

Article 12. Elder Body and Elder Board

12.1 Elder Body

The Elder Body consists of all the lay and staff elders called and selected to be an elder at FBCNB. A Pastor/Elder/Overseer (hereafter referenced as “Elder”) is a man *appointed (called) by God* to serve His Church (Acts 13:2 & 20:28; 1Peter 5:1-3). The church recognizes and acknowledges God’s selection.

- 12.1.1 God’s calling inspires a man to *aspire* to be an elder (1Timothy 3:1). They should exhibit a strong, Holy Spirit driven desire to shepherd, teach, care for, and feed the flock.
- 12.1.2 When a man aspires to the role of elder, the local church tests and affirms the individual. If found qualified, the church ordains him.
- 12.1.3 While pastor/elder/overseer is the same biblical office, functionally FBCNB differentiates a pastoral elder from a lay elder.
 - 12.1.3.1 Staff elders have day-to-day operational responsibilities within FBCNB and each pastoral role has a unique job description. Staff elder is typically a paid staff position.
 - 12.1.3.2 Lay elders typically have no operational responsibilities or FBCNB job description.
 - 12.1.3.3 The number of lay elders is a function of calling and qualifications. There shall be a minimum of 4 and no maximum number of lay elders in the Elder Body.

12.1.4 Purpose

An elder strives to glorify God through every aspect of their life (work, church, and private).

12.1.4.1 All elders glorify God through:

- 12.1.4.1.1 Modeling prayer and servant leadership
- 12.1.4.1.2 Spiritual oversight of our church

12.1.5 Qualifications.

The minimum qualifications for an Elder shall not be less than those listed in 1Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9 and 1Peter 5:1-4.

12.1.5.1 Ministry of the Word

An elder must be able to teach the Bible. He should be found to be capable in the following:

- 12.1.5.1.1 Skilled to teach the Bible and exhort in sound doctrine (1Timothy 3:2; Acts 20:20; Ephesians 4:11; Titus 1:9)
- 12.1.5.1.2 Able to silence rebellious men, empty talkers, and deceivers (Titus 1:10-11)
- 12.1.5.1.3 Able to refute those who contradict sound Biblical doctrine (Titus 1:9)

12.1.5.2 Christ-like character

An elder must provide an example of Christ-like character in life, speech, love, faith, and purity. (1Peter 5:1-3; 1Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:7-8) An elder must be above reproach, exhibiting the following characteristics:

- 12.1.5.2.1 upright and holy,
- 12.1.5.2.2 hospitable, caring for the flock,
- 12.1.5.2.3 disciplined, self-controlled
- 12.1.5.2.4 a husband of one wife, loyal and devoted to his wife,
- 12.1.5.2.5 manages his own household well,
- 12.1.5.2.6 beyond reproach as God’s steward, free from the love of money,
- 12.1.5.2.7 not arrogant,
- 12.1.5.2.8 not overindulging in wine/alcohol,
- 12.1.5.2.9 not a new convert,
- 12.1.5.2.10 having a good reputation with those outside the church

12.1.5.3 FBCNB requirements

- 12.1.5.3.1 An Elder must also fully adhere to and subscribe to FBCNB’s doctrinal position as stated in Article 3 of our Bylaws and our Membership Covenant.

- 12.1.5.3.2 Lay elder applicants must have served in God's Church for a minimum of 5 years with the most recent year being a member of, and serving at FBCNB.
 - 12.1.5.3.2.1 Serving as an active deacon and an active elder simultaneously is prohibited.
 - 12.1.5.3.2.2 No qualifications beyond those listed in the Bylaws shall be required.

12.1.6 Responsibilities

Per Acts 6:4, the primary responsibility of an elder is to be devoted to prayer and ministry of the Word.

12.1.6.1 Biblical fidelity

Ensures FBCNB's operations and ministries employ biblically correct theology and doctrine AND our staff (paid and volunteer) model a biblical worldview and lifestyle.

- 12.1.6.1.1 Accurately interpret and resolve disputes over the Bible for FBCNB (2Timothy 2:15; 1Thessalonians 2:4; 2Cor 4:2, 10:18)
- 12.1.6.1.2 Accurately teach and preach (1Timothy 3:2; 2Timothy 2:24; Titus 1:9)
- 12.1.6.1.3 Confront and refute incorrect doctrine
- 12.1.6.1.4 Ensure all ministry team leaders, teachers, and committee members are spiritually mature, as well as qualified.
- 12.1.6.1.5 Ensure all practices, procedures, and policies are consistent with biblical principles.

12.1.6.2 Spiritual Culture

Actively seeks to create and promote a healthy spiritual culture within FBCNB.

- 12.1.6.2.1 Role model – lives a life consistent with the biblical elder qualifications and illustrates a Christ-like character in life, speech, faith, and purity
 - 12.1.6.2.1.1 Shepherds and leads the church
 - 12.1.6.2.1.1.1 Understands and applies servant leadership as modeled by Jesus
 - 12.1.6.2.1.2 Deacon and lay elder selection, testing, and recommendation to the congregation
 - 12.1.6.2.1.2.1 Conducts ordination of new Elders and Deacons
- 12.1.6.2.2 Equipping – Actively disciples, teaches, and mentors groups and individuals
 - 12.1.6.2.2.1 Recruits and trains current and prospective church leaders and teachers
- 12.1.6.2.3 Church membership – Interviews, evaluates, and approves member candidates after they complete the membership requirements and prior to submitting them to the congregation for approval.

12.1.6.3 Strategic Direction

Develops, communicates, and directs the overall vision and strategy as we seek to fulfill the church's God-given mission

- 12.1.6.3.1 Mission – The biblically mandated missional mandate is clear:
 - 12.1.6.3.1.1 "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19)
 - 12.1.6.3.1.2 "Go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel" (Mark 16:15)
- 12.1.6.3.2 Coordinates and champions the ministries of the church, ensuring a healthy balance between equipping the congregation and evangelizing the lost.

12.1.6.4 Accountability

The elder is accountable to the Elder Board, the congregation, and to one another.

- 12.1.6.4.1 An elder may be removed for cause, subject to 1Timothy 5:19-20, and by vote of the Elder Board. Notice of removal of the elder shall be accompanied by communication to the Church membership.

12.2 Elder Board

The Elder Board is composed of staff pastors and lay elders selected from FBCNB's lay elder body to serve on the Elder Board.

12.2.1 These elders provide accountability and are to be a source of encouragement, support, and counsel for FBCNB. Collectively the elder board, elder body, and FBCNB staff provide spiritual and practical leadership in pursuit of the God given mission and vision of the church.

12.2.2 When serving on the Elder Board, elders glorify God through:

12.2.2.1 Determining and executing God's mission, vision, and strategy for FBCNB

12.2.2.2 Oversight and general direction of all church operations and ministries

12.2.3 Structure

12.2.3.1 The Elder Board shall consist of the Senior Pastor, no more than 2 additional staff pastors, and 4-6 lay elders. The two additional pastoral positions are selected and approved by the Elder Board.

12.2.3.2 The Elder Board shall meet at least monthly with a 66% quorum required.

12.2.3.2.1 Each elder board member has one vote

12.2.3.2.2 Proxy voting is prohibited

12.2.3.3 The tenure of the pastoral staff elder board positions is open-ended.

12.2.3.4 The lay elder board positions are 3-year terms. Terms of office will be staggered such that no more than 2 expire simultaneously.

12.2.3.4.1 Upon approval by the Elder Board and affirmation of the congregation, an elder may serve one additional consecutive term on the Elder Board. (Six years total)

12.2.3.4.2 If an elder board position is vacated early, the Elder Board shall appoint an interim replacement from the lay elders. At the next regularly scheduled Member meeting, a permanent replacement will be recommended to the congregation for the remainder of the unexpired term.

12.2.3.4.3 An elder may not serve more than 7 consecutive years and may not succeed to that same office until one year has elapsed.

12.2.3.5 Elder Board Officers – Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary

12.2.3.5.1 Officers shall be selected from, and by, the Elder Board.

12.2.3.5.2 Chair and Vice-Chair shall be chosen from the board's lay elders.

12.2.3.6 The Elder Board shall annually encourage lay elders to prayerfully consider serving on the Elder Board.

12.2.3.6.1 Applicants will submit their name to the Elder Board Chair.

12.2.3.6.2 The Elder Board will review and make recommendations to the congregation at a regularly scheduled Member Meeting.

12.2.4 Decision making

As we are all guided by the same Spirit and all are to have the "mind of Christ," the Elder Board must model seeking a clear understanding of the Lord's will in each decision (1Corinthians 1:10, Ephesians 4:3, Philippians 1:27, 2:2).

12.2.4.1 Unanimity is the ideal, yet we are an imperfect people in an imperfect world and unanimity may not always be possible. Therefore, decision making will be by consensus.

12.2.4.2 If there is division and consensus cannot be achieved, the elders should study, pray, and seek the will of God until consensus is achieved.

12.2.4.3 The exception to consensus decisions is pastoral candidates and elder nominees. The elder board must be unanimous before recommending either to the congregation.

12.2.5 Governance

Oversight and spiritual direction of the church, its membership, Deacons, committees, staff, ministries, finances, and property; holding all accountable to the Word of God and the mission of the Church (Acts 15-16:4; Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17; 1Thessalonians 5:12-13).

12.2.5.1 Shepherd the spiritual life of the church, assessing the spiritual health, and safeguarding its spiritual vitality.

- 12.2.5.2 Review and approve all church handbooks and policies
- 12.2.5.3 Formation and dissolution of ministry teams
- 12.2.5.4 Financial Stewardship
 - 12.2.5.4.1 Reviews monthly financial statements
 - 12.2.5.4.2 Reviews and approves the annual budget proposal, ensuring the budget is aligned with the mission, vision, and strategy of the church prior to submitting to the congregation for their approval.
- 12.2.5.5 Elder Board members are appointed by the Senior Pastor and Elder Board Chair as liaisons to every standing committee and other committees and ministry teams as deemed appropriate by the Elder Board.
 - 12.2.5.5.1 The liaison role is to provide direct communication to/from the Elder Board and provide support when issues are encountered. The liaison has a voice, but no vote.
- 12.2.5.6 Approves FBCNB official representatives to any group, association, or conference the FBCNB congregation chooses to attend.
- 12.2.5.7 The standing committee chairs and the deacon chair will be invited to a monthly elder board meeting at least biannually.
- 12.2.5.8 The Elder Board shall conduct an annual congregational membership review.

12.3 Elder Handbook

FBCNB's *Elder Handbook* shall be the procedural guide for the Elders. It shall be maintained and updated by the Elders and approved by the congregation. Reviews shall be biennially at the minimum.