**Eldership and Governance in CFC**

In the New Testament there are few specific details of how leadership meetings were conducted or of how Elders were selected and chosen.

What is clear is that Elders were required to provide godly leadership and were called and equipped by God to lead and care for the Church.

**The role of the Elders in protecting Vision, Values and Beliefs**

There are three main responsibilities;

1. *To give protection*.

* Oversee and provide spiritual oversight for the church.
* Protect from false teachers.
* Be responsible for the spiritual diet of the church.
* Lay their lives down for the flock.
* Confront difficult situations with a view to helping those in distress and help members of the church to fulfil their God given destiny.
* Their utmost concern is the well being of every member.

1. *To give direction.*

* Discern the vision and direction of the church - “where is the Lord leading us as a church?”.
* Encourage and empower every member to be actively engaged in contributing to and fulfilling the vision.
* Elders are servant leaders, not rulers or dictators and will be required to give an account to the Lord.

1. *To give correction*.

* Elders bring correction when necessary, seeking to guide people to live holy lives and to see redemption and restoration wherever possible.

In the New Testament it is clear that the Elders demonstrated servant hearts, leading as humble examples of Christian living. They aimed to provide loving oversight for a congregation and encourage everyone to become active ministers of the New Covenant.

The eldership model is notautocratic rule (with little if any regard for the input of others), but neither is it democratic rule when decisions are made by popular or majority vote.

It seeks to model theocratic rule in which Elders are called by the Holy Spirit to serve in the local Church. In this context wise eldership teams will rule by listening to God, His word and wise counsel. They do not dictate what the congregation should do but instead appeal to them to faithfully follow God’s word.

**Governance and Leadership**

The privilege and responsibility of the Great Commission (Matthew 28) is to ‘make disciples’, individuals who are created in the image of God, who have had a life changing encounter with the risen Christ, who are filled with the Holy Spirit and who are walking in good relationship with the body of Christ, the church.

In this regard the Eldership recognise and honour the fivefold ministry as articulated in Ephesians 4.

**Ephesians 4: 11-13**

‘So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip His people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.’

The Eldership recognise that no one individual is equipped or called to fulfil all elements of this ministry and the strength of the Eldership team is expressed in the diversity of gifting and in the recognition and releasing of these gifts and ministries in others throughout the church.

Whilst the Elders carry ultimate responsibility for the vision and the direction of the church, they are not called to lead in isolation and the effective ‘equipping of the body’ requires the raising up and releasing of leadership at every level and in every ministry throughout the church body, including both staff and volunteers.

In this regard the language of Governance and Leadership may be helpful.

Whilst the Elders carry ultimate responsibility for the Governance of the church (protecting, directing and correcting) their responsibility in Leadership is both to lead and also to raise up and release leadership throughout the body.

**Selection of Elders in CFC**

* The first step is for the individual to know that God has called them to serve.
* They have exhibited the qualifications in their own lives (Titus1:6-8, 1Tim 3:1-7, Acts 20:28).
* The existing Eldership and the congregation recognise the work they are doing.
* They must be willing to serve and be confirmed by the Elders and the Church.

The appointment of an Elder should be discerned through prayer and listening to the Lord. Wise Elders listen to what God is saying through the team of elders and through the Church.

We have considered the question of staff [full or part time employees] also being on the Eldership. We believe there should be a balance on this issue for the sake of continuity and communication between the staff and Eldership.

While we do not have a democratic rule in CFC, it is impossible to lead without the support and respect of the majority of the church. While we do not vote on who is in the eldership, if a significant number of people were not supportive of a proposed appointment we would not proceed with the appointment.

We are careful that with any addition to the eldership, we as Elders have sought to do everything we can to discern the mind of the Lord and the Church.

**How are decisions reached in the eldership team?**

When making decisions regarding minor issues, some Elders may have no strong opinion on the matter and in such cases we defer to one another. With regard to more important issues, Elders defer to the collective mind of the team and seek to ‘find’ the mind of God in the context of the meeting, conversation and prayer.

The guiding example here is James’ letter to the Gentiles in Acts 15:28, when after much discussion he wrote ‘it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us…’

We do not vote, however on some issues where the Elders feel it is essential we have complete and absolute unanimity, we hold off making the decision and pray through the matter until we have consensus, recognising the spiritual significance of unity.