

Spiritual Leadership

Eldership and Church Governance Framework

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Introduction

This document aims to concisely:

- State the importance and principles of good eldership and church governance;
- Provide a framework so elders can quickly understand their responsibilities; and
- Point to resources available to help fulfil those responsibilities.

This is not a comprehensive survey of eldership and governance in the church context as there are excellent resources that already achieve this. The biblical records describe how the early church recognised elders, appointed deacons, conducted councils to make significant theological decisions and, as time went on, appointed bishops to oversee church work in a region. In recognition that there is much descriptive biblical material (with no actual prescribed church leadership structure) this eldership and governance framework takes a principled approach, leaving the development of the leadership architecture to suit individual churches.

The Importance of Church Governance

Spiritual leadership of a church community is a high calling and a significant responsibility. This framework sees all church leadership responsibilities as being spiritual in nature and so collects all of these responsibilities into one place. Governance is a spiritual activity that requires the elders of a church to take responsibility:

“Governance is the coming together of a group of elected individuals to act as one for the purpose of guiding the organisation, of which they hold trusteeship, toward the accomplishment of its ends, while keeping it in check along the way.” Olan Hendrix

The reasons a church will need to appoint leaders to make decisions on its behalf are:

- To provide spiritual leadership and oversight to the broader church community.
- When the group grows to a point where the whole group is too large to make decisions, there needs to be a smaller group who acts on behalf of and for the good of the entire community.
- The society in which the church exists requires it to have a “board” or “governance group” to formally take responsibility for legal accountabilities.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are changed to various alternatives in churches but they are defined here to provide consistent understanding for the purpose of this framework.

Ministry Team Leader

The person with the responsibility of leading the ministry activity of the church, as distinct from the eldership who provide oversight. Often this person is called the senior pastor in a church and is usually a paid staff person, although it can be a volunteer.

Eldership

The highest positioned leadership group in the church, the Eldership is the group who takes responsibility for the governance responsibilities of the church. An Elder is member of the eldership.

Ministry team

The group of ministry leaders who lead various aspects of the ministry activity of the church. This team is led by the Ministry Team Leader and the ministry leaders are directly accountable to the Ministry Team Leader for performing their roles. Ministry leaders may be paid staff or volunteers.

Church governance

All the leadership responsibilities of the Eldership who are charged with acting on behalf and for the congregation as a whole.

Eldership: Reflections on the Biblical Material

This section is modified from an original paper written by Graham Clarke

The first issue to deal with as we think about the role of elders in the church is how to read the biblical teaching on this issue. While the Bible does not give us prescriptive teaching on church structure, we are given examples of how the early church dealt with issues of administration, leadership and spiritual oversight. These examples are founded on sound principles and we can draw guidance from the example of scripture. This example of leadership in the New Testament (NT) offers strong teaching on character as the key qualification for elders and deacons.

The Bible on Eldership

The idea of eldership that we find at work in Acts and the NT letters is something that the church inherited, to large extent, from its culture. The idea of elder is very much at work in the Old Testament (OT). What follows is an excerpt from the *New Bible Dictionary* on eldership – it provides a good survey of the OT material.

Throughout the Bible, seniority entitles people to respect (Lv. 19:32; 1 Tim. 5:1) and age is thought of as bringing experience and therefore wisdom (1 Ki. 12:6-15; Pr. 4:1; 5:1). Consequently, the leading men of Israel, right through its OT history, are the 'elders' of the nation (Ex. 3:16, 18; Lv. 4:15; Jdg. 21:16; 1 Sa. 4:3; 2 Sa. 3:17; 1 Ki. 8:1, 3; 2 Ki. 23:1; 1 Ch. 11:3; Ezr.5:5, 9; Je. 26:17; Ezk. 8:1, etc.). Seventy of them are chosen to share the burden of ruling with Moses (Nu. 11:16-30), and the elders later do something similar for the king. Along with the priests, they are entrusted with the written Law, and charged to read it to the people (Dt. 31:9-13). When the people settle in the promised land, and are dispersed throughout its cities, the elders of the cities act as judges there (Dt. 19:12; 21:19f.; 22:15-18; Jos. 20:4; Ru. 4:2, 4, 9, 11; 1 Ki. 21:8, 11; 2 Ki. 10:1, 5), thus continuing the practice of having lay judges for lesser questions, which began in the wilderness (Ex. 18:13-26; Dt. 1:9-18). The appeal judges at Jerusalem, however, are partly lay, partly priestly (Dt. 17:8-13; 2 Ch. 19:8-11).

The lay judges of Ex. 18 and Dt. 1 are selected for their wisdom, piety and integrity. Similarly, the choice made among the elders in Nu. 11 probably reflects a recognition that age does not bring wisdom invariably. Indeed, a wise youth is better than a foolish old king (Ec. 4:13).

At Jerusalem also, the ancient link between elders and priests continues (La. 1:19; 4:16) and is prominent in the NT (Mt. 21:23; 26:3, 47; 27:1, 3, 12, 20; 28:11f.; Acts 4:23; 23:14; 25:15). Out of it has now grown the Sanhedrin, which is the ruling council of the nation and its supreme court of justice, presided over by the high priest. The elders and chief priests are included among its seventy-one members (Mt. 27:1; Mk. 8:31; 14:53; 15:1; Lk. 22:66; Acts 4:5, 8, 23; 22:5), along with 'scribes' and 'rulers', terms which probably have very similar meanings to the other two.

For their duty of judging the people according to God's law, the priests and elders need a knowledge of God's law, and this is why the priests are given the further duty of teaching it (Lv. 10:10f.; Dt. 33:10; Mal. 2:6f.). In 1st-century Alexandria we still find the priests as well as the elders performing this duty, by expounding the Scriptures to the people in the synagogue on the Sabbath (Philo, *Hypothetica* 7. 13), but in Palestine the task of teaching seems to have passed over almost entirely to the elders, who are called by this name in Lk. 7:3, in a Jerusalem synagogue inscription from before AD 70, and in the rabbinical literature, but in the NT are usually called 'scribes' (Scripture-experts), 'teachers of the law', 'lawyers' or 'rabbis'. They teach on occasion in the Temple (Lk. 2:46) but have their great centre of influence in the synagogue (Mt. 23:6; Mk. 1:21f.; Lk. 5:17; 6:6f.; 7:3-5). In the rabbinical literature, their primary duty is still to be judges, and this is why we read in the NT of excommunications from the synagogue (Jn. 9:22; 12:42; 16:2), and of punishments being inflicted in the synagogue (Mt. 23:34; Mk. 13:9; Acts 22:19; 26:11). The synagogue also has one or more 'synagogue-rulers', responsible for keeping order there (Lk. 13:14) and for choosing who should preach (Acts 13:15), read the lessons or lead the prayers; and an 'attendant' (Lk. 4:20). The non-biblical evidence suggests that these are local appointments attached to the synagogue building. The elder, on the other hand, is ordained by their teacher and thus has a wider scope for their ministry, though they usually settle and earn their living by a trade. An elder in turn ordains their own pupils, often with the co-operation of two other elders, and usually by the laying on of hands and thus a succession of teachers and judges, and a tradition of teaching and legal interpretation, is established and continued. Then, in the 2nd century AD, the right to ordain or authorise ordinations is concentrated in the national patriarch.

In summary:

- The role of the elder in the OT required maturity and wisdom.
- It also required the ability to know and apply the Torah.
- Elders were focused on the general welfare of the people, primarily the spiritual welfare of the people which was seen to affect every other aspect of their lives.
- Elders were at least partly responsible for teaching and applying the Word of God.

The NT presentation of elders is somewhat similar to this. We read that Paul appointed elders (Gk: presbuteros) in all the churches he founded. In Acts 14:23 for example: "Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust." Evidently the elders in these cases are entrusted with the task of overseeing the health of their churches. They are to ensure there is a legacy for generations to come and so they oversee the passing on of the faith. Hence Jesus disciples' call themselves elders (1 Pet. 5:1; 2 Jn. 1; 3 Jn. 1). They pass on the teaching they have received and commit it to others, who are to commit it to others again (1 Cor. 11:23; 15:1, 3; 2 Thes. 2:15; 3:6; 2 Tim. 2:2). Those to whom it is committed are likewise called elders

(Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5). They have the tasks of teaching (1 Tim. 5:17; Tit. 1:5, 9) and of acting as judges (Acts 15:2, 6, 22-29; 16:4). In addition to the tasks of teaching and judging, the task of ruling and overseeing is re-emphasized in the Christian eldership, and given a pastoral rather than a political character (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Tim. 5:17; Jas. 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1-4; cf. Mt. 9:36-38; Eph. 4:11); hence the elder's other title of 'bishop' (episkopoi – meaning 'overseer' – in the spiritual sense rather than a ruler in the political or pragmatic sense).

From Acts and the Epistles we can therefore gather that the Christian eldership is thus primarily an office of teaching, of adjudicating questions of right and wrong, and of providing general pastoral oversight of the church as a whole. In 1 Tim 5:17 we see that in Paul's understanding of eldership, different elders were responsible for different tasks.

1 Tim 5: ¹⁷The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. ¹⁸For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages."

He speaks of the elders who 'direct the affairs of the church'. The other eldership task is that of 'teacher' which again is distinguished as one possible needing to be a paid position probably. This latter position comes from the primary teaching function of the priests in the OT who were set apart to ensure the ongoing communication and transmission of the faith through the word and the temple liturgy.

In James 5:14 we see that the elders are also to be called upon for healing. In this sense they are the primary practitioners of the basic mandate to mediate the blessings of God. This is not the exclusive prerogative of the elders but they are to be the first to be equipped to handle this kind of situation. In this sort of case too they represent the church as a whole to the sick person.

The role of Eldership in the NT church was one that was intentionally devoid of the day-to-day administration of affairs. In Acts the deacons were set up to free the apostles to focus on prayer and the ministry of the word. Hence the role of deacons in the NT church helps us to define the boundaries of the role of elders. They were not to be involved in running the church day-to-day. In the early church it was generally the master of the house (at which the church was resident) who oversaw the administration of the church. This person acted something like the Synagogue ruler in the Jewish system. But this was a separate role to that of the elders. The elders were not concerned with the affairs of the house or with the practical issues in the community but with the general spiritual welfare of people. They were the guardians of the Christian community. Most of the elders in fact may have done very little beyond what every other person in the church did. It seems to more a position of responsibility and judgment rather than one of frequent activity.

Eldership in the Church

From the NT material on eldership we should draw the principle that every church needs a certain leadership function that is separate from the day-to-day administration of the church. This is the function of the elder or overseer (they are used interchangeably) in the NT. The eldership role is therefore not a *ministry* role in the sense that it is activating church ministry. It is not a role that requires a certain skill. It is a role that simply requires a high level of spiritual

maturity, wisdom and theological understanding. As guardians of the faith elders are to protect, guide and give judgments about spiritual direction. They are not necessarily to be the planners or the implementers of plans. In a sense, the smoother things go, the less the elders need to be active in their role, except of course for their devotion to spiritual impartation through prayer, encouragement, exhortation in truth etc.

The point that eldership *is not a political role* is important. It is not to be seen as a position of power but as one of spiritual oversight. The position is one of natural influence rather than the ability to enforce one's opinions. The role is not one of political clout but one of spiritual authority based upon relationship with God and the people. We do not, therefore, nominate elders to a position of authority but rather the nomination is a gesture by which we recognise a spiritual authority that is already present, having been grown in the person over the years. This is what makes someone an 'elder' in the faith. These people become the spiritual older siblings in the church.

Given that the role of elder is not in itself a ministry role we should be careful to make the distinction, lest the position infringe upon the ministries of the church rather than support the ministries of the church. Of course we would expect that the elders would be involved in ministry but this is not part of their role as elders. Their involvement in ministry is something they do as Christians along with everyone else. But when they do so they *do not* automatically bring their authority to bear on the practicalities of that ministry. For example, if an elder serves on the music team, they do not necessarily have the right to decide which songs are going to be performed. They are not free to go beyond the boundaries established by the ministry leader in that case. This is why it is important to separate a role of spiritual authority from a practical ministry role.

The extension of this distinction between practical ministry involvement and spiritual position in the church is that the elders are not necessarily the ones who shape the ministries of the church. The elders are not the ones who run the church. The elders are not the day-to-day decision makers but rather the guardians of the general welfare of the church. Elders need only get involved in decision making when there are serious spiritual, theological or moral issues at stake. Elders do not decide what the *best* thing to do is. They are the ones who decide whether what we are doing is the *right thing*. Within the boundaries of what is right there is a great deal of freedom. Something may be *right* but not necessarily the most prudent thing to do. Elders should step back from these decisions. The exception of course is if, in addition to being an elder, a person also has a ministry role in practical leadership which is often the case. This is of course the case with the Ministry Team Leader (Senior Pastor) role who is often also an elder. There may be a number of staff pastors and other ministry leaders who may be elders as well. In this instance it is important to separate the two roles involved in the one person.

The role of elder is therefore not about primarily about *doing* but *being*. We do not recognise elders by what ministry gifts they have but by their *character*. Hence when it comes to Paul outlining the qualifications for elders in his letter to Timothy you see there a list of moral character and faith requirements rather than skills:

1 Tim 3: Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. ²Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴ He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper

respect. ⁵ (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) ⁶ He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. ⁷ He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

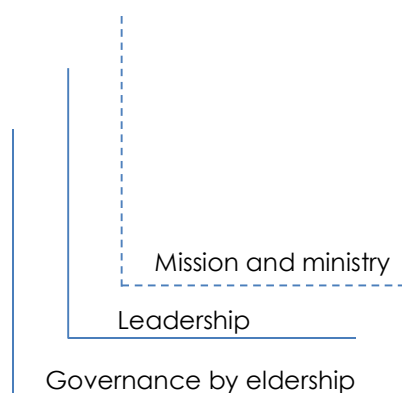
The requirement that an elder must be able to teach does not mean that the elder must be a great orator, or indeed necessitate they have a regular place on the preaching roster, but that they must have the intelligence to imbibe and impart biblical truth. It also means that they must be equipped with theological understanding and the ability to handle biblical truth correctly and apply it to the governance issues of the day. This is indeed an aspect of character given that it is a fundamental discipline of the spiritual life to study the Word of God.

Principles of Church Governance

The framework for church governance provided is based on the following principles. This is not an attempt to provide an exact model of church leadership but rather, to provide a principle-based framework that allows each church to fulfil its governance responsibilities in a way that reflects their context.

Mission and ministry are always the end goal

Governance creates the context for leadership, which creates the context for mission and ministry. It is important to recognise that the end goal of church life is ministry and mission not leadership or governance per se. The reason we have elders and leaders is to protect the culture of the community, to ensure that it does what it is supposed to, and to ensure legal obligations of the church are met. Mission and ministry are always the end goal and for this reason good governance and eldership serve the church rather than "lord over them".



Each church should have only one governing group

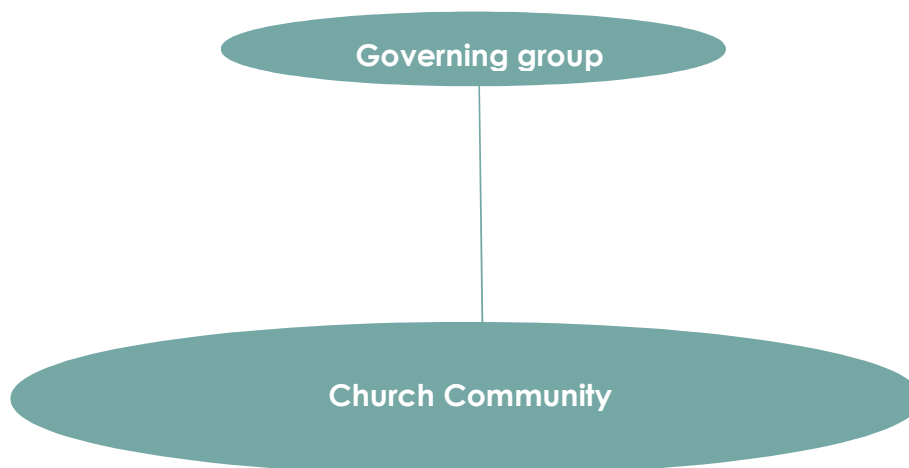
The Eldership has overall authority for and takes ultimate responsibility for the church. This is also true in any organisation, business or community group.

Other groups may exist within the church for leadership and management purposes, but there can only be one group that holds the ultimate governance responsibility.

The office of elder is the highest in the church community so it is appropriate for the elders to take responsibility for governance work, since governance work always sits with the highest office holders.

Oversight tasks should not be divided into spiritual and practical or business-type work. In a church context, governance is a spiritual, grounded, God-honouring task that requires Spirit-led leaders to undertake it.

Whilst the leadership architecture of the church will vary according to the context, size and complexity of the church, there should only ever be one governance group. This group is appointed by the church in accordance with the constitution, and makes decisions on behalf of the church, except those decisions retained by the church members in the constitution.



Governance discussions are identified and separated from ministry discussions

There are unique things for the eldership to do that only the governing group can take responsibility for. Whilst *tasks* can be delegated, *governance responsibility* can never be delegated. For example: the work of helping every person working with children get a blue card can be delegated but the Eldership retains responsibility for the safety of children in the church.

The focus of this governing group is to create the environment that allows the “real work” of the church to happen. The “real work” of the church includes things like running worship services, youth ministry, mission and community engagement, prayer meetings, bible studies etc.

Take youth ministry as an example. Whilst the youth leaders will run a program for young people, the governance contribution to this ministry would include things like:

- affirming that youth ministry is within the vision of the church;
- ensuring the budget accurately reflects this priority so resources are available;
- developing policies that ensure the Ministry Team Leader is supervising the youth pastor correctly;
- ensuring the Child Safe policy is up to date, clear and implemented; and
- praying for the ministry and ensuring that the youth ministry team is creating a Christ-centred community.

- None of the activities in the previous example are actually doing youth work but they are essential for creating the environment in which it can happen effectively. This is the work of the governing group.

Elders wear different “hats” in church life and should understand how and when to operate as an Elder. When in an Eldership meeting, the elder carries the decision-making authority of the role but outside of the meeting does not retain this decision-making authority. Using youth ministry as an example again:

- In an Eldership meeting an elder will be required to make governance decisions that impact the youth ministry (see examples above) and has the authority to do so.
- If that same elder then volunteers in the youth ministry as a team member they no longer retain their decision-making authority. Of course they retain the character qualifications of an elder, but are now under the leadership of the youth ministry team.

Improving Church Eldership and Governance

Churches of Christ in Queensland are committed to supporting church elders to improve the quality of their leadership and governance. To this end, CofCQ recommends each church develop their leadership and governance by:

- Using the CofCQ framework for governance and eldership to clarify the full range of their responsibilities.
- Accessing the resources and supports provided by CofCQ for church elders.
- Utilising the CMA self-assessment tool for governance to check for areas of improvement.
- Attending annual board training for church boards offered by CMA in Brisbane.
- Engaging an external consultant (available from CofCQ) to help elders understand and develop their governance capacity.

A Framework for Church Governance

The elders are responsible for ensuring their church is a:

- Christ-centred community
- Well-led community
- Safe and legal community

CofCQ has put together a framework around these three governance themes, outlining the key governance responsibilities of elders, the documentation the elders should develop, and actions they should take each year to meet their governance responsibilities. This framework is outlined in the following table.

This framework document and example/template documents referred to, as well as links to other general governance resources can be found on the CofCQ website (www.cofcql.com.au/church-resources).

Governance Theme	Key Questions	Key Responsibilities	Governance Responsibility of Elders	Documentation Required	Governance Actions
Christ-centred community	<p>Are we relating and leading the way Jesus would?</p> <p>Is our church culture honouring God?</p>	High level pastoral issues	Providing advice to the Ministry Team Leader on high level pastoral issues and managing the risk of the congregation being negatively impacted by high profile cases	<p>A written high level pastoral issues procedure that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> determines threshold for issues to be referred to the elders references the Privacy Policy references Safe People, Places and Programs Policies in terms of reporting to authorities outlines when people ought to be referred to professional support (counsellors/psychologists) 	<p>Annual review of procedure</p> <p>Reporting to board when threshold is met. Board responds.</p>
		Significant theological issues	Resources on how to research, debate and provide a position on issues that have the potential to create division and relational pain in the church	<p>A written process for providing a position on significant theological issues to outline:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> which issues need to be dealt with by the elders, and how the elders will reach a position 	<p>Annual review of process</p> <p>Reporting to board when threshold is met. Board responds.</p>
				The constitution contains or points to a statement of faith that outlines the essential beliefs of the church	<p>Annual review of the statement of faith to ensure it reflects any decisions made in the preceding year</p>
		Conflict and relational unity	Un-resolved or poorly resolved conflict will have a detrimental impact on the culture of the community and compromise its capacity to fulfil its mission. Complaints and conflict procedures will help the community maintain unity	<p>Written conflict management and complaints handling procedures that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> outlines how conflict and complaints will be handled determines threshold for issues to be referred to the board 	<p>Annual review of procedures</p> <p>Reporting to board when threshold is met. Board responds.</p>
			Any significant change should be proactively managed and communicated in a clear and timely fashion to the congregation and in a way that allows for input from relevant stakeholders	Change management process	Change management process is used to guide managing and communicating significant changes
		Spiritual oversight	In a church the elders are responsible for setting expectations for the Spiritual formation of the community. Provide spiritual oversight of the church by setting an example of Christ-likeness and take a "God first" approach to church life,	A values statement that defines Christ-like behaviour	<p>All board members have a copy of the values statement and regularly check their decision making against these values</p> <p>Regular prayer time at elders meetings and other retreat type activities each year</p>

Governance Theme	Key Questions	Key Responsibilities	Governance Responsibility of Elders	Documentation Required	Governance Actions
			including regular prayer together		
Well-led Community	<p>Do we have a clear mission that is owned by the church?</p> <p>Is our Ministry Team Leader empowered and resourced to lead our church?</p> <p>Is there a plan and process for selecting, inducting and training new Board members?</p> <p>Does the Eldership understand its unique governance role and how to distinguish this from ministry / operational decisions?</p>	Appointment of Minister	Run a clear process for selection of a new Ministry Team Leader and recommend the appointment to the church.	<p>Constitution outlines the elders' responsibility to run the MTL selection process</p> <p>Document a process for clarifying the type of leader/pastor the church is seeking and ensure that is owned by the entire church community</p>	<p>Appoint a team to run the MTL search process</p> <p>Review of process before each new pastoral position is sought</p>
		Ministry Team Leader support and evaluation	Empower the Ministry Team Leader's performance, support their ministry and evaluate regularly	The constitution documents the place of the MTL on the board as either a full member or a non-voting member	
				The role responsibilities of the MTL (and all paid and volunteer ministry leaders) are clearly documented in a position description	<p>Annual review of the performance of the MTL and their position description</p>
				The limits of the MTL's decision making authority are documented, including:	<p>Annual review of the decision making limits of the MTL</p>
				(i) defining the MTLs responsibility for managing other ministry staff including reference to the staff grievance policy	<p>Reporting monthly to board by MTL on staff issues defined in the limits document</p>
				(ii) what areas of church leadership sit with the MTL and which areas the board retains responsibility for	
				(iii) how the board will interact with other staff members	
		(iv) where ideas for fulfilling the vision are generated and the board's role in approving new initiatives is defined			
		Staff reviews	Empower and evaluate the performance all paid staff, support their ministry	<p>Staff Review and Development Process</p> <p>Staff Review Documentation</p>	<p>Annual review of process and documentation</p>
		Mission and Vision	Facilitate a process to clarify the church's mission and vision and evaluate progress regularly	<p>Mission and vision statements</p>	<p>Annual review of these statements to bring focus to church activity</p> <p>Facilitation of the process to clarity or renew as required</p>

Governance Theme	Key Questions	Key Responsibilities	Governance Responsibility of Elders	Documentation Required	Governance Actions
Well-led Community				Constitution outlines the process by which the mission and vision of the church is established	
		Budget and finances	Approve a budget that reflects ministry priorities, monitors financial viability and protects the assets of the church	A procedure that outlines how the budget is aligned with vision priorities and how it is set and approved each year A procedure that outlines financial practices for payroll, operating expenditure and banking, including approval processes – refer to Example Church Financial Practices Guideline	Annual review of procedure Set the budget annually for church approval Monthly financial report to the board to allow financial oversight Independent audit of financial accounts and practices (recommended annually)
		Conflict of interest	The elders/board declare and manage actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest as they arise	There is a Conflict of Interest Policy Board maintains a register of interests There are guidelines in place for managing actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest	Review and update register of interests at each meeting Annual review of guidelines
		Congregational meetings	The elders are responsible for and to the church congregation and so lead congregational meetings. Lead congregational meetings so they are unifying and focus on key church wide issues	Constitution states the eldership responsibility to lead congregational meetings and their frequency and who will chair these meetings	Run congregational meetings in line with constitutional requirements
		New elders/board members	Oversee the selection, induction and training of board members	The constitution documents how board members are selected and how the chair is appointed	Annual appointment process of new elders in line with constitutional requirements
				Written board member selection process that captures: 1. the roles required on the board to adequately cover its responsibilities 2. how the board will be structured 3. how new board members will be selected to match these roles	Annual review of the required roles on the board Implement selection process for new board members
				Written process for how new board members will be inducted	Annual review of the process
				Over-arching legal statement or advice for church office bearers	Induct new board members per the written process Provide training for board members on a regular basis

Governance Theme	Key Questions	Key Responsibilities	Governance Responsibility of Elders	Documentation Required	Governance Actions	
		Evaluate the performance of the board	Evaluate the performance of the board and ensure that elders are being training in all issues of governance and leadership	Written process for how the board will be reviewed	Annual review of the process	
Safe and Legal Community	<p>Are our church activities safe for everyone involved?</p> <p>Are we meeting our legal responsibilities?</p>	Safe People	Create a safe environment for vulnerable people, including children	Policy outlining how programs and activities will be run in a way that keeps all participants, particularly children and vulnerable people, safe	Annual review of policy	
				Procedures outlining how ministry leaders will comply with children and vulnerable people safety requirements	Annual review of procedures Reporting monthly to board on any children or vulnerable people safety issues	
			All ministering persons have signed the Churches of Christ in Queensland Code of Conduct for Ministering Persons Codes of conduct are in place for staff, board/elders and volunteers	There is a signed CofCQ Code of Conduct on file for all ministering persons There is a signed Code of Conduct on file for all staff, volunteers and board/elders	Annual review of currency of CofCQ Code of Conduct version Annual review of the Codes of Conduct and audit of records	
		Safe Places	Policies to ensure the physical environment of the church is safe for all users and any church activities are appropriately risk managed	A Workplace Health and Safety Policy that outlines how the board will ensure the site is safe and how ministry leaders and volunteers will manage risk of physical injury during their activities	Annual review of the policy	
				Procedures outlining how ministry leaders will comply with WHS requirements	Annual review of procedures Reporting to board monthly on WHS issues	
		Industrial relations (staffing)	Policies help to ensure all relevant Industrial Relations responsibilities are met in relation to all staff and volunteers	A Recruitment Policy A Recruitment Procedure	Annual review of policy and procedure	
					Remuneration and Employment Policy	Annual review of policy
					Staff Grievance Policy	Annual review of policy
		External reporting	Oversee any reporting requirements to external entities including ACNC and Churches of Christ in QLD			Annual reporting to Churches of Christ in Queensland, ACNC and any other reporting requirements

Governance Theme	Key Questions	Key Responsibilities	Governance Responsibility of Elders	Documentation Required	Governance Actions
		Record keeping	Appropriate records are kept securely for the required length of time under relevant legislation and best practice.	Follow Record Keeping for Churches Information Sheet	Ensure records are kept securely (preferable electronically) for the required amount of time
		Church Constitution	Ensure the constitution is current, clear and followed in decision making by the governance group and the church members	A constitution approved by the church membership is in place	Ensure all board members have a copy of the current constitution Annual review of the constitution to determine its ongoing suitability
		Privacy and confidentiality	Ensure the church complies with privacy legislation and treats confidential information correctly	A Privacy Policy that outlines how confidential personal information is handled by the church	Annual review of policy Reporting to board on breach

