

Hope Chapel Leadership

The following is a brief outline of the leadership structure at Hope Chapel. Over the years we have become increasingly convinced that a plurality of Elders best describes the New Testament model. In no way do we feel this is the only model or a superior model but it is what we believe appropriately fits this body. Sometimes we refer to it as balanced leadership where each Elder is co-equal in authority but unique in gifting.

A plurality of leaders has its own inherent value as a system of checks and balances. It is a practical way to submit to one another, care for one another, and bear one another's burdens. It also evens out the workload in accordance with 1Cor 12 and Rom 12; there's less chance for burnout because one person isn't shouldering all or most of the responsibility.

Furthermore, a plurality of leadership facilitates organic growth. When the time comes for the church to multiply by planting another church body, there are ruling elders ready to lead the new body who are known by the church, experienced in their leadership, and qualified to teach. Paul sent established elders into the new churches to organize them and to appoint other elders before they moved on, as with Titus at Crete (*Titus 1:5*).

We hope this leadership model reflects the loving equality that existed between the apostles, with Christ as Head over all, and with each striving to be servant of all. The following scriptures are the basis for Eldership in Hope Chapel and we hope this serves to give a broad understanding of how leadership functions at Hope Chapel.

The Head of the Church

Jesus Christ is the head of the church from which our church leadership derives its authority and submits to His will. We believe all ministry begins here and therefore our structure of Eldership keeps the priority of Christ in full view. (*John 10:16; Eph 1:22; Col 1:18; Heb 4:14; 1Pet. 2:6*)

Basis for Eldership in the N.T.

The N.T. clearly points out when it comes to leadership that pastoral oversight is by a council of Elders. In other words a plurality of leadership is the biblical model.

- Elders are found in the churches of Judea and surrounding area. (*Acts 11:30; James 5:14, 15*)
- Elders governed the church in Jerusalem (*Acts 15 & 21*)
- A plurality of Elders was established in the Pauline churches
In Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Antioch (*Acts 14:20-23*); in the church of Ephesus (*Acts 20:17; 1Tim. 3:1-7; 5:17-25*) in the church in Philippi (*Phil. 1:1*); and in the churches on the Island of Crete (*Titus 1:5*)
- According to the letter of 1Peter, elders existed in the churches of northwestern Asia Minor: Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia (*1 Peter 5:1*)

Qualifications for Elder

We believe that the local church is to be led or governed by a group of elders. These are men, who qualify according to the biblical standard for elders/overseers/pastors (*Acts 14:23, 20:17,28; Eph. 4:11; Titus 1:5; 1 Pet. 5:1-4*). These men are also biblically qualified based on 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

Decision Making

The Elders of Hope Chapel act jointly as a council and equally share the responsibility for the leadership of the church to include decisions on spiritual matters of doctrine, practice, and essential policy within the church. It is not their job to determine their own will, or the will of the people, but the will of the Lord. Decisions are reached by unanimity, not majority, where we believe the mind of the Lord is best manifested.