

Officer Training



Emmanuel Presbyterian Church

Church Government (Polity)

Definitions of The Church

- Visible Church

- Invisible Church

What are the Marks of the Church?

- Preaching of the Word
- Sacraments - Acts 2:42
- Church Discipline - Matt. 18:15-20

Three Forms
Church
Government

Issue	Model:	“Episcopal”	“Presbyterian”	“Congregational”
Installation & Ordination of Ministers		Bishop Calls Bishop Ordains	Congregation Calls; regional elders & pastors ordain	Congregation calls; congregation ordains
Membership & Excommunication		Bishop > Priest Priest > Member	Regional elders & pastors > Local pastor Local elders & pastors > members	Congregation > pastor Congregation > member
Power of Larger Councils		Authoritative	Constitutionally authoritative; other matters advisory	All Advisory
Theory of Church Power		Oligarchy "Top Down" from pope or bishops	Republic Elected elders & pastors rule by their conscience	Democracy “Bottom Up” from members
Exercise of Power		Bishops exercise power	Elders & pastors exercise power	Members exercise power

Presbyterian Polity

Presbyterian Structure

General Assembly

**Regional
Presbytery**

**Regional
Presbytery**

**Regional
Presbytery**

**Local
Church
Session**

**Local
Church
Session**

**Local
Church
Session**

**Local
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**Local
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Offices of The Church

- Pastors

- Elders

- Deacons & Deaconesses

Pastors

Pastors

- The pastor is a prophetic (teaching) office of Word and Sacrament.
- This role is open to men only.
- www.emmanuelcedarpark.church/sermon/womens-roles-in-the-worship-service-at-epc/)

Elders

Elders

- The elder is an office of authority. Elders set the course for the church.
- Elders oversee the teaching and doctrine of the church
- They admit, discipline, and remove members.
- They are accountable for the health and functioning of the church.

Elders

- Elders provide vision & servant leadership
- Elders shepherd the flock.
- Elders must be compassionate in their care for others.
- This office is open only to men.
- Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 5:1-4, 1 Tim. 5:17

Deacons &
Deaconesses

Key Passages

- Acts 6:1-6

- 1 Tim. 3:1-13

- Note: 3:11 - "Their wives"

- Lit. "Women"

• The Diaconate is a group of men & women who come alongside the session to help serve the congregation of the church. The model for our Diaconate comes from Acts 6, where deacons were appointed to serve the congregation to allow the apostles to focus on their work of prayer and ministry of the word. This is similar to the advice Jethro gave to Moses in Exodus 18. Jethro told Moses to appoint others to help him with his work. This work is too much for the Session to try to do by themselves; thus, the work needs to be shared. This sharing frees up the Session to focus on their work of the overall shepherding of the church.

Key Passages

- Acts 6:1-6

- 1 Tim. 3:1-13

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On Deaconesses

- We believe it is Biblical to have deaconesses
- Technically they are NOT officers
- They are nominated & elected by the congregation
- But formally they are appointed by the Session as Diaconal Assistants (BCO 9-7)
- www.emmanuelcedarpark.church/blog/from-the-pastor/should-there-be-deaconesses-at-epc/

Deacon Job Description

- Pastoral Care & Leadership. The diaconate helps to provide a wise and relational presence to men & women in the congregation in need of pastoral care & assistance. This involves walking with people in both normal life and crisis situations in order to help them take steps of faithfulness and wholeness. In addition to providing care themselves, deacons help connect people with various resources (money, counseling, education, medical care, etc.) and people (community groups and individuals in the congregation).

Deacon Job Description

- Deacons provide valuable care & help in the following types of situations:
 - Acute crises: marital strife/separation/divorce, hospitalization, job loss, family death, etc.
 - Chronic struggles: failing health, mental illness, substance abuse, infertility, loneliness, unemployment/underemployment, etc.
 - Member care: help ensure that all members are being cared for & staying connected.

Deacon Job Description

- Benevolence. The Diaconate oversees the Deacons' Fund, which is set aside to help people who are facing financial challenges. Money from this fund goes to pay rent, utility bills, automotive repairs, counseling fees, etc. The deacons will meet with people both inside and outside of the congregation needing financial help, provide financial assistance, encouragement, and other resources, as appropriate

Deacon Job Description

- Administration. The Diaconate will assist both the Session and the staff with some of the administrative needs of the church. This includes areas like budget/finance, human resources, and facility oversight.

Officer Qualifications

- Calling: Calling is both inward and outward. A candidate should desire to serve and be recognized by others as possessing the gifts and graces necessary for the task.
- Character: Though no leader is expected to be perfect, they must be exemplary, modeling in a consistent way the character of Christ. 1 Tim. 3:1-13 & Titus 1:5-9 offer a useful summary of the character qualifications found in Scripture.

Officer Qualifications

- ◉ Competency: God calls elders, deacons, & deaconesses to serve in distinct and varying ways. A candidate should evidence the inclination and ability to fulfill that particular biblical role.
- ◉ Elder candidates should be able to equip & care for people spiritually and should know their way around the Bible & be able to teach it. They should be comfortable praying with people in need and should be good overseers.
- ◉ Deacon/deaconess candidates should demonstrate a practical & caring spirit, and be willing to serve & care for those in need.

Officer Qualifications

- Compatibility: Candidates need to understand and embrace the life and vision of EPC and be able to serve well alongside others.
- Comprehension: Candidates need to understand and accept Emmanuel's convictions about theology, worship, and church government. This involves commitment to the Bible's authority for faith and practice (individually and congregationally), to the Westminster Standards, to historical/liturgical worship on the Lord's Day, and to Presbyterian church government.

Reading

- The Book of Church Order of the PCA
- The Westminster Confession of Faith + Longer & Shorter Catechisms