



Church Government

Participation

Shared ministry is key to the healthy growth of the church and its leaders (2 Timothy 2:2). We believe disciples of Jesus Christ are called to minister to one another in the local church, rather than one or a small number of vocational pastors bearing total responsibility to care for the entire congregation. God gives spiritual gifts to all of His people to provide mutual ministry in the context of a healthy and strong local church (Ephesians 4:11-12).

We value an intentional plan and approach to help every interested person enjoy godly relationships in the church and to encourage those who are growing in Christ to grasp the importance of contributing to the work of ministry and serving the Lord by using their gifts to serve others in the local church.

Elders and Deacons

In 1 Timothy 3:1-16 and Titus 1:5-9, the Bible provides instruction for two church offices. Although there are multiple terms used for the offices of the church, (i.e. bishop, overseer, elder and deacon), our understanding of these terms indicates that bishop, overseer, and elder are used interchangeably. At Woodmen, we call this role “elder.”

Elder Qualifications (Titus 1:6-9)

- Above reproach
- Able to teach
- Husband to one wife
- Not addicted to wine
- Temperate
- Not antagonistic
- Prudent
- Uncontentious
- Respectable
- Free from the love of money
- Hospitable
- Manages his household well
- Not a new convert

Elder Duties

In accordance with the Scriptures, Woodmen has both vocational Elders, who are employed by the church and comprise the pastoral staff (“Pastors”), and non-vocational Elders. Elders have responsibility for:

1. **Doctrine.** Ensuring that the doctrine of the church is biblical; all doctrinal issues in the church will be settled solely by the Elder Council;
2. **Direction.** Ensuring that the direction of the church is consistent with the Woodmen Valley Chapel Vision and Mission Values; and
3. **Care and Discipline.** Caring for the congregation and administering in love and humility the process of church discipline as outlined in Matthew 18:15-20, Galatians 6:1-4, Titus 3:10, 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15, 1 Timothy 5:17-25, 1 Corinthians 5, 2 Corinthians 2:5-11, and Romans 16:17.

Plurality of Elders

The Scriptures teach that a plurality of elders governed individual New Testament churches (Acts 14:23, 20:28; Titus 1:5; Philippians 1:1). The Scriptures do not mention any congregations featuring a stand-alone pastor and leader. A plurality of godly Elders, exercising their individual giftedness, squares with the Scripture's teaching that wisdom is found in a multitude of godly counselors (Proverbs 15:22, 24:6). As such, Woodmen is shepherded by an Elder Council. The Council is comprised of no less than seven elders at any given time.

The Scriptures allow for the possibility and likelihood that, due to their personal giftings, the role of one or more elders will be more public in their ministry. At Woodmen, the Lead Pastor of Teaching and Vision automatically serves on the Elder Council and should be gifted primarily to serve as a preacher/teacher and leader.

Under the direction of the Lead Pastor of Teaching and Vision, the church staff is responsible for the day-to-day work of the church while the Elder Council ensures that the Vision, Values and Doctrine of the church are honored and reflected through the ministries and staff of the church. In addition, the Elder Council annually elects officers for the corporation in accordance with the church bylaws. (For purposes of prudent stewardship, the church maintains 501c3 corporate status in the state of Colorado.) The Elder Council is also charged to care for the Lead Pastor of Teaching and Vision and his family, coach and evaluate his performance, and address any employment issues related to his role.

Selection

When the need arises for an additional non-vocational elder, the existing Elder Council will recommend a nominee. In keeping with biblical teaching regarding authority within the church, only men will be considered for the office of Elder. An in-depth interview will ensue to determine if the nominee is biblically qualified and affirms and abides by Woodmen's Principles of Doctrine, Practice and Governance. If the interview determines that the nominee is suitable to continue forward in the process, the nominee will sit informally with the existing Elder Council, first for a period of time without their consideration being made public, and then for a period of time after their candidacy is made known to the congregation.

When the nominee is formally made known to the congregation, the congregation will be reminded of the biblical requirement for elders and given 30 days to speak personally with the nominee if they are aware of any potentially disqualifying characteristics on the part of the nominee. If the matter remains unresolved, the nominee or church member should approach the Elder Council to request that the Council attempt to mediate to resolve the matter or remove the nominee from consideration.

Term

Elder Council members will be allowed to serve up to two consecutive three-year terms. At the end of their first three-year term, renewing Council members will be required to participate in a review process whereby their names will be placed before the congregation and the congregation will be reminded of the biblical requirements for elders. The congregation will then be given 30 days to speak personally with the elder if they are aware of any biblical reason why the elder should not continue. If the matter remains unresolved, the elder or church member should approach the Elder Council to request that the Council attempt to mediate to resolve the matter or remove the elder from his role. Following the 30-day period, the elder who is up for renewal must be confirmed by a majority of the remaining members of Elder Council before being eligible to commence serving another three-year term. After completing two three-year terms, the elder must rotate off the Elder Council for a minimum of one year.

If, in the determination of the rest of the Elder Council, an Elder is disqualified at any time by not meeting biblical qualifications, he may resign his position or be dismissed by the Elder Council. The congregation will be notified of any elder failing to complete his term.

Deacon Qualifications (1 Timothy 3:8-13)

- An individual of dignity
- Not double tongued
- Not addicted to wine
- Not greedy for dishonest gain
- Hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience
- First tested as a servant

Deacon Duties

The word “deacon” comes from the Greek word diakonos and usually simply means “servant.” The Bible teaches that Deacons were engaged in serving and in assisting the Elders in the work of the ministry. At Woodmen, Deacons are men and women who are selected by their Campus Pastor to serve in a variety of key leadership roles at their local campus. Deacons’ primary duties at Woodmen are focused on caring for their campus community. Here are the three broad areas in which Deacons contribute:

1. **Campus Ministry.** Praying with and for others, hospital visits, men’s or women’s ministry leadership, coaching other Ministry Partners;
2. **Campus Maintenance.** Serving by leading campus maintenance and project teams;
3. **Campus Care.** Caring for those in need through coordinating benevolence and hospitality ministries.

Deacon Selection

Deacons may be nominated by their Campus Pastor, Elders or other pastors, from among Commissioned Leaders. After an interview with their Campus Pastor, the Deacon nominee will have their name placed before the congregation at their campus for a period of two weeks. During this period congregation members will be encouraged to clear up any relational or other difficulties that could hinder the nominee’s ministry among us. This is done in the spirit of Matthew 18:15-17. If the matter remains unresolved after two weeks, the nominee or church member should approach the Campus Pastor to request that the Pastor attempt to mediate to resolve the matter or remove the nominee from consideration. At the end of this vetting period (which will take at least two weeks but could take up to one month longer if a congregation member has come forward with an issue) nominees who successfully complete the process will be publicly welcomed as Deacons on the next weekend set aside for that purpose. To be a Deacon, one must affirm and be willing to abide by Woodmen’s Principles of Doctrine, Practice and Governance.

If a Deacon is disqualified by not meeting biblical qualifications, he or she may resign the position of leadership or be removed from the position of leadership by the Elder Council.

Deacon Council

A churchwide Deacon Council will be selected from among the deacons serving at each campus. The Deacon Council serves at the request of the Elder Council as a representative board on behalf

of congregants and members to inform and advise on matters of direction, policy and ministry. Deacon Council members are appointed to three-year terms and must rotate off of the Deacon Council for a minimum of one year before being eligible to serve for any additional terms.

Commissioned Leaders

Commissioned Leaders are men and women who desire to align themselves with Woodmen as their home church and to serve in a teaching or leadership role. These leaders serve in a variety of leadership, teaching and shepherding roles and are a big part of the day to day ministry that helps people at Woodmen gather, connect, grow and contribute. To be a Commissioned Leader, one must affirm and be willing to abide by Woodmen's Principles of Doctrine, Practice and Governance, complete our Commissioning Journal, and be confirmed through an interview process with a Woodmen staff member, deacon or elder.

Unity in the Church

Each of us bring unique backgrounds, experiences and perspectives to the community of faith—yet through this diversity, we are called to be unified within the body of Christ. Coming together in unity is vital for us to truly love well and change lives through Christ. We seek to listen with empathy to others, to humbly speak the truth in love, to believe the best and to extend grace to one another in pursuit of unity in all we do as the people of Woodmen (1 Corinthians 1:10; 1 Peter 3:8; Psalm 133:1; Ephesians 4:1-3). In significant disagreements or other circumstances where unity is compromised, we seek to follow the biblical steps outlined in Matthew 18:15-20.