

ChristWay Community Gathering Constitution and Bylaws

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CHRISTWAY COMMUNITY Gathering, INC.
OF OOLTEWAH, TENNESSEE
(A Nonprofit Corporation)

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

We declare and establish this Constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly and biblical manner consistent with the essential tenets of the Southern Baptist Church. This Constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual Gathering partner and the freedom of action of this body in its relations to other Gatherings of like faith.

ARTICLE I – NAME AND LOCATION

This body shall be known as CHRISTWAY COMMUNITY Gathering, INC. of OOLTEWAH, TENNESSEE. The principal office of the corporation, hereinafter referred to as the “Gathering”, shall be located at 6201 Mountain View Road, the address set forth in the Articles of Incorporation. The Gathering may have such other offices, either within or without the State of Tennessee, as the officers may determine from time to time.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE & OBJECTIVE

In seeking to carry out the New Testament mandate, this Gathering desires to be the “body of Christ” locally. We are one body with many partners, each having differing responsibilities, all working under the direction of the Head, which is Jesus Christ (Eph. 4:4-16). The purpose of the Gathering is to equip the body through worship, education, and fellowship in order to witness, to disciple, to minister, and to apply the teachings of Jesus Christ in all areas of life. In carrying out the purpose of the body, ChristWay will pursue three vital relationships: Intimacy with God, Community with Insiders, and Influence with Outsiders. In order to have a balanced life with Christ and his Gathering we must always pursue each of these relationships as equally important.

We believe that practicing faith is a serious, yet simple matter. We have established a clear mission, strategy to carry out that mission, distinctives, and core values that guide us as we seek to carry out the work of Jesus Christ. The following are the **Mission, Strategy, Distinctives, and Core Values** of our Gathering.

Our **Mission**: Love is why Jesus died for us. Our love for Him is why we follow His commands.

Our **Vision**: ChristWay’s vision is to apply biblical truth to create disciples, invest in families, and reach the world with his love.

Our **Distinctives**:

ChristWay will be seeker aware in our approach to ministry. We will seek to be sensitive to the needs of those who attend our services by trying to create excellent and relevant environments that are conducive for the Holy Spirit to work most effectively. We will be proactive in removing all potential obstacles but the cross (the message of Christ). We will seek to be a place where the hurting and confused can find love, acceptance, help, forgiveness, guidance, and encouragement. We will have seeker events. These events are designed for people who may be seeking answers concerning God. These people will have the opportunity to come and learn in a non-threatening environment.

However, ChristWay will NOT be a seeker driven Gathering. We will seek to be Savior sensitive in our worship, for seekers cannot worship the Living God. We present a holy and righteous, yet loving and forgiving God in the worship of our Gathering. We will uphold a high standard of Christian living while answering the question of why for those seeking answers.

ChristWay will seek to become a spirit-filled Gathering. We will value spirit-filled music and preaching/teaching of the Word of God. We will value joyful and celebrative praise and worship. We will use innovative methods to communicate but will not compromise the message.

ChristWay will be an Elder governed and equipped Gathering. Partners will be free from unnecessary maintenance meetings to perform ministry. We will embrace ministry teams for the effective execution of ministry. Every partner will be viewed as a minister and expected to participate in group life as well as strategic service teams.

ChristWay will utilize covenants to uphold the highest integrity and accountability for Partnership and ministry.

Our **Core Values**:

1. Biblical Authority

The Bible is God's Word to us. It is divine, authoritative, infallible, inerrant, God-breathed, and truth without any mixture of error. ChristWay will uphold the authority of Scripture. WE will seek to apply timeless truth in timely ways without compromising accurate interpretation of the text in its original context.

2. Personal Integrity

ChristWay will value authentic Spirit-led living. Christ's desire is that His body be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Mt. 5:13-16). We are to live by the power of His Spirit and allow His life to be formed in us (Gal. 5:16-25).

3. Intimacy with God

ChristWay will value intimacy with God. This is an important value because it affects two important functions of the healthy Gathering: prayer and worship. The Christian life is an intimate relationship with God. It is this personal relationship that transforms our lives into His likeness. ChristWay will value this intimate relationship and seek to develop passionate, fully devoted followers of Christ. (*Vital Relationship #1*)

4. Authentic Community

ChristWay will value authentic relationships within the body. We will seek to become a Biblically functioning community of believers who reflect His love before a watching world. (*Vital Relationship #2*)

5. A Passion for the Lost

ChristWay will value the intentional building of relationships with the lost. A healthy Gathering must have the heart of God, and God's heart beats for those who are lost. ChristWay must properly understand God's great salvation, embrace the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ as the atonement for the world's sins, and see herself on mission with God to reach the world with the Good News. Reaching the lost is a priority at ChristWay. (*Vital Relationship #3*)

6. Disciple-development

ChristWay will take seriously the mandate of Christ to "make disciples" (Mt. 28:19). The goal of ChristWay will be that every newborn Christian becomes a mature, faithful follower of Jesus Christ.

Discipleship is more than knowing God's Word. Discipleship is living God's Word and mentoring others in God's Word!

7. Each Believer's Giftedness

ChristWay will value the commitment to use individual spiritual gifts in ministry. Each partner of the body has an important function within the overall mission of the body. For the body to accomplish its God-given purpose each partner must recognize his or her area of giftedness and delight in the service to the entire body. ChristWay will value this giftedness and help believers discover, develop and use their spiritual gifts.

ARTICLE III – DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE

This Body of Christ, acting together with the leadership of the Holy Spirit, determines its doctrine and practice, always respecting the priesthood of every believer. In essentials we have unity, in non-essentials we have liberty, and in all things we have love. Any action or judgment of doctrine and practice shall always be referred to the Elders of the Gathering and will be considered by them with serious intent and prayer. The Baptist Faith & Message 2000 as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention and interpreted by this local body, shall serve as a guideline for this local Gathering's interpretation of Scripture, doctrine, and practice, so long as it remains true to God's Word.

ARTICLE IV – GOVERNING POLICIES

This local body will be independent and self-governing; always recognizing Jesus Christ is the Head of the body. The government of this Gathering is vested in the body of believers, under the leadership of the Lord Jesus, and guided by the Holy Spirit. This Gathering shall set up Bylaws supplementing this Constitution to serve as guidelines for the carrying out of the pastoral, educational, administrative, and supportive functions of the Gathering. This Gathering is not subject to the control of any other ecclesiastical body.

ARTICLE V – COOPERATION

In carrying out the wider ministry for which Jesus Christ has made us responsible, we shall voluntarily cooperate with and be a supporting part of the HAMILTON COUNTY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, the TENNESSEE BAPTIST CONVENTION, and the SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION, so long as each remains true to God's Word. The Gathering will, as possible, cooperate with other local, state, national and international Christian organizations.

From time to time partners or non-partners of the Gathering may desire to use the Gathering's property, buildings and meeting facilities, vehicles, equipment, assets and other resources in support of their private pursuits or those of their groups or organizations. The Gathering Governing body (Elders) reserves the right and privilege to establish such policies and guidelines pertaining to non-Gathering use of Gathering assets. Persons or groups associated with unscriptural conduct or not in friendly cooperation with the Gathering's Purpose, Objectives, Doctrine, and Practice may be disqualified from using Gathering assets and resources for non-Gathering purposes and events.

The Gathering desires to be in voluntary compliance both organizationally and operationally with the Internal Revenue Code Section 501 (c) (3) applying to religious, nonprofit corporations. The private inurement prohibition will be adhered to in policies and guidelines pertaining to Gathering partners who may be granted use of assets and resources for non-Gathering functions.

ARTICLE VI – ORDINANCES

The ordinances of this Gathering are Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

A. Baptism. A person who receives Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith and who indicates a commitment to follow Jesus Christ as Lord, shall be received for baptism. Baptism by immersion symbolizes the death and burial of the old life, and the resurrection and new life in Christ. The Elders, Deacons and Ministerial Staff shall be responsible for planning baptism services.

B. The Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act during which Christians, through the partaking of bread and the fruit of the vine, commemorate the life, death, resurrection, and return of our Lord Jesus Christ. This Gathering, through open communion, invites any believer to participate with us in the Lord's Supper. The Elders and Ministerial Staff shall be responsible for planning times to observe the Lord's Supper.

ARTICLE VII – Partnership

Partnership in this Gathering is a covenant relationship, not only with God, but also with other partners of the body. Under God's leadership through Jesus Christ, the partners become committed to each other to do the work of the Gathering. Partnership requires the following: a conversion experience in which the individual becomes a new person in Christ, a public profession of that faith, believer's baptism, and a commitment to be an active part of this local body, supporting it in word and deed.

ARTICLE VIII – ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

This Gathering shall organize itself into the necessary units for carrying out the purposes of this Gathering. These units shall be subject to periodic review and change, so that we might always carry out the purposes of this Gathering in the most effective and orderly manner. Those serving in the capacity of leadership in these units shall be partners actively involved in fulfilling the Gathering's mission.

ARTICLE IX– LEADERSHIP

The offices and leadership of this Gathering shall be set forth in the Bylaws of this Constitution, and their qualifications and responsibilities shall be defined.

ARTICLE X– AMENDMENT

Any amendments to this Constitution must be based upon the unanimous recommendation of the Elders and the majority affirmation of the congregation. Proposed amendments to this Constitution shall be provided, in writing, to every resident Gathering partner for at least 30 days of prayer and discussion prior to the date of affirmation by the Partners. Affirmation will be according to the process outlined in the Bylaws.

CHRISTWAY COMMUNITY Gathering, INC. OF OOLTEWAH, TENNESSEE

BYLAWS

These Bylaws are adopted in accordance with and subject to the Constitution of ChristWay Community Gathering (C.W.C.C), hereinafter referred to as the "Gathering", so that there might be orderly, biblical organization and administration of the Gathering.

ARTICLE I – Gathering Partnership

SECTION 1.1. REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTNERSHIP

Partners must be authentic followers of Jesus Christ. It is expected that partners will understand and agree with the following statements.

- a. I recognize that I was born a sinner and have offended a holy God by my own sins.
- b. I understand my depravity and lack of any righteousness in myself.

- c. I recognize that I cannot save myself by my own effort.
- d. I recognize that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, was born of a virgin, lived a perfect life, and died on the cross in order to pay the penalty for my sins.
- e. I believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and now sits at the right hand of God the Father.
- f. I have repented of my sins and have trusted in the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ for a full pardon for my sins, and have received the gift of eternal life and the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- g. It is my intention to faithfully follow Jesus Christ for the rest of my life.

SECTION 1.2. PARTNERSHIP TYPES

2 Types of Partnerships:

1. **Full Partnership:** Anyone that is living in the area indefinitely.
 - a) Will obtain all partner privileges. (Able to serve in any role and vote on Gathering matters.)
2. **Transient Partnership:** Anyone that is already a partner of another Gathering but is away from home for either school or work for an extended amount of time.
 - a) Will have all the privileges of the full Partnership with the exception of voting on Gathering matters as well as being on any governing team.
 - b) Also Gathering discipline will not apply. However their home Gathering will be contacted and given the responsibility of discipline.

SECTION 1.3. RECEPTION OF NEW PARTNERS

Applicants for Partnership become candidates by presenting themselves to any pastoral staff, Elder, or at any public worship service where opportunity is given. Candidates will be required to complete a new partner's orientation class. After completion of the Partnership orientation and requirements, the Elders will review and approve the candidate's Partnership request. Upon approval, candidates will be publicly affirmed by the body. New partners may be received in the following ways:

1. Completion of new partner's class and affirmation by a Christway Elder.
2. By Letter of Recommendation from another Gathering of like faith and order, which verifies Partnership.
3. By Statement. When a Gathering letter cannot be obtained because of lost records or similar unavoidable circumstances, applicants are received upon their statement affirming their faith, baptism by immersion and Gathering partnership.
4. By Restoration. When partners of this Gathering who have been excluded from Partnership, per Section 1.7, seek restoration; they will meet with the Elders to make an explanation of their experiences and their desire for restoration. Once the Elders see evidence of repentance and reformation, the partner shall be restored to Partnership.

1.3A Process for Consideration of Gathering Partnership

1. The person shall meet with an elder or an elder-appointed partner to review their testimony regarding trusting in Christ.
2. An elder or an elder-appointed partner of the Gathering shall provide the Partnership covenant/commitment to the applicant, as well as how to access the ChristWay constitution, bi-laws, and denominational faith statement.
3. An elder or elder-appointed partner of the Gathering shall meet with the candidate to discuss and answer any questions regarding the Gathering and his or her Partnership commitment, which includes their willingness to regularly serve the body.
4. If after meeting with an elder of the Gathering, the person is found to be of kindred spirit with the Gathering, and can and will commit to the responsibilities of Partnership, an elder shall present his or her request for Partnership to the elder body for approval.
5. If a request for Partnership is denied due to the person's inability or unwillingness to meet any of the requirements for Partnership set forth herein, an elder of the Gathering shall meet with the person to discuss and answer any questions regarding the decision of the elder body.
6. Upon elder body approval, the new partner shall be publicly presented to the Gathering as a fellow partner of the Gathering.

SECTION 1.4. PARTNERSHIP ROLL

A roll of the Partnership shall be kept for the sake of records. The partnership roll shall be regularly reviewed and updated as needed by the Gathering staff.

SECTION 1.5. RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS OF PARTNERS

1. Partners have the responsibility to prayerfully seek God's direction and affirm the direction of the Gathering.
2. Partners have the responsibility to scripturally support the Gathering through regular participation, serving, fellowship and giving.
3. Partners have the responsibility to love one another.
4. Partners have the right to voice their ideas, concerns, and questions to the Elders.
5. Every partner of this Gathering is eligible for service in or appointment to places of leadership, except when otherwise specified in the Bylaws.

SECTION 1.6. TERMINATION OF PARTNERSHIP

The policy of this Gathering shall be to remove the names of partners from the Gathering roll for the following reasons:

- a. Death.

b. Letter - Letters of dismissal for any partner of the Gathering in good standing shall be granted upon the request from any other Gathering of like faith and order.

c. Resignation - A partner of this Gathering who desires to terminate their Partnership with this body may do so by expressing such desire to the Gathering.

d. Erasure - When it is known that a partner has become affiliated with a Gathering of another faith and order, the name shall be removed from the Partnership roll.

e. Deactivation - A partner's name may be deactivated after one year of no contact or involvement with the local Gathering body. Since this is under the category of Termination, a letter should be sent to the partner requesting a status of their Gathering attendance plan. If no response is received within one month, the partner's name should be removed from the Partnership role. The Elders will be responsible for initiating deactivation.

f. Exclusion - The Elders may also, after giving due notice to the partner and making every effort to make such action unnecessary, terminate the partnership of Partners if restoration is not possible (see Section 1.7).

SECTION 1.7. ACCOUNTABILITY, DISCIPLINE, AND RESTORATION OF PARTNERS

This Gathering will extend every reasonable measure to restore any partner entangled in sin. The Elders and Ministerial staff will always be available for counsel and guidance. Restoration rather than exclusion is held to be the goal that governs this process. Every reasonable measure will be taken by the Elders to resolve the problem in accordance with scriptural teachings. A spirit of Christian kindness, gentleness, and forbearance shall pervade all such proceedings (Gal. 6:1-5). But, finding that the partner is unrepentant, the Elders may make the decision to exclude the person from fellowship and Partnership and will inform the Gathering appropriately. In the rare event that a person is excluded from Partnership they shall not be treated as an enemy, but as a person to be encouraged to repentance and to be won back into fellowship with God and the Gathering.

The purpose of Gathering discipline is to effect a return to a biblical standard of conduct and doctrine in a partner who errs, to maintain purity in the local Gathering, and to deter sin. Partners of this Gathering who shall err in doctrine or conduct shall be subject to dismissal according to Matthew 18:15-18, Galatians 6:1, 1Cor 5:1-5, 1Tim. 1:18-20, 1Tim. 5:19-20, 2Tim. 2:16-18, and James 5:19-20.

Before such dismissal, however:

1. It shall be the duty of any partner of this Gathering who has knowledge of the erring partner's heresy or misconduct to warn and to correct such erring partner in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration.

2. If said erring partner does not heed this warning, then the warning partner shall again go to the erring partner accompanied by one or two witnesses to warn and correct such erring partner, seeking his or her repentance and restoration.

3. If said erring partner still refuses to heed this additional warning, then, it shall be brought to the attention of the elders.

4. The elders, upon careful and prayerful investigation, shall inform the Gathering.
5. If said erring partner refuses to heed the warning of the elders and the Gathering, he or she shall be publicly dismissed from the Gathering.
6. The decision of the Elders is binding and is not subject to outside facilities.
7. It is understood that this process will continue to conclusion even if the erring partner leaves the Gathering or otherwise seeks to withdraw from Partnership to avoid the discipline process. Any person who has been excluded from Partnership may seek restoration, by meeting with the Elders to make an explanation of their experiences and their desire for restoration. Once the Elders see adequate evidence of repentance, the partner shall be restored to Partnership. The Elders will inform the Gathering of the partner's restoration.

SECTION 1.8. PARTNERSHIP COVENANT

I affirm that I have made a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and have been, or will be scripturally baptized. I further affirm that I have read the statement of faith and doctrine of this Gathering and am of like faith and kindred spirit.

I understand that my responsibilities as a partner of this Gathering are to:

1. *Protect the unity of ChristWay...*
 - a. By acting in love and respect toward all partners.
 - b. By discussing any issue with the person involved rather than gossiping.
 - c. By following the leaders.
References Romans 12:5, Romans 14:19, Ephesians 4:29, Hebrews 13:17
2. *Share in the vision of ChristWay...*
 - a. By praying for its growth.
 - b. By inviting those who do not currently attend or actively participate
 - c. By warmly welcoming those who visit.
References Colossians 1:9-10, Luke 14:23, Romans 15:7
3. *Serve the ministry of ChristWay...*
 - a. By developing a servant's heart.
 - b. By discovering and developing my gifts and talents.
 - c. By being available to serve where I am gifted.
References I Peter 4:10, Ephesians 4:11-12, Philippians 2:4
4. *Support the mission of ChristWay...*
 - a. By attending a small group and worship services faithfully.
 - b. By living a godly life.
 - c. By financially giving to the Gathering as a steward of God's resources.
References Hebrews 10:25, Philippians 1:27, I Corinthians 16:2

ARTICLE II – Gathering GOVERNMENT AND LEADERSHIP

SECTION 2.1. THE CHIEF SHEPHERD

The Lord Jesus is the Chief Shepherd of this congregation. It is before Him that all other leadership must bow (Ref: Eph. 1:22, 23; Matt. 23:8–11; 1 Peter 5:4, Heb.13:20-21). He

communicates His will for the Gathering through the Bible and through prayer. He gives additional guidance by means of the specific leading of the Holy Spirit who indwells the heart of each believer. He also shepherds the flock through the leaders of the Gathering, to whom He has given specific gifts.

SECTION 2.2. BIBLICAL GATHERING GOVERNMENT

We believe there are three key concepts that must be recognized and applied for biblical Gathering government to function as God intended.

2.2A. Plurality

Upon study of the key passages concerning Gathering government, (Titus 1:5, Acts 14:23) it is clear that individual New Testament Gatherings were led by a plurality of leaders, most often referred to as Elders, who met the qualifications outlined in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. The Elder model of Gathering government is not only biblical, it is also practical. Instead of placing leadership responsibility on one man, a group of biblically qualified men are entrusted with seeking God's direction for the Gathering, and with shepherding the Gathering in that direction. Plurality also provides increased accountability among leadership.

2.2B. Unanimity

God's will is singular. When the Elders are in touch with the Holy Spirit, God's direction will not differ and unanimity will be the result. In Acts 15:25, the leaders at the Jerusalem Council knew they had heard God's will when they were in one accord. The Elders must come to unanimous agreement as to God's direction. In order for unanimity to be a practical reality, it is imperative that biblically qualified men are appointed.

2.2C. Affirmation: A Voice Instead of a Vote

The Bible teaches that prayer (hearing from God) and adherence to God's Word are the keys to the Gathering's decisions, not majority rule. When Gatherings limit partners to a single vote on major issues, their voice may never be heard above that of the majority of the congregation. Each believer is a priest and has direct access to God through prayer and His Word (1 Peter 2:5). Thus, each partner of the body should have a voice, regardless of their role in the Gathering or the majority opinion. The expression of a partner's voice is not for the purpose of complaint or merely to express an opinion, but rather, to affirm, apply, and investigate Scripture.

The role of the Elder Council is not to follow the majority, but to ensure that God's voice is heard and His direction is followed on all decisions. After reaching a unanimous decision among themselves, the Elders will move in the direction they feel the Lord is leading. For major decisions, including (but not limited to) appointing Elders or changes in the constitution/bylaws, the Elders will present such changes to the Gathering. The Gathering will then have a period of time to voice their thoughts or concerns birthed from their prayer for God's direction. The Elders will welcome respectful communication from partners in writing and/or in special sessions of the Elder Council to hear from partners on major decisions. The Elders will humbly listen, even if it is one partner who has a concern. They will continue to pray and, if appropriate, will make any changes that the Lord leads them to make after hearing the voice of the Gathering. After a season of prayer and discussion, the Elders will communicate the direction to the Gathering, trusting that God's voice has been heard.

In summary, the affirmation process for major decisions (including but not limited to, constitution or bylaws changes, sale or purchase of property, and appointing of Elders) will be as follows:

- a. The Elders will pray for God's direction for the Gathering.
- b. Upon reaching unanimity through prayer, the Elders will clearly present to the Gathering the direction God is leading.
- c. The Gathering will be given a season of time to pray and search scripture with regard to the direction that the Elders have communicated.
- d. The Gathering will have the opportunity to respectfully share the results of their prayers with the Elders; either in writing, or in special sessions with the Elder Council for the purpose of hearing from the partners.
- e. The Elders will carefully and humbly listen to each partner who voices any concerns based on their prayer and biblical examination.
- f. If there is concern about the direction from the partners, and if further communication does not resolve that concern, then the Elders will continue to pray in order to be certain they have clearly heard God's voice.
- g. If God leads the Elders to continue in the original direction, then the Gathering will gather in a special meeting to publicly confirm that this is the direction God is leading the Gathering.

SECTION 2.3. ELDERS

2.3A. General Scope: It is our desire to let the Bible define our Gathering government. After diligent study of the Scriptures, our conclusion is that the New Testament Gatherings were jointly pastored by a biblically qualified council of shepherd-elders, rather than by a single person. The Scriptures consistently show that a plurality of godly men are to share in the responsibility of leading and shepherding each individual Gathering (Acts 15, James 5:14, Acts 14:23, Acts 20:17, Acts 20:28, Philippians 1:1, Titus 1:5, 1 Peter 1:1, 1 Peter 5:1), though the Elders within each Gathering may differ in their specific functions and giftedness. Based on the New Testament, we believe that in the early Gathering the *presbuteros* (elders), *episkopos* (overseers or bishops) and *poimen* (pastors) were one and the same, and that their role was to humbly and ably shepherd the Gathering as a team, under the headship of Jesus Christ.

2.3B. Authority and Responsibilities of Elders

- *"To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is 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 it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock, and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away." – 1 Peter 5:1-3*

1. Feed the Flock. Elders must be able to feed the flock by teaching God's Word. They protect, guide, guard, lead, nourish, comfort, educate, and heal the flock by teaching and preaching the Word. The Bible is clear that Elders must have the ability to teach and to be heard, although not all have to preach. The elders are responsible for equipping the saints for ministry. (Acts 2:42, 1 Tim. 3:2, 1 Tim. 4:13, 1 Tim. 5:17, Titus 1:9, Eph. 4:11-13). Elders must protect the Gathering from unsound doctrine, sin and spiritual attack (Acts 20:17, 28-31; Titus 1:5, 9; 1 Peter 5:2-9).

2. Lead the Flock. In biblical language, to shepherd a group means to lead. This requires humility, leadership gifts, spiritual maturity, management skills, and hard work. Eldership is

very demanding, time-consuming pastoral work, with great responsibility to God and the Gathering. Elders must lead by example and should model what it means to be a faithful partner of the local body. Elders must be men of prayer (2 Sam. 5:2, Acts 20:28, 1 Tim. 3:4-5, 1 Tim. 5:17, 1 Peter 5:1-3, Titus 1:7, 1 Thess. 5:12).

3. Care for the Flock. Elders must share the responsibility of caring for the Gathering's practical needs (comfort, visits, strengthening, discipling, praying, counseling, and managing) through pastoral care and hospitality. The Gathering is not only a flock, but also a body of Spirit-gifted, royal priests who minister to the Lord and His people. As leaders, Elders set the example and work alongside the rest of the body in caring for each other. However, each partner of the Gathering body must also be a minister. Biblical Elders do not control a passive congregation but lead an active Gathering. Elders **MUST** love people. (James 5:14, Acts 6:2-6, 2 Cor. 2:4, Gal. 6:10, 1 Cor. 13:1-2, 1 Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:8).

2.3C. Qualifications of Elders

The biblical qualifications of Elders are described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. An explanation of the biblical qualifications for Elders is given in Appendix I.

2.3D. Selection of Future Elders

Nomination: When the Elders determine that there is a need for additional Elders, the Gathering will nominate candidates based on the biblical qualifications defined in Appendix I. Nominees must be a partner of the Gathering for a minimum of one year unless already ordained as an Elder at another Gathering.

Nominees will be contacted by the existing Elders to see if they aspire to serve and if they meet the basic qualifications to be a Candidate.

Examination: candidates will be interviewed, observed, and evaluated by the Elder Council to consider their spiritual qualifications. After a season of prayer and fasting, those whom they feel led to appoint as Elders will be placed before the Gathering for 21 days of public examination. During that time any Gathering partner may present in writing to the Elder Council any concerns, based upon scripture that a Candidate may not be qualified to serve as an Elder at this time. All written concerns must be signed. No anonymous concerns will be considered. The existing Elders will investigate all concerns and will address them with each candidate as necessary.

Affirmation: Those candidates who have been proven through examination by the Elders and the Gathering will be presented to the congregation for affirmation.

Ordination: If they have not been ordained as an Elder previously, Elder candidates will be publicly ordained in a special public service involving the laying on of hands (1 Tim 5:22).

2.3E. Elder Term of Office

Once a man is appointed as an Elder, he should be honored and recognized as such for life. The only exception to this would be in the case of Biblical reasons why the man should no longer be recognized as an Elder, or because of no longer participating as an active partner of the Gathering. However, it is expected that there may be seasons where an Elder takes a period of time off as an active partner of the Elder Council, in order to reduce his leadership or teaching load during special circumstances, or due to the need for a season of rest and renewal. It is required that every Elder take a one-year inactive break from the Elder Council at least every four years for a season of refreshment and renewal. The Lead Pastor/Teaching Elder is the exception

to the periodic inactive recommendation, but he will be given generous sabbatical periods after certain periods of service. An inactive Elder will not be expected to attend Elder Council meetings, or function as a Pastor during the inactive period. He may continue other duties, as necessary. The Elder Council must unanimously approve an inactive Elder returning to active status. During their active service, each Elder shall be reviewed annually by the rest of the Elders asking the following questions:

Do they continue to meet the character qualifications of an elder as outlined in this document?

Are they effective in their service as an Elder with respect to:

- An active ministry and shepherding relationship with a portion of the flock?
- Devotion to prayer and the Word of God?
- A willingness to set aside personal opinions and pursue a unified answer from God with the rest of the Council?
- Healthy relationships with the other Elders?
- Availability for and participation in the Elder meetings?

2.3F. The Elder Council

The Elder Council will consist of all ordained, active Elders. The Council will determine its own meeting schedule and location. If there are no Ministerial Staff partners on the Elder Council (such as when there is a vacancy in the position of Lead Pastor), then one of the Ministerial Staff will be asked to attend Elder Council meetings in order to serve as a communication liaison to and for the Gathering staff. The Lead Pastor will serve as the leader among equals in the Elder Council, and may delegate administrative responsibilities among Elders and Ministerial Staff. He shall have but one vote in the elder body and in that way is an equal among equals. At the discretion of the Elder Council, Ministerial Staff or others may be invited to Elder meetings as deemed helpful to the administration and leadership of the Gathering.

2.3G. Number of Elders

The number of elders shall be as many as are qualified and needed to carry out the ministry of elders in the Gathering. The elder council shall determine that number but should never be less than four and not to exceed 12. For every ordained staff Elder there shall be at least two lay Elders.

2.3H. Accountability and Removal of Elders

Elders are subject to strict accountability to the Gathering and to each other. Each Elder is under the oversight of the Elder Council and subject to discipline, as are all partners of the Gathering according to Scripture. In case discipline becomes necessary, restoration to wholeness is always a goal. An Elder may be removed because he has disqualified himself due to his behavior or he is unable to presently fulfill his responsibilities. The decision to remove an Elder must be a unanimous decision from the other Elders, excluding the one in question, after much prayer. Two or more partners of the congregation can bring a Biblical concern to the Elder Council concerning the qualification of an Elder (I Timothy 5:19), upon which the Elder Council will investigate and prayerfully determine what direction to follow.

The Elders will regularly communicate with the Gathering. Annually, the Elder Council will set an operating budget for Gathering. This budget and annual ministry reports will be available to Partners upon request.

2.3I. Elder Training and Education

No specific education level is required of Elders. The qualifications are based on character, spiritual maturity and biblical knowledge. Elders will be encouraged to regularly attend training that further develops their biblical knowledge and leadership skills. The existing Elders will mentor and develop future Elders from the existing leaders in the Gathering.

2.3J. Paid and Non-Paid Elders

Both paid Ministerial Staff and non-paid partners are eligible to serve as Elders and must meet the same qualifications. Paid staff Elders and non-paid Elders are of equal authority. Employment and Elder appointments are separate and distinct considerations; and not all paid ministerial staff have to be Elders. A paid partner of the Ministerial Staff may cease to be an employee of the Gathering, either voluntarily or otherwise, but may still continue to be an Elder; and an unpaid Elder may become a partner of the staff and receive compensation for specific services rendered. The Gathering Ministerial Staff who are not Elders should be referred to as “Ministers” not Pastors. Paid staff Elders will be held accountable to the Elder Council just as are all non-paid Elders, without distinction.

SECTION 2.4. LEAD PASTOR/TEACHING ELDER

2.4A. Qualifications of a Lead Pastor/Teaching Elder

The general qualifications of a Lead Pastor/Teaching Elder are the same as that of any other Elder. The Lead Pastor/Teaching Elder must be spiritually and educationally qualified to teach the Gathering as an under-shepherd of Christ. He should be particularly gifted in the public preaching and teaching of the Word to the body and in leadership.

2.4B. Responsibilities of a Lead Pastor/Teaching Elder

The primary responsibilities of the Lead Pastor/Teaching Elder will be prayer, study of the Word, and teaching/preaching of the Word. He will be responsible for weekly preaching for the majority of the year. He may appoint other Ministerial Staff, Elders, or guests to preach when necessary (e.g. vacations, revivals, special emphasis, etc.). He will also be first among equals on the Elder Council and will be responsible for either serving as Chair of the Elder Council or the appointment of a Council Chairman (with approval by the Elder Council). He will be responsible for daily oversight and management of the Gathering staff, although he may designate another staff partner or Elder to serve that role with approval by the Elder Council.

The Lead Pastor/Teaching Elder will be expected to take one working weekday per month away from the office to focus purely on prayer and study. A one-month sabbatical may be taken at his discretion (with agreement on the dates from the Elder Council) between years 3 and 6 of service. After 7 years of service, a three-month sabbatical will be encouraged for personal and ministerial renewal. Another month of sabbatical may be taken between years 10 and 13, and another three month sabbatical will be provided after 14 years. This pattern will continue to repeat for longer tenures. At the discretion of the Elders, they may increase the frequency or duration of sabbatical time necessary for the Lead Pastor/Teaching Elder or may grant sabbaticals to other paid staff Elders.

2.4C. Selection Process of a Lead Pastor/Teaching Elder

The Elders will oversee the Lead Pastor/Teaching Elder search process and may appoint other Gathering partners to be involved in the search process. Upon reaching unanimity through much prayer, the Elders will present the candidate before the Gathering. As mentioned in Section 2.2C,

the Gathering will have a season of prayer as a body. After that time, the Elders will provide an opportunity for sharing of the prayer results from Partners. The Elders will humbly listen to the voice of all Partners who request an audience with the elders during this season. After this time, the Elder table will meet again to confirm the direction by the Holy Spirit.

2.4D. Accountability and Removal of a Lead Pastor/Teaching Elder

The process of disciplining the Lead Pastor/Teaching Elder is the same standard as for any other Elder (Section 2.3I). No partiality is to be shown. Restoration to wholeness is always a goal. In the case that removal is necessary; the Gathering will compensate the Lead Pastor/Teaching Elder with not less than one-twelfth of the total annual compensation. The Lead Pastor may resign by giving at least a two-week notice to the Gathering.

SECTION 2.5. DEACONS

2.5A. General Statement

The New Testament gives us a clear indication of both Elders and Deacons in the local Gathering. Deacons were those who rendered service (*diakonos*) in the local Gathering. As distinct officers in the local Gathering, they are referred to in the plural (*diakonoi*, Phil. 1:1), and are mentioned in addition to Elders in 1 Tim. 3:8–13. The government of the local Gathering rests upon the Elders (1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:17), while the Deacons give needed assistance in the various ministries of the body of believers. Deacons actively serve the physical needs of the Gathering. To that end, Christway subscribes to the belief that ministry volunteers fulfill the role of deacons. Christway does not officially designate partners to the title of deacon. Instead, Christway vets volunteers with the above biblical requirements and integrates said volunteers into various positions throughout the regular operations of the gathering in a way that puts them in a unique position to care for the needs of the gathering in ways that the staff and elders cannot.

SECTION 2.6. GATHERING STAFF

This area includes all employed personnel. There are four categories of Gathering staff: ministerial, support, custodial, and other.

1. Selection. The Elders shall be responsible for the creation of positions, filling of positions, and dismissal of employees. The Lead Pastor/Teaching Elder will be responsible for day-to-day supervision of all employees, although these responsibilities may be delegated to other Elders or staff.
2. Responsibilities. The Elders shall maintain a “Personnel Policies and Procedures Guide” as part of the Gathering Policies & Procedures Handbook, detailing the job descriptions and areas of responsibility of the Gathering staff.
3. Salaries for all paid staff, including all paid Elders, will be determined by an administrative team of partners, which will include at least one non-paid Elder. The Lead Pastor/Teaching Elder, or the assigned staff leader, will be responsible for participating in the determination of salaries and raises for other paid Elders, and will make salary recommendations for the other paid staff to the administrative team.
4. Licensing and Ordination. The Gathering may license and/or ordain any person as a minister of the Gospel, after first examining the applicant’s background, moral and religious character, education and training, and previous Christian service. Final determination of a person’s

suitability for licensing or ordination shall be within the discretion of the Elders. The person does not have to be an employee of the Gathering. Requests for licensing or ordination as a minister of the Gospel shall be submitted to the Elders. Candidates who are approved shall receive a certificate evidencing the licensing or ordination after the Elder Council has approved and completed the process.

ARTICLE III – Gathering ORGANIZATION

SECTION 3.1. DEFINITION

Gathering is composed of those whose names appear on the Partnership roll of the Gathering.

SECTION 3.2. WORSHIP

Praise services, special meetings, and the Ordinances of the Gathering shall be observed at times set by Elders.

SECTION 3.3. PARTNER MEETINGS

1. The Elders reserve the right to conduct mandatory meetings of all Partners if deemed necessary.
2. Partner meetings shall be guided by an agenda presented by the Elders. All Partner meetings requiring the affirmation of the Gathering shall be in writing with advance notice. Partner meetings shall follow [Robert's Rules of Order](#) to provide structure to the proceedings.
3. In the event of major decisions affecting the direction of the Gathering such as (but not limited to) changes in the Constitution, Bylaws, or the transaction of business pertinent to the purchase, sale, or mortgage of property, the Gathering will be given an extended period of time for the affirmation process. All prayerful, biblical concerns shall be given careful consideration by the Elders.

SECTION 3.4. GATHERING ORGANIZATION

All administrative areas of the Gathering shall be autonomous to ChristWay Community Church with all officers and ministry leaders being active partners of the Gathering. The leadership of organizational elements and ministries of the Gathering shall be appointed by the Elders in cooperation with the Ministerial Staff. Committees, officers, organizations, and ministries may be appointed by the Elders and Ministerial Staff as necessary, to meet the needs of the Gathering.

ARTICLE IV. Gathering FINANCE

SECTION 4.1. BUDGET

The Elders shall appoint a finance team to oversee the preparation, approval, and oversight of the Gathering budget.

The finance team in cooperation with the Elders, the Ministerial Staff and ministry leaders, shall maintain documentation of expenditures and revenue for reporting purposes.

SECTION 4.2. ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES

All funds for any and all purposes shall pass through the Gathering's financial system and be properly recorded. All individuals who have signature or accounting authority over funds in excess of five hundred dollars shall be bonded.

SECTION 4.3. FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the Gathering shall be the calendar year, unless otherwise designated by the Elders.

SECTION 4.4. FINANCIAL REPORTING

The ChristWay Financial Secretary shall make copies of the financial statements available to the active resident Partnership at least annually in the Gathering office. These financial statements will show summaries of receipts and disbursements, with expense reports structured similar to the budget line items.

The Financial Secretary will also provide end-of-year individual contribution records to the Partnership.

ARTICLE V. INDEMNIFICATION OF ELDERS AND OFFICERS RESPONSIBLE FOR FINANCE

The Gathering shall indemnify the Elders, any partner of the Finance or Budget Teams, any officer of the Gathering, its Financial Secretary, and any person who may have served at its request as a partner of the Finance Team, against and for any expense, fine, penalty, tax liability or similar item or cost, or the expense actually and necessarily incurred by him or her in connection with the defense of any action, suit or proceeding in which he or she is made a party by reason of being or having been such Finance Committee partner or Treasurer, except in relation to matters as to which he or she shall be adjudged in such action, suit or proceeding to be liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of duty.

"Negligence or misconduct in the performance of duty" shall not include mistakes in calculation, mistakes in filings, or mistakes in connection with the processing or preparation of the Gathering's payroll, accounting, or books and records, unless any such mistake constitutes or otherwise is attributable to the gross neglect or intentional dereliction of such person in the performance of such person's duty as a partner of the Gathering's Finance Team or as an officer of the Gathering. No intentional act of misconduct will be indemnified.

The Gathering may also reimburse to an Elder, any such partner of the Gathering's Finance or Budget Teams, or an officer of the Gathering, or the Financial Secretary, the reasonable costs of settlement of any such action, suit, or proceeding, including administrative proceedings involving the Gathering, brought by any government agency, if it shall be found by a majority of a committee composed of directors not involved in the matter in controversy (whether or not a quorum) that it is in the best interest of the Gathering that such settlement be made and that such Finance Team partner, or Financial Secretary, or officer, was not guilty of negligence or misconduct. Such rights of indemnification and reimbursement shall not be deemed exclusive of any other right to which such Finance Committee partner or officer may be entitled under any bylaw, agreement or otherwise.

Any such indemnification by the Gathering shall not exceed the maximum available liability limits of any applicable insurance policy.

ARTICLE VI. INDEMNIFICATION, INSURANCE, AND LIABILITY

SECTION 6.1. INDEMNIFICATION OF GATHERING ELDERS, OFFICERS, AND OTHERS

1. The Gathering may indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending, or completed action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative (other than an action by or in the right of the Gathering) by reason of the fact that the person is or was a Gathering Elder, director, officer, employee, or ministry leader of the Gathering, or is or was serving at the request of the Gathering as a director or officer or ministry leader of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, or other enterprise, against expenses (including attorneys fees), judgments, fines, and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by the person in connection with such threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding. Any such indemnification may be payable by the Gathering only if the claim for indemnification relates to an activity by said persons that is not excluded, expressly or by operation of law, from any applicable policy of liability insurance. The termination of any action, suit, or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner which he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the Gathering, and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had reasonable cause to believe that his conduct was unlawful.
2. The Gathering may indemnify any person who is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action or suit by or in the right of the Gathering to procure a judgment in its favor by reason of the fact that he is or was an Elder, director or officer or ministry leader of the Gathering, or is or was serving at the request of the Gathering as a director, officer, ministry leader or representative of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise against expenses (including attorneys fees), judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement, actually and reasonably incurred by the person in connection with such threatened, pending or completed action or suit by or in the right of the Gathering. Any such indemnification may be payable by the Gathering only if the claim for indemnification relates to an activity by said persons that is not excluded, expressly or by operation of law, from any applicable policy of liability insurance.
3. Expenses incurred in defending a civil or criminal action, suit or proceeding of the kind described in Section 6.1, Sub-Sections 1 and 2 of this Article may be paid by the Gathering in advance of the final disposition of such action, suit or proceeding upon receipt of an undertaking, by or on behalf of the person who may be entitled to indemnification under those Sections, to repay such amount unless it shall ultimately be determined that he is entitled to be indemnified by the Gathering.
4. The Gathering may, at the discretion of and to the extent and for such persons as determined by the Elders, (i) indemnify any person who neither is nor was an Elder, a director or officer or ministry leader of the Gathering, but who is or was a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal,

administrative or investigative (and whether brought by or in the right of the Gathering), by reason of the fact that the person is or was a representative of the Gathering, against expenses (including attorneys fees), judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement, actually and reasonably incurred by the person in connection with such threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding; and (ii) pay such expenses in advance of the final disposition of such action, suit or proceeding, upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of such person to repay such amount if it shall ultimately be determined by a court of competent jurisdiction that such person is not entitled to be indemnified by the Gathering.

5. Any right to indemnification provided in this Article shall continue as to a person who has ceased to be a pastor, director or officer or ministry leader of the Gathering and shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors and administrators of such a person.
6. Nothing herein contained shall be construed as limiting the power or obligation of the Gathering to indemnify any person in accordance with applicable state law provisions as amended from time to time or in accordance with any similar law adopted in lieu thereof.
7. The Gathering shall also indemnify any person against expenses (including attorneys' fees), actually and reasonably incurred by him in enforcing any right to indemnification under this Article, under the Gathering's state nonprofit corporation law as amended from time to time or under any similar law adopted in lieu thereof.
8. Any person who shall serve as an Elder, a director, officer, ministry leader, employee, or agent of the Gathering or who shall serve at the request of the Gathering, as a director, officer, ministry leader, employee, or agent of another corporation, joint partnership, joint venture trust, or other enterprise shall be deemed to do so with knowledge of and in reliance upon the rights of indemnification provided in this Article, under applicable state law indemnification provisions as amended from time to time and, in or under any similar law adopted in lieu thereof.

SECTION 6.2. INSURANCE

The Gathering shall have the power to purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was an Elder, director, officer, ministry leader, employee or agent of the Gathering or is or was serving at the request of the Gathering as a director, officer, ministry leader, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, or other enterprise against any liability asserted against him and incurred by him in any such capacity, or arising out of his status as such, whether or not the Gathering would have the power to indemnify him against such liability.

SECTION 6.3. LIABILITY OF ELDERS AND OFFICERS

To the fullest extent permitted by applicable state law, as now in effect and as amended from time to time, the Elders, or a director or officer or ministry leader of the Gathering shall not be personally liable for monetary damages for any action taken or failure to take any action.

ARTICLE VII. AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be amended by the Elders and affirmed by the Gathering with an extended affirmation period of at least 30 days.

APPENDIX 1: QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

The following is an interpretation and clarification of the biblical qualifications of Elders and Deacons in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, and is intended to be used as the criteria for examining and appointing qualified men. Since only the Lord Jesus Christ was perfect, these qualifications shall not be interpreted as an indication of human perfection, but of the normal, usual, and predictable behavior of the one being qualified. It is expected that deviations would be the exception, and would be appropriately responded to by the individual. The Bible translation used in this Appendix is the *English Standard Version (ESV)*.

1 Timothy 3:1-7

1. Above reproach (1 Tim. 3:2, Gk. *anepileptos*). Literal Greek: “blameless, affording nothing of which an adversary can take hold”

- a. Blameless: There is no valid accusation of wrong-doing that can be made against him. This is an umbrella statement under which all of the other qualifications fall.
- b. This is a present-tense phrase. The present participle *einai* (be) means that the Elder is in a present state of being above reproach.
- c. If they could be accused of violating any of the qualifications it would have to be in the past, and there would have had to be a notable change that has been publicly observed for a significant period of time.

2. Husband of one wife (1 Tim 3:2 and Titus 1:6, Gk. *mias gynaikos andra*): Literal Greek: “one woman man”

- a. This does not mean an elder must be married, since there is no definite article in the Greek text, but if a man is married then he must be faithful to his wife. Single men and widowers are eligible.

3. Temperate (1 Tim. 3:2, Gk. *nephalios*): Literal Greek: “wineless” or “unmixed with wine”

- a. The Greek context for this word means alert, sober, watchful, vigilant, clear-headed, self-controlled, mentally stable, and emotionally stable.
- b. Freedom from excess or rash behavior.

4. Self-controlled (1 Tim 3:2, Gk. *sophron*) Literal Greek: “One who has a healthy mind”

- a. Prudent, sober-minded, sensible
- b. A person who is free to act, but his sound mind tells him how to limit his freedom of action.
- c. This characteristic tempers pride, authoritarianism, and self-justification
- d. One who is self-controlled, particularly as it relates to exercising good judgment, discretion and common sense.

5. Respectable (1 Tim 3:2, Gk. *kosmios*)

- a. Honest, decent, and well behaved
- b. Demonstrates a well-ordered life and honorable behavior.
- c. Someone who behaves in a manner that others would want to follow.

6. Hospitable (1 Tim 3:2 and Titus 1:8, Gk. *philoxenos*) Literal Greek: “friend of strangers”

- a. Their home life is open so all can see their spiritual character.
- b. Taking the initiative to invite others into their home, including strangers.
- c. Available

7. Able to teach (1 Tim 3:2, Gk. *didaktikos*) Literal Greek: “instructive”

- a. An Elder must be able to teach, but is not required by the text to have the spiritual gift of teaching.
- b. The ability to teach involves three basic elements: knowledge of Scripture, the readiness and desire to teach, and the ability to communicate in a manner that is heard and received by the flock.
- c. All Elders do not have to be gifted to fill the pulpit in a public setting, but must be able to clearly communicate the Word of God according to the guidelines in Titus 1:9.
- d. In 1 Timothy 5:17 it is clear that some Elders will focus more strongly on preaching than others.
- e. A teacher has earned the right to be heard by their lifestyle and people are willing to learn from them.

8. Not given to drunkenness (1 Tim 3:3, Gk. *me paroinon*) Literal Greek: “not staying near wine”

- a. An Elder must be above reproach with regard to alcohol or other addictive behaviors.

9. Not violent (1 Tim. 3:3, Gk. *plektes*): Literal Greek: “not a striker”

- a. A man who keeps his temper under control.
- b. Not a fighter, bad-tempered, irritable, or out-of-control individual.
- c. He must react to situations calmly, coolly, and gently.

10. Gentle (1 Tim. 3:3, Gk. *epiekes*) No English word fully conveys the meaning of this Greek word. The range of meaning includes: kind, gentle, equitable, gracious, forbearing.

- a. He does not keep a list of wrongs and does not hold grudges.
- b. Yielding wherever yielding is possible instead of standing up for one’s rights.
- c. The shepherd must be patient, gracious, and understanding with the erring – and at times frustrating – sheep and/or fellow Elders.

11. Not quarrelsome (1 Tim. 3:3, Gk. *amachos*): Literal Greek: “disinclined to fight, not a brawler”

- a. A person who is not disposed to fights or quarrels.
- b. Not quick-tempered but peaceful.
- c. Should contend for the faith, but not fight other believers.
- d. Must be able to handle disagreements within a team environment in a loving and godly manner.

12. Not a lover of money (1 Tim. 3:3, Gk. *aphilarguros*): Literal Greek: “one who is not a friend of money”

- a. An Elder must not be greedy, and love of money must not drive his life.
- b. Not one who tries to gain financial wealth through dishonest means.
- c. Must be content with the financial blessings God has given him.

13. Must manage (1 Tim 3:4-5, Gk. *prohistemi*, Literal Greek: “lead and care for”) **his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s Gathering?)**

- a. An Elder must have a reputation for managing his home and family well. He must be a model Christian father, husband, and household manager.
- b. The home is a proving ground for ministry. A man must provide proper leadership to his own family before he can provide it for the Gathering.
- c. He must have a reputation for providing for his family, financially, emotionally, and spiritually.
- d. If he is a father and husband, his leadership style should not be tyrannical. He must be a loving and responsible spiritual leader, and his children must obey and submit to the father’s leadership while under his care.
- e. An Elder’s first ministry is to his family, and if he does not fulfill this duty well, then he is not ready to lead the Gathering.
- f. This qualification does not mean that Elders must be married or have children.

14. Not a recent convert (1 Tim. 3:6, Gk. *neophutos*, Literal Greek: “not a novice”) **or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.**

- a. Must not be a new convert whose stability in the faith has not yet been tried and proven.
- b. An Elder must be spiritually mature, not just a believer for a number of years, and must know his own heart.
- c. A new Christian does not yet know his own heart or understand the craftiness of the enemy, so he is vulnerable to pride – the most subtle of all temptations and most destructive of all sins.
- d. A strong evidence that a man is mature is that humility characterizes his life.

15. He must also have a good reputation (1 Tim. 3:7, Gk. *marturia*, Literal Greek: “certifying testimony”) **with outsiders so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap.**

- a. A man chosen to lead the Gathering must maintain a reputation in the community for moral character, love, kindness, generosity, and goodness.
- b. Even if outsiders don’t agree with his theology or moral stance, they respect his integrity and lifestyle.

Titus 1:5-9

16. An Elder must be blameless (Titus 1:6, Gk. *aneglektos*) Literal Greek: “not arraignable”

- a. Meaning is very similar to Qualification #1.
- b. If he does wrong, then he makes it right.

17. Husband of one wife (Titus 1:6, Gk. *mias gynaikos andra*): Literal Greek: “one woman man”

- a. See Qualification #2.

18. A man whose children believe (Titus 1:6, Literal Greek: “having faithful children”) **and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient** (Gk. *pista, me in kategoria asotias e anupotakta*)

- a. His children are not to be continually rebellious or uncontrollable.
- b. He has the ability to lead his children to salvation and sanctification.

- c. His children should be believers, or on a clear path to salvation, depending on age and understanding. We recognize that the Holy Spirit is ultimately responsible for prompting the process of salvation.
- d. His responsibility to shepherd the spiritual condition of his children takes precedence over Elder responsibilities.

19. Not over-bearing (Titus 1:7, Gk. *authade*) Literal Greek: “pleasing himself”

- a. Not arrogant, stubborn, condemning, or self-willed.
- b. A person who does not have to have his or her own way and puts the needs of others first.
- c. This person does not try to impose his will on others.

20. Not quick-tempered (Titus 1:7, Gk. *orgilos*): Literal Greek: “easily angered”

- a. This refers to one who gets easily angered at the wrong time and for the wrong reason.
- b. Their anger should be limited to when the cause of Christ is attacked, and not to personal injury or insults.
- c. An Elder is a person who should not be angry, unless there is an unselfish reason to be angry.

21. Not given to drunkenness

- a. See Qualification # 8.

22. Not violent

- a. See Qualification #9.

23. Not pursuing dishonest gain

- a. See Qualification #12.

24. Hospitable

- a. See Qualification #6.

25. Loves what is good (Titus 1: 8, Gk. *philagathos*) Literal Greek: “lover of goodness”

- a. A lover of good things, good people, and good actions.
- b. Loves to see good done and loves to be involved in doing good.
- c. This is a redemptive love to both friends and enemies.

26. Self-controlled (Gk. *egkrates*) Literal Greek: “master of himself”

- a. A man who pursues self-mastery.
- b. God’s steward must be characterized by self-control and self-discipline in every aspect of life.
- c. Particularly self-controlled in his physical desires, since an undisciplined man has little resistance to sexual lust, anger, slothfulness, a critical spirit, or other base desires.

27. Upright (Titus 1:8, Gk. *dikaio*s) Literal Greek: “justly”

- a. A man who makes fair, just decisions for the Gathering.
- b. Should care about whether people are treated fairly, and should want to see justice in the world at all levels.
- c. Views the rights of others, as though they were his own.

28. Holy (Titus 1:8, Gk. *hosios*) Literal Greek: “Devout”

- a. A man who is firmly committed to God and His Word, despite the changing winds of culture and circumstances.
- b. He should have a deep personal relationship with the Lord.

29. Disciplined (Titus 1:8, Gk. *sophron*) Literal Greek: “One who has a healthy mind”

The NIV chose to translate the word *sophron* as “self-controlled” in qualification #4 (1 Timothy 3).

- a. See Qualification #4.

30. Hold firmly (Titus 1:9, Gk. *antecho*, Literal Greek: “cling firmly to”) **to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.**

- a. A man who is solid and unshakeable in his grasp of the Word of God.
- b. His lifestyle is characterized by a continual studying of the Word of God.
- c. Understands and knows what sound doctrine is and is able to teach and instruct others.
- d. He can recognize false doctrine and lovingly confront and correct the one in err.