibility

We believe that all members have the obligation to remember that our primary mission is to bring unbelievers to Christ. To this end, we may be called on to give up convenient parking spaces, the best seating, available bulletins, and in general, our comfort, in order to give precedence to nonmembers and seekers. (*Rom 15:1-3, I Cor. 9:19-23*)

The Christian's Excellence

Excellence honors God and inspires people. Too often, Christians are satisfied with doing the "acceptable minimum" when it comes to their service for God. The Lord deserves our best. Therefore, we are determined to raise the standard of excellence in our worship and service to God. (*Colossians 3:23*)

The Body's Growth

Our desire is to work with God to build a consistently healthy church that is growing both spiritually and numerically. This commitment means that we will regularly celebrate God's legitimate growth in the church and will encourage the pursuit of methods and policies that will facilitate that growth on all levels.

(1 Corinthians 3:6-7; 2 Corinthians 5:19-20; Jonah 4:10-11; Luke 14:23)

The Church's Multiplication

Since the early church (as evidenced in the book of Acts), the single most effective evangelistic methodology is planting new churches. Therefore, we are determined to encourage and pursue the development of new congregations via the multi-site church model and to support new congregations as the Holy Spirit leads. (Matthew 16:18; Acts 13:1-3; Acts 14:21-23)

14.0 METHODS OF MINISTRY

At Coastal we function with certain "Assumptions of Ministry". As Elders it is important to understand and support these assumptions as we pray for discernment in the growing of God's Kingdom.

All believers are responsible to be a witness in their faith and walk with Christ.

(II Corinthians 5:20) Every believer is accountable to reach out to others and share with them the need we all have for a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ. We mobilize these believers' evangelism efforts by providing a service designed to communicate the message of Christ with relevance, creativity, and contemporary style.

Needs of Seekers and Believers

The needs of the seeker differ from the needs of the believer. (I Cor. 9:19-23; Acts 15:5-21;17) Individuals who have not made a commitment to Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord may not understand Christian terminology and traditional customs, and may be reluctant to attend a service that seems non-relevant to them. Coastal Community Church is committed to communicating the truth of the Gospel in ways way seekers will understand and appreciate.

Recognizing that the needs of the believer must be met as well, Coastal Community Church is dedicated to encouraging, edifying, and equipping the believer for service. We are committed to the believer's continual growth toward spiritual maturity for the purpose of leadership development and for ministry to the seeker and fellow believers.

Spiritual Development and Maturity

Believers must recognize that spiritual development is a process that leads to a commitment to Jesus and continues toward spiritual maturity. (Romans14:1;15:1) Theologically, it is recognized that there is a moment in time when an individual is born into the family of God through a commitment to the person and work of Jesus Christ. Practically, however, this event occurs during a process of examining, considering, evaluating, and weighing the costs of the Christian faith. Therefore, Coastal Community Church is not event-oriented: Conversion is not the end process, but rather the point on the journey between separation from God and maturity in faith. It is our task to point all people toward Jesus Christ as they navigate the maturing process.

Growth through Relationship

Loving relationships are the best context for spiritual development. (Ephesians 4:15-16; Hebrews 10:24-25) Spiritual growth, like emotional and mental growth, does not take place in a vacuum; it is fostered and enhanced by interaction in loving relationships. God created us to thrive in community. Being in a small group of caring people opens up a dimension of growth that cannot take place individually or in a large group. It is within the context of these "Life" groups that seekers may make a commitment to Jesus Christ, and believers can realize spiritual depth and maturity. For both the believer and the seeker, being in a "Life" group is extremely important for spiritual development.

Believers as Ministers

Every believer is a minister, gifted by God for the benefit of the church. (I Corinthians 12:12-31; 14:12) Every believer is gifted by God to be a vital part of the equipping and maturing of the body of Christ. Coastal Community Church strives to mobilize the body for service and ministry. This is accomplished by challenging people to become servants and servant-leaders through discovery, development, and implementation of their spiritual gifts.