

Leadership Structures at Capilano Christian Community (June, 2017)

At CapChurch, people matter. Our community has a long history of believing that relationships are primary, and trust is essential. Systems cannot replace relationships, and structures are not a substitute for trust.

Because of this, our governance structures are simple, and defined more by personhood and plurality than by power or position. These convictions are very much in step with the biblical material on church leadership.

Biblical Reflections on Leadership

Character over Competencies

In each of Acts 6:1-17; 14:23; Acts 20:13-38; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:1-13; 4:14; 5:17-20; Titus 1:5-9; James 5:14; I Peter 5:1-4 we see there is much **more emphasis on the character and trustworthiness of the leader, and the way they relate to others than there is on their job descriptions, or the structures in which they serve.** The biblical material seems more concerned with who is doing the work and how they are doing it, rather than all the details of what they are doing and how governance functions. It is also interesting to note in Acts 6:1-7 that governance may need to adapt to new circumstances.

Christ is the Head

When new churches are described in the New Testament three truths need to be taken together—First, **Christ is the head of the body, the church** (Ephesians 4:15; Colossians 1:18). **Our ultimate leader at Cap is the Chief Shepherd, the Head--Jesus Christ.** He was sent by the Father and left us His Holy Spirit; it is the privilege and responsibility of leaders to pay attention to the triune God and live faithfully with Him as their primary audience. By the same token, we all need to carry out our part of the work as it is encouraged and equipped by the Head of the church and by those He has put in positions of leadership.

All Leaders are Under-Shepherds

Second, **Christ has provided elders, shepherds, pastors, teachers, overseers, and deacons, to provide leadership in his church.** Christ is not leading his church without utilizing His people, nor are individuals or groups of people leading the church without recognizing Christ's ultimate headship. Peter summarizes it well—Be shepherds of God's flock...and when the Chief Shepherd appears... (I Peter 5:2, 4).

We Need "One Another"

Third, we are reminded consistently that **the body also needs to function with a commitment to "one another."** This poignant phrase is used 59 times in the New Testament and is a call to mutual and shared responsibilities. Just as church leaders cannot abdicate their authority because Christ is the head of the church, neither can people in the church avoid their God-given mandate to show care, compassion and concern for others, believing this is the sole

responsibility of leaders. The “whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.” (Ephesians 4:16). At CapChurch, we do not believe that it is the responsibility of the leaders, either unpaid or paid, to do all the ministry.

Elders versus Overseers

We believe **the terms ‘elder’ and ‘overseer’ reflect the different culture contexts of the New Testament material and may be used interchangeably.** The first term, reflecting Jewish heritage, speaks to the dignity and maturity of those who lead, while the second is linked with a Greek context and describes those who watched over the church like a shepherd would watch over sheep. It appears that **elders/overseers were those who prayerfully kept the truth, guarded the truth, and communicated the truth so that the church was strengthened in its faith and grew into maturity.** The Bible does not tell us what every elder did or that every elder did everything, but what is clear is that it was their job to lead, govern, and provide direction without micromanaging every detail.

With the biblical material being written in a very different context to our own, we recognize the need for us to both understand the cultural arena in which churches and church leaders operated then, as well as to discern how that same material has application for today. In our contemporary context, most elders almost always have outside employment or responsibilities in the home and simply do not have the time or energy to devote to all church matters. However, this does not eliminate the need to have **a leadership group that has ‘eyes on’ the work of the church even though they are ‘hands off.’ These elders or overseers do not do everything but seek to ensure that everything is being done.**

The Pastor-Teacher

In Ephesians 4:11-16, Paul describes the leadership gifts that are given to the church including the gift of the **pastor-teacher. This individual does their work with a view to equip people for service, so that the body is built up, unified, and mature.** When the pastor-teacher provides leadership through prayerful pastoring and teaching the church is strengthened and God is served.

Elders at CapChurch: “Over and Under”

At Cap, Elders have a dual role. Firstly, they **oversee** the church and the Lead Pastor in several ways: by functioning as guardians of the truth for the strengthening of the body, by overseeing the work of the lead pastor, and by serving as Directors of the Society that is Capilano Christian Community. As Directors, Cap Elders are thus legally responsible for oversight of the church. However, Elders also **come under** the church by caring for the body through prayer and care, and likewise caring for and supporting the work of the Lead Pastor.

Doing all of this requires the character qualities outlined in the biblical passages noted earlier: a thirst for both understanding and living out the truths of the Bible; a commitment to prayerfully keeping, guarding, and communicating the identity of the church in its passion for Christ and compassion for neighbor; a love for people demonstrated in personal care and wise

shepherding; hiring, oversight, empowerment, evaluation, and encouragement of the Lead Pastor; and support of the staff team.

Under the leadership of the Elders' Chair, this group meets every other month to carry out its mandate. Twice a year, Cap Elders will publish an online letter for the community, with highlights shared during the Sunday morning service previous to its publication. This is a communication from the Elders outlining the areas they have been discussing (keeping confidentiality in mind), along with encouragements, concerns, and items of information and interest.

Discerning New Elders

Prospective elders have the character qualities described in the biblical passages above, and are already functioning in some way as an elder in the community. With input from the community, current elders and staff propose names for consideration; the team of elders then prayerfully selects individuals to approach. Once candidates are approached, the names of willing candidates are brought before the community for input. If nothing arises from congregational feedback that would disqualify a candidate, potential elders are asked to serve a one year apprenticeship after which time both the candidate and the elders take three months to discern a call to eldership. Once the call is discerned, new elders are formally affirmed and commissioned by the community.

Terms of Elders

All Elders take a mandatory sabbatical year after seven years of service. This represents an opportunity for discerning whether there is a continued call to serve as an elder at Cap.

The Pastoral Team at CapChurch

The Pastoral Team consists of the Lead Pastor and other staff members who are responsible for the overall care and leadership of the church on a day-to-day basis. At present the Pastoral Team consists of John Colpitts (youth minister), Shelley MacDonald-Lin (worship minister), Rod Wilson (teaching associate), and Kim Pierrot (Lead Pastor).

The Lead Pastor leads the Pastoral Team as well as those staff members serving in support roles at the church. The Lead Pastor always possesses the same character qualities as an elder/overseer, shares the same passion for Scripture, the same commitment to the identity of CapChurch, and meets as an elder with the Elders team (although there are points during the year when the Elders meet in-camera without the Lead Pastor). This person's role is unique in that they work full-time in the church; have particular giftedness to provide leadership through visioning, preaching, teaching, and pastoral care; and direct the staff through hiring, supervision, and evaluation. Just as the Elders do not do everything but seek to ensure that everything is being done, the Lead Pastor adopts a similar posture seeking to work this out on a day to day basis.

Under the leadership of the Lead Pastor, the Pastoral Team meets every second week to carry out its mandate. Twice a year the pastoral team will publish an online letter for the community

outlining the areas they have been discussing (keeping confidentiality in mind), along with encouragements, concerns, and items of information and interest.

Cap Leadership Summits

Four times a year the Elders and Pastoral Team meet together under the leadership of the Lead Pastor, each gathering with a unique wisdom-discernment focus.

May —What will we do next? (Planning)

October—How are things going? (Assessing)

January—What are we hearing? (Listening Session open to the community)

March—Where are we going next? (Envisioning)

In between these meetings each Elder supports the staff by praying for a particular team member; finding ways actively to encourage and affirm them; and spending time personally with them between one and two times a year. Each Elder also commits to participating in the CapCare Circle, caring for a particular group of people within the community by emailing them to ask for prayer requests, passing on these requests to other elders as appropriate, and to initiate contact with them as the Holy Spirit leads, or as the Lead Pastor requests.

Our Leadership Covenant

We, the leaders at CapChurch, want to value people, and to cultivate relationships of trust. To this end, we are committed to communicating openly and regularly. With God's help, and in submission and obedience to our Chief Shepherd, we will seek to fulfill our responsibilities prayerfully and diligently with godly character.

CapChurch Leadership Team

Kim Pierrot, Elder and Lead Pastor

Elders

David Zimmerman, Elder Chair

Andrea Smith, Elder

Lynne Smith, Elder

Brian Dean, Elder

Dan Thomson, Elder

Pastoral Team

John Colpitts, Youth and Young Adults Minister

Shelley MacDonald-Lin, Worship Minister

Rod Wilson, Teaching Associate