

Frequently Asked Questions

ABOUT OFFICER NOMINATION

Why should I participate?

One of the membership vows taken when joining the church includes the promise that you will “support the church in its worship and work to the best of your ability.” Participating in officer nominations and elections is one of the most important ways that you can support the work of Faith. The future direction of our church depends largely upon the leadership God selects through his people.

What are the qualifications for elders and deacons?

Summaries of the character qualifications for elders and deacons can be found in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1:6-9. Acts 6 contains the story of how and why the early church appointed seven men to care for widows, and it is an excellent resource for understanding what qualifications deacons should possess.

Elders and deacons should be men who are:

- worthy of respect and generous.
- if married, managing their families well.
- peacemakers and those who honor truth.
- Spirit-filled and wise.
- hospitable and committed to caring for those in need.
- holding firmly to God’s Word and the deep truths of the faith.
- (if elders) able to teach.

Why are only men allowed to serve as elders and deacons?

Our church and our denomination reserves the offices of elder and deacon for qualified men because we believe this is the teaching of Scripture. The particular responsibilities of authoritative teaching and leadership are to be filled not by all men, but by those men God has called and gifted to sacrificially serve his church (see 1 Tim. 2:11-14, 1 Tim. 3, and 1 Cor. 14:34-35).

This teaching in no way implies that women are inferior to men, or that they are not also called to serve Christ and his church in many important ways. In particular, the Bible makes clear that women are to be partners in the diaconal ministries of mercy and service (see Rom. 16:1-2 and Luke 8:2-3), and therefore our church has many women on the Missions committee, serving our church’s widows, and various other mission works both locally and globally. Women are also called and gifted by the Holy Spirit to teach, pray, evangelize, supervise, and disciple in accordance with the guidelines given in Scripture.

We strongly encourage every member of our church to use their gifts at Faith, and we are thankful for all of the non-ordained people in this congregation, men and women alike, who are serving in so many different ministries here. We are all members of one body, brothers and sisters in Christ, working together to serve our King.

What are the differences between the responsibilities and roles of elders and deacons?

Elders provide overall governance and leadership to the church. They have the responsibility of watching diligently over the flock committed to their charge and making sure that neither doctrine (what is taught in the church) nor morals are corrupted. They are to minister to the members of the congregation, especially the hurting and sick, and to set a worthy example by their zeal to evangelize unbelievers and to make disciples.

Deacons lead in ministries of service, particularly to those in need. They also help give direction in the use of the church's finances, overseeing the upkeep of the building and grounds, and maintaining order on Sunday mornings. In the discharge of their duties, the deacons are under the supervision and authority of the Session.

Are elders supposed to be older men and deacons younger men?

While many older men do serve as elders and many younger men serve as deacons, the qualifications for each office are not necessarily dependent on age. There are older men with gifts of mercy and service who are called to be deacons, and there are younger men with gifts of teaching and leadership who are called to be elders. Deacons are not "junior varsity elders." Elders and deacons are two distinct offices, each with its own calling.

What type of training is required for those who accept a nomination for the office of elder or deacon?

Each candidate who accepts a nomination must go through six weeks of officer training on Sunday evenings in January and February. This training includes the roles of the offices of elder and deacon, Faith's mission, vision, and philosophy of ministry, our church government, and Bible content. Candidates must have also gone through the Theological Foundations class that is offered each fall. After completing this training, each candidate is required to pass a written exam on all the above. The Session then examines them on all these matters as well as their walk with Christ, their family life, and call to the office for which they are being considered.

