RULING ELDERS

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PRESBYTERIAN POLITY (CHURCH GOVERNANCE)

- Representative leadership elected by the people
 - Not "Congregational" the entire community makes decisions
 - Not "Episcopal" the single appointed leaders makes the decisions
 - But "Presbyterian" the elected commissioners make the decisions

THERE IS NO "I" IN CHURCH

- Ministry to Jesus Christ is a team effort
- Jesus always sends disciples in groups; never alone
- Presbyterian Christians model this understanding by recognizing that GOD CALLS ALL PEOPLE TO FAITH, LIFE, AND SERVICE
 - Baptism is universal ordination "Priesthood of Believers"
 - God calls us to FUNCTION not STATUS and God gives us
 - \succ innate gifts for the ministry,
 - > the ability to develop new gifts as needed, and
 - Charges us to recognize and actualize the gifts of others in Christ's service



Spiritual leadership is not an occupation... it is a calling.

WORSHIPFUL WORK



- Approach the session table as a communion table. What would this look like?
- Engage in worship and prayer/praying for one another & the congregation.
- Engage in spiritual discernment.
- Speak and act as one.
- Invite, equip and engage the people in ministry.
- Lead with compassion, devotion & humility
- What else?



FUNCTION OF THE RULING ELDER

...the New Testament church provided persons with particular gifts to share in **discernment of God's Spirit** and **governance of God's people**... Ruling elders are so named <u>not</u> because they "lord it over" the congregation (Matt. 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation **to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God**, **and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life**. Ruling elders, together with teaching elders, exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation as well as the whole church... (G-2.0301)

SPEAK, LORD. Your servant is listening

I SAMUEL 3:9



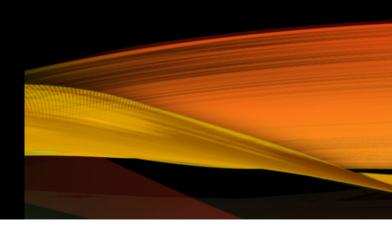
DISCERNMENT

WITH WHICH DEFINITION OF "DISCERNMENT" DO YOU MOST RESONATE?

- To separate or distinguish
- To test in crisis or to distinguish good and evil
- To find the authentic and valuable and to recognize the counterfeit
- To see to the heart of the matter with spiritual eyes, from God's vantage point
- To be able to see the trees in the forest
- To possess immediate and direct insight



GOVERNANCE



SESSION'S RESPONSIBILITIES & DUTIES TO THE CONGREGATION

Provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard Provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received

Nurture the covenant community of disciples of Christ

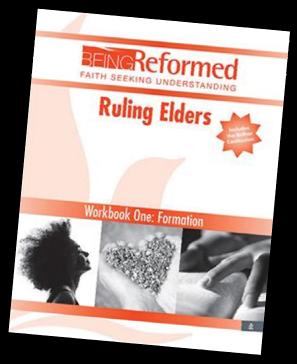
CONGREGATION'S UNIQUE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



Electing	Electing, ordaining & installing ruling elders, deacons, and trustees
Calling	calling a pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor
Changing	changing existing pastoral relationships
Buying, mortgaging , or selling	buying, mortgaging, or selling real property
Requesting	requesting the presbytery to grant an exemption on ruling elder terms of service
Approving, amending, or dissolving	approving, amending, or dissolving a joint congregational witness

SESSION'S RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO OTHER COUNCILS

Elect	elect, as a commissioner to presbytery, ruling elders from the congregation, preferably for at least a year, and hear their reports
Nominate	nominate to presbytery ruling elders and other members to serve in higher councils of the church
See	see that the guidance and communication of presbytery, synod, and General Assembly are considered, and that any binding actions are observed and carried out
Welcome	welcome representative of presbytery on the occasions of their visits
Propose	propose such measures (policy, procedures, overtures) to presbytery, synod and General Assembly
Send	send to presbytery and General Assembly requested statistics





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