

ELDER MINISTRY: VALUES AND VISION

The Role of Calvary's Elders

1. Working with the senior pastor and ministry staff, the elders serve in affirming the vision of the church. (2 Thess. 1:11-12)
 - a. Promoting the goals, serving, supporting, and advocating for Calvary's vision.
 - b. Helping the church staff to evaluate the progress and achievement of Calvary's vision.
2. Protecting the church from all the *"schemes of the devil,"* striving to maintain *"the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,"* and working to create harmony among all the people.
 - a. The elders will work to promote authentic love between the pastors, ministry staff, and members of Calvary Community Church.
 - b. See: Acts 20:25-31; Eph. 4:1-3, 15-16; Eph. 6:10-12; 1 Jn. 4:11-12.
3. Helping to promote Calvary's health by being an excellent example and role model of righteousness, peace, and joy. (Rom. 14:17)
4. Serving in the ministries of the church according to their own giftedness and calling. (1 Pet. 4:10)
5. Serving in the role of advisory council to the senior pastor.

The Function of the Elders

1. Remaining steadfast in the Scripture and prayer as an aid to hearing the Spirit's voice and calling. (Acts 13:1-3)
2. Communicating and promoting the goals and objectives which support Calvary's vision for intimacy, community, and kingdom.
3. Serving as discerning partners with the senior pastor and ministry staff in considering Calvary's response to the political, social, and community issues of our time.
4. Caring for the needs of the church—both spiritual and physical. Being diligent in prayer for the needs of the church body. (Col. 1:9-12)

What do we value as an elder team?

1. We value the presence of God.
2. We value people hearing God's voice.
3. We value worship, prayer, the ministry of the Holy Spirit and Scripture as avenues of God's presence, love, wisdom, and power.
4. We value the creative tension between Word and Spirit.
5. We value faith community and the deepening of love it requires.
6. We value members using their giftedness in ministry.
7. We value love.
8. We value the prophetic.
9. We value intimacy, community, and kingdom.

What commitments are required from members of our elder team?

1. Integrity
2. Authenticity / vulnerability
3. Courage
4. Commitment to love one another as Christ loves us
5. Confidentiality
6. Respect
7. Walking in the light and dispelling offenses (1 Jn 1:7)
8. Earnest pursuit of unity (Eph. 4:1-3)
9. Prayer, both individually and corporately
10. Zeal for God's house and his purposes
11. Missional living—joining Jesus on his mission, in our spheres of influence both locally and globally
12. Sacrificial lifestyle
13. Maintaining love for one another is more important than being right
14. *Truthing in love* (Eph. 4:15)
15. *"All in"* relationships for one another and for God's purposes

What is the role of the elder team in relation to the senior pastor?

1. The elders seek to support the senior pastor as called by God to be the primary vision setter for the church. The elders provide this support to the senior pastor through prayer and wise counsel.

- a. The elders help to shoulder the burden of the senior pastor by serving as prayer warriors, forming a spiritual defense for both the pastors and the people of Calvary.
 - b. The elders serve as an advisory council for the senior pastor, providing him with wisdom, diverse viewpoints, and broader support for major initiatives.
2. The elders also serve the senior pastor through their encouragement, their faith, and their love.
 3. Their support of the senior pastor is also seen in their authentic partnership, camaraderie, and interdependence.
 4. While elders contribute to the vision and its implementation, they recognize that the process for setting the agenda and defining the vision most commonly resides with the senior pastor.
 - a. Elders come alongside the senior pastor and work with him to process and discern emerging vision.
 - b. (See Acts 16 concerning the *"Macedonian call;"* Paul's team *"concluded"* the vision was truly God's call for them. At that point, they turned to being advocates and catalysts of that vision.)

What is the role of the elder team in relation to the ministry staff?

1. In supporting the ministry staff, elders will offer wise guidance, genuine love, and sincere prayer.
2. Protection for the ministry staff falls under the prayer assignment for the elders. Ministry staff is often the target of Satan's attack. Ministry leadership also places the ministry staff in vulnerable places where misunderstanding occurs and it is the prayer and support of the elder's that both protect and encourage our ministry staff.
3. Elders also serve the ministry staff through advocating for Calvary's vision, serving the vision, and helping the church to stay aligned with our vision and calling.

How are decisions made?

The elders serve as an advisory council for the senior pastor helping to discern and process emerging vision. They also work to advise in important decision-making and problem-solving. There will always be situations and circumstances arising within the church and the world that will require decisions to be made. The elder team serves the senior pastor in helping to discern God's will and way forward. This process is based in these guiding principles:

UNANIMITY: We will always seek unanimity. Complete unity and agreement in any process is always best. We will aim for the best. Our **guiding principle:** EPHESIANS 4:3 "MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.."

CONSENSUS: Sometimes decisions must be made with less than complete agreement. While there will be decisions made without everyone's agreement, we will not allow disagreement to divide us. Consensus for us means that most of the elder team is in agreement on some issue, but there may be some who see things differently. Disagreement is not seen as disunity. All viewpoints are to be respected and heard. After an agreement is reached by consensus, all elders still honor, support, and serve this decision because of our trust and love for one another and our confidence in the Lord's leadership of our church family. Our **guiding principle:** EPHESIANS 4:3 "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit THROUGH THE BOND OF PEACE."

TRUSTED HEADSHIP: There may be times when a decision cannot be delayed due to circumstances. Someone must decide. If consensus cannot be reached, the team will humbly submit the decision into the prayer closet while allowing the senior pastor to make the final decision that is at hand. We are comfortable in this process because of the trust and love we have for one another and our reliance on the Holy Spirit to speak. We embrace and believe that *the process is the product*. Our **guiding principle:** EPHESIANS 5:21 "SUBMIT TO ONE ANOTHER OUT OF REVERENCE FOR CHRIST." HEBREWS 13:17 HAVE CONFIDENCE IN YOUR LEADERS AND SUBMIT TO THEIR AUTHORITY, BECAUSE THEY KEEP WATCH OVER YOU AS THOSE WHO MUST GIVE AN ACCOUNT.