

Fairfax Church of Christ Elders' Philosophy

As elders of the Fairfax Church of Christ, we want you to have a clear understanding of the philosophy by which we try to live and lead. The benchmark of our leadership style is Peter's admonition to his fellow-elders in the early church:

"Be shepherds of God's flock that are under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock." — 1 Peter 5:2-3

As shepherds of the flock of God, New Testament elders are committed to leading and nurturing, not lording over; to demonstrating rather than demanding; to inspiring rather than intimidating; to facilitating rather than fighting. They are concerned for every member of the congregation and community, just as Jesus is concerned for each of us as we struggle to follow him and even when we are lost in our sinfulness. We seek to follow this New Testament model. We do not claim to have fully acquired these desirable qualities of care and concern to which we aspire. However, we pledge to keep learning and growing in the art and spiritual gift of New Testament leadership and shepherding.

We also recognize that as a congregation grows in size it is advisable and necessary for elders to change the focus of their attention and efforts. To give us more time for spiritual leadership and shepherding, we intend to delegate as many administrative and management functions as possible. Staff members, ministry leaders and volunteers will become increasingly expected to shoulder most of the responsibility for these functions. We seek to communicate the vision and mission that we believe God desires for the church at Fairfax. We seek to be a congregation that impacts our community by demonstrating the love of Christ. We seek to mentor, communicate and encourage our sisters and brothers in service and faith – seeking what God wants us to be.

We commit ourselves to:

- Prayer: To connect to God, searching for His guidance and discerning His Will. We will not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present our requests to God.
- Teaching the faith: guarding the integrity of Scripture, knowing and teaching God's word, reaching the lost in our communities with the good news of Jesus, and promoting healthy belief
- Shepherding members: protecting the church, ensuring that everyone gets the scriptural knowledge they need to grow, and lovingly caring for members' needs
- Consoling those in affliction: consoling as we have been consoled by God, facilitating Christians caring for one another, and gently dealing with all
- Encouraging Christian formation: nurturing Christians as Christ is formed in them, encouraging all believers to grow to fullness in Christ, and leading members to progress in spiritual maturity
- Building our congregational community: building into a household of faith, facilitating "one another" ministries, and assisting believers in using their gifts for common good
- Equipping members for service: facilitating their God-given ministries, encouraging each part of the body to join together in God's work, and assisting believers in being good stewards of the gifts they have received
- Facilitating reconciliation: promoting oneness in mind and purpose, overseeing the practice of confronting sin and false teaching, and offering wise judgment to members in conflict
- Enabling outreach: empowering members so that they may be led by the Holy Spirit and a blessing to this church and surrounding community through their gifts.
- Ensuring that God's vision for our church is the focus of our activities

When we make decisions necessary for the direction of the church's journey with God, we do so with consideration for the views of others, we seek prayerfully for God's guidance, and we show respect for the revealed will of God through the Bible. The elders may not always share the same opinion as matters are discussed, but once a decision is made we all accept and support that decision. We believe that the collective judgment of the elders is superior to the individual judgment of any one elder.

Please pray for God to bless us as we lead, that we may "prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Ephesians 4:11-12), and we may help others learn about the good news of Jesus.

The Elders

*31 March 2008
Revised & Reaffirmed 19 June 2010*