



ECCLESIOLOGY

Church Government in an **Anarchy Culture**



The Nature of the Church

Principles to Affirm in Governance

1. We are trying at MACC to conform the structure and procedures and spirit of church governance as closely as possible to Biblical guidelines
 - **2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17**
2. We believe in liberating the laity. Internal structures are NOT the main ministry of the church
 - **EPHESIANS 4:11-12**
3. Governance structures should be lean and efficient



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Principles to Affirm in Governance

4. Christ is head and the royal priesthood lives on through us
 - EPHESIANS 4:15 | GALATIANS 6:1-2 | HEBREWS 3:13

5. God has ordained the existence of officers in the church
 - 1 TIMOTHY 5:15 | 1 THESSALONIANS 5:12



The Nature of the Church

Three Common Models

Episcopalianism | Congregationalism | Presbyterianism

- **Episcopalianism** : the rule of the church by monarchical bishops; one man may govern those under him.
- **Congregationalism** : the rule of the church by every member, and the independence of every congregation from all others.
- **Presbyterianism** : the rule of the church by multiple, elected elders – not the dictates of one man, nor those of the whole congregation.



The Nature of the Church

Unpacking Our Structure

The Bible teaches a leadership consisting of a plurality of elders, along with a group of deacons, who serve the church.



The Nature of the Church

Unpacking Our Structure

ELDER

1. The word *Presbuteros* has always been translated Elder
2. Elders were Israelite leaders in the Old Testament
 - **2 SAMUEL 5:3 – ³** So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel.
 - **2 SAMUEL 17:4, 15 | 1 KINGS 20:7 | EXODUS 24:1,9 | NUMBERS 11:16, 24-25**



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Unpacking Our Structure

ELDER

3. The Elder role is patterned after Christ
 - **1 PETER 2:25** – ²⁵ For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.
4. In the New Testament the elders served in the role of church leadership
 - **JAMES 5:14** – ¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.
 - **ACTS 14:24, 15:2, 20:17 | TITUS 1:5**



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Unpacking Our Structure

ELDER

5. Usually found in the plural
6. Elders joined the apostles in leadership
 - **ACTS 15:2-16:4**
7. The position of elder was equal to the position of *episkopos*, translated “overseer” or “bishop”
 - **ACTS 11:30** – ³⁰ And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.
 - **1 TIMOTHY 5:17** – ¹⁷ Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.



The Nature of the Church

Unpacking Our Structure – ELDER

Each congregation is to have a plurality of elders

- **ACTS 14:23** – ²³ And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.
- **ACTS 20:17 | PHILIPPIANS 1:1**

These elders have oversight over their local church

- **ACTS 20:28** – ²⁸ Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.
- **1 PETER 5:2-3 | 1 TIMOTHY 3:5, 5:17 | HEBREWS 13:7, 17
1 THESSALONIANS 5:12**



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Unpacking Our Structure – ELDER

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Elders judge among the brothers | **1 CORINTHIANS 6:5**
2. Elders rebuke | **1 TIMOTHY 5:20**
3. Elders use the “keys of the kingdom” | **MATTHEW 16:19**
4. Elders teach and equip the saints | **MATTHEW 28:19-20**
5. Elders administer the sacraments | **1 CORINTHIANS 11:23**
6. Elders exercise Church Discipline | **MATTHEW 18:17**



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Unpacking Our Structure – DEACON

DEACONS

- Assist Elders in their ministry responsibilities
- Deacons are separate from Elders
- From *Diakonos*, which means “servant”



The Nature of the Church

Unpacking Our Structure – DEACON

WERE WOMEN DEACONS? – YES

1 TIMOTHY 3:8-13

⁸ Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. ⁹ They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. ¹¹ Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. ¹² Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. ¹³ For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.



The Nature of the Church

Unpacking Our Structure – DEACON

WERE WOMEN DEACONS? – YES

1 TIMOTHY 3:8-13

NOTE: They were not the governing body in the church nor charged with the duty of authoritative teaching



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Unpacking Our Structure – DEACON

ORIGINS – ACTS 6:1-4

- The deacon office exists to assist the leadership of the church by relieving the elders of distractions
- They give attention to the ministry of mercy

PHILIPPIANS 1:1 | ACTS 6:1-6 | 1 TIMOTHY 3:8-13

RESPONSIBILITIES – 1 TIMOTHY 3:8-13

- Care for the building and grounds
- Supply the communion and baptismal needs
- Handle the greeting and welcoming ministries



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Unpacking Our Structure – PASTOR

PASTOR

- Only mentioned once **EPHESIANS 4:11**
- Historically, the two terms “pastors” and “teachers” as referring to a single position
- The Pastor, or Teaching Elder, has no more authority than any other Elder



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Unpacking Our Structure – CONGREGATION

CONGREGATION

- In Scripture, congregations provided significant input in decisions
- Any leaders in the church are nominated and elected by the congregation
 - **ACTS 6:5-6 | ACTS 13:1-3 | 1 TIMOTHY 4:14**
- Excommunication happens by recommendation of the Elders and vote of the congregation



The Nature of the Church

Practical Demonstrations of MACC's Church Governance

- Biblical church government includes rule by a plurality of biblically qualified Elders
- These Elders convene where they settle disputes, adjudicate disciplinary and doctrinal cases, and handle normal administrative matters of the church
- In making decisions, these leaders are to pass judgment based upon the scriptures



The Nature of the Church

Practical Demonstrations of MACC's Church Governance

- These decisions should have a binding governmental authority in the church
- The Local church should have autonomy (free from external control, right to self government) Titus 1:5, while not being free from Accountability.
- Members of the church have the right to appeal disputed matters in the congregation to their elders for resolution



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Practical Demonstrations of MACC's Church Governance

- If a dispute is with the local elders you can appeal to a regional governing body





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