

Arbor Foundations
15 – Church Leadership
Jan 20, 2018 – Steve Woodman

Q1. What form of local church government do we have at Arbor Church?

A. Plural-elder congregationalism

According to Steven B. Cowan in *Who Runs the Church?*, historically there have been three major models of church government: episcopalianism, presbyterianism, and congregationalism. The following is adapted from that resource.

Episcopalianism has an episcopate (office of bishop) distinct from and superior to the officers of local churches. The bishop ordains and governs the leaders (often called priests or rectors) of several local parish churches. The territory (including its churches) over which the bishop rules is called a “diocese.” Often an archbishop has authority over many (or all) the other bishops.

- Roman Catholic Church
- Eastern Orthodox Church
- Anglican Church/Church of England
- Episcopalian Church in the United States
- United Methodist Church
- Some Lutheran groups

Presbyterianism is sometimes referred to as a “representative” form of church government. The local church is ruled by a group of elders (often called a “session”) who are chosen by the congregation. Members of the sessions from several local churches in a geographical region are also members of the presbytery which has ruling authority over their several churches. In turn, at least some members of each presbytery are also members of a general assembly which governs the entire denominational body. They make a distinction between ruling elders and teaching elders. Ruling elders provide leadership in setting policy and supervising various church ministries. Teaching elders are given the responsibility to preach and teach in the church.

- Presbyterian Church (USA)
- Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)
- Christian Reformed Church
- Assemblies of God (somewhat more loosely)

Congregationalism emphasizes the autonomy (independence) of the local church. Each local church, under the authority of Christ, governs itself. No ecclesiastical authority exists outside or above the local assembly of believers.

- Most Baptists
- Churches of Christ

- Bible churches
- Independent churches

1) **Single-Elder Congregationalism** has the local church overseen by one elder or pastor chosen by the congregation and clearly distinguished as its spiritual leader. This single pastor is usually assisted by a group of deacons. The church may also use other pastoral staff members (associate pastor, assistant pastor, youth pastor, etc.), but one pastor is clearly set apart as *the* (senior) pastor.

2) **Plural-Elder Congregationalism** has the local church overseen by a plurality of elders or pastors, but they have no authority outside their own local church. No distinction is made between ruling and teaching elders – they all teach and rule. They are considered to be equal in authority. One or more men may be set aside vocationally for the work of the ministry, but the concept of “senior pastor” is not emphasized. **This is the church government of Arbor Church.**

Q2. What is the biblical basis for plural-elder congregationalism?

A. Multiple passages show that local churches were led by a plurality of elders with no outside authority maintaining control of them.

Some have noted that this biblical form of church government is mixed, in the sense that we see the elements of monarchy (because of Jesus Christ the king), democracy (because of the power of the local church), and aristocracy (because of the rule of the elders).

These biblical principles are organized topically in our confession of faith. The following is from *Confessing the Faith: The 1689 Baptist Confession for the 21st Century* by Stan Reeves. These paragraphs are from Chapter 26 “The Church.”

- 26:4-6 – monarchy (Jesus Christ reigns)
- 26:7 & 15 – autonomy (each local church governs itself)
- 26:8 – plurality of both elders and deacons
- 26:9 – democracy (congregation’s role in choosing officers)
- 26:10 – the office of pastor (elder)
- 26:11 – gifted brethren
- 26:14-15 – relationships among churches

26:4 (excerpt). The Lord Jesus Christ is the head of the church. By the Father’s appointment, all authority is conferred on him in a supreme and sovereign manner to call, institute, order and govern the church.⁷

⁷Colossians 1:18; Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 4:11, 12.

26:5. In exercising the authority entrusted to him, the Lord Jesus, through the ministry of his Word, by his Spirit, calls to himself out of the world those who are given to him by his Father.⁹ They are called so that they will live before him in all

the ways of obedience that he prescribes for them in his Word.¹⁰ Those who are called he commands to live together in local societies, or churches, for their mutual edification and the fitting conduct of public worship that he requires of them while they are in the world.¹¹

⁹John 10:16; John 12:32. ¹⁰Matthew 28:20. ¹¹Matthew 18:15-20.

26:6. The members of these churches are saints by calling, visibly displaying and demonstrating in and by their profession and life their obedience to the call of Christ.¹² They willingly agree to live together according to Christ's instructions, giving themselves to the Lord and to one another by the will of God, with the stated purpose of following the ordinances of the Gospel.¹³

¹²Romans. 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2. ¹³Acts 2:41, 42; Acts 5:13, 14; 2 Corinthians 9:13.

26:7. To every church gathered in this way, conforming to Christ's mind as declared in his Word, he has given all power and authority that is in any way necessary to conduct the form of worship and discipline that he has instituted for them to observe. He has also given them commands and rules to use and carry out that power rightly and properly.¹⁴

¹⁴Matthew 18:17, 18; 1 Corinthians 5:4, 5; 1 Corinthians 5:13; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8.

26:8. A local church, gathered and fully organized according to the mind of Christ, consists of officers and members. The officers appointed by Christ are overseers or elders, and deacons. They are to be chosen and set apart by the church called and gathered in this way, for the distinctive purpose of administering ordinances and for carrying out any other power or duty Christ entrusts them with or calls them to. This pattern is to be continued to the end of the age.¹⁵

¹⁵Acts 20:17, 28; Philippians 1:1.

26:9. Christ has appointed the way to call someone prepared and gifted by the Holy Spirit to the office of overseer or elder in a church. He must be chosen by the collective vote of the church itself.¹⁶ He must then be solemnly set apart by fasting and prayer. The body of elders of the church must lay hands on him if there are any already in place.¹⁷ A deacon must be chosen by the same kind of vote and set apart by prayer and laying on of hands as well.¹⁸

¹⁶Acts 14:23. ¹⁷1 Timothy 4:14. ¹⁸Acts 6:3, 5, 6.

26:10. The work of pastors is to give constant attention to the service of Christ in his churches in the ministry of the word and prayer. They are to watch over the souls of church members as those who must give an account to Christ.¹⁹ The churches to whom they minister must not only give them all due respect but also must share with them from all their good things according to their ability.²⁰ They must do this so their pastors may have a comfortable living without having to be entangled in secular matters²¹ and so they can show hospitality to others.²² This is required by the law of nature and by the explicit command of our Lord Jesus, who has ordained that those who preach the Gospel should earn their living by the Gospel.²³

¹⁹Acts 6:4; Hebrews 13:17. ²⁰¹ Timothy 5:17, 18; Galatians 6:6, 7. ²¹² Timothy 2:4.
²²¹ Timothy 3:2. ²³¹ Corinthians 9:6-14.

26:11. Although overseers or pastors of churches must be engaged in preaching the word as a function of their office, yet the work of preaching the word is not totally restricted to them. Others who are also gifted and prepared by the Holy Spirit for it and approved and called by the church may and should preach.²⁴

²⁴Acts 11:19-21; 1 Peter 4:10, 11.

26:14. Every church and all its members are obligated to pray continually for the good and prosperity of all churches of Christ in every place.²⁷ They must also—at every opportunity within the limits of their stations and callings—exercise their gifts and graces to benefit every church. Also, when churches are raised up by the providence of God, insofar as they enjoy opportunity and favorable circumstances for it, they should have fellowship among themselves for their peace, growth in love, and mutual edification.²⁸

²⁷Ephesians 6:18; Psalms 122:6. ²⁸Romans 16:1, 2; 3 John 8-10.

26:15. Cases of difficulties or differences—doctrinal or administrative—may arise, touching on the peace, union, and edification of all churches in general or an individual church. Other cases may occur when a member or members of a church are injured in or by disciplinary action that is not in keeping with truth and order. In such cases, it is according to the mind of Christ for many churches having fellowship together to meet through their messengers to consider and give their advice concerning the issue in dispute and to report their advice to all the churches concerned.²⁹ Nevertheless, these assembled messengers are not entrusted with any church authority, strictly speaking. Neither do they have any jurisdiction over the churches themselves, to exercise any discipline either over any churches or individuals or to impose their decision on the churches or officers.³⁰

²⁹Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23, 25. ³⁰² Corinthians 1:24; 1 John 4:1.

For a more detailed description of plural-elder congregationalism, see Grudem's *Systematic Theology*, pp. 932-935. It describes Arbor Church pretty accurately in significant detail. See also Sam Waldron's contribution in *Who Runs the Church?* on pp. 187-221 for a biblical and historical explanation of plural-elder congregationalism.

Q3. What is the office of elder?

A. An elder (presbyter), also called bishop (overseer) and pastor (shepherd), is a God-ordained minister of the Gospel who leads and feeds the people of God in a local church. (Acts 6:1-4; Acts 20:28-31; II Timothy 4:1-5; I Peter 5:1-4)

The Title of “Shepherd”

- Same Greek word is translated “pastor” in Ephesians 4:11 in the KJV and NKJV (“shepherd” in ESV)
- Emphasis on NURTURE (tending)
- Feeding the sheep
- Protecting the sheep
- Keeping the sheep in the fold
- Keeping the wolves out of the fold

The Title of “Elder”

- *Pres-boo'-ter-os* or presbyter (Presbyterian)
- Emphasis on MATURITY
- Old Covenant: a leader in the community
- A man of wisdom
- One who can give counsel and advice
- Not a novice
- A man of character and good reputation (blameless)

The Title of “Bishop”

- *Ep-is'-kop-os* or overseer (Episcopalian)
- Emphasis on LEADERSHIP
- Ruling and directing a group of people
- Making sure that the Word of God is being faithfully preached
- Making sure that the ordinances are being biblically observed
- Making sure that the worship is being reverently conducted
- Making sure that conflict is being peacefully resolved
- Making sure that families are being spiritually led

Duties of Pastors

- LBC 26:10a – “The work of pastors is to give constant attention to the service of Christ in his churches in the ministry of the word and prayer. They are to watch over the souls of church members as those who must give an account to Christ.” (Acts 6:1-4 & Heb 13:17)
- Minister the Word of God to the flock (Acts 6:1-4)
- Give themselves to prayer (Acts 6:1-4)
- Take heed to himself (Acts 20:28-31)
- Take heed to all the flock (Acts 20: 28-31)
- Oversee the flock (all four passages; I Peter 5:1-4 specifically)

Some Conclusions

- God gave pastors to the church to shepherd the people of God.
- The role of pastor involves both authority and nurture.
- A shepherd has to know his sheep and be known by them in order to minister effectively to them.

Q4. What are the Qualifications of Pastors?

A. I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9

blameless

- blameless (two Greek words)
- ἀνεπίληπτος (3:2)
- ἀνέγκλητος (1:6,7)
- ESV – above reproach
- “as a steward of God” (1:7)
- Does he have a credible reputation? Does he deserve it?
- Is his life so consistent that he does not provide opportunities for reproach and blame to be validly attached to him?

the husband of one wife (3:2; 1:6)

- ESV – same
- This is not just a marital status, but an inner and outer purity: “a one-woman man.”
- If the man is married, is he a one woman man? Is his moral character unquestioned at this point?
- Is he exemplary in his love and faithfulness to his wife? Does he nurture and cherish her?
- Is he discreet in his contacts with other women?

temperate (3:2)

- Νηφάλιος
- ESV – sober-minded
- “wineless”
- Alert, watchful, vigilant, a clear thinker who abstains from excess
- Is he well-balanced, moderate, and free from excesses in his ideas, food, time, money, and energies?

sober-minded (3:2; 1:8)

- Σώφρων
- ESV – self-controlled
- “Prudent”
- Well-disciplined; knows how to order priorities
- Does he view the world through God’s eyes as a spiritually serious follow of Christ?
- Is he wise in all his dealings? Not flighty but level-headed?
- Prudent in the light of Scripture? Does he recognize Biblical principles when making decisions? Sanctified common sense? Is the wisdom of Proverbs observable?

of good behavior (3:2)

- Κόσμιος
- ESV – respectable
- Well-ordered
- Is his life disciplined and orderly? Not slipshod, scatterbrained, and disorganized?
- Is he responsible and able to get things done on time?
- Is there an inner moral excellence displayed in an outward orderly behavior?

hospitable (3:2; 1:8)

- Φιλόξενος
- ESV – same
- A friend of strangers
- Ready to befriend and to lodge destitute, traveling, or persecuted believers
- Is he friendly to all people?
- Does he open up his home to friends and people in need?
- Does he show a willingness to share with others whatever God has given to him?

able to teach (3:2)

- Διδακτικός
- ESV – same
- Gifted to teach the Word of God as one who has been instructed by the Holy Spirit
- Does he have a good grasp on the contents of the whole Bible and the doctrines set forth there? Does he apply himself to the discipline of studying the Scriptures?
- Is he able to take that knowledge and relate it to the flock for their edification and growth in grace? Is he able to hold your attention by presenting the Word in an interesting manner? When he is finished do you have a better understanding of the passage or subject dealt with? Do you see how it applies to you?
- Is he teachable, one who has been able to receive instruction in the past?

not given to wine (3:3; 1:7)

- μη παροινον
- ESV – not a drunkard
- Not addicted to wine
- Is he a man of moderation and self-control, not only in the consumption of alcohol, but in all areas of physical appetites?
- Is he careful not to cause another person to stumble while he is enjoying his own liberty?

not violent (3:3; 1:7)

- μη πληκτην
- ESV – same
- Not a quarrelsome fighter
- Does not react to difficulty with physical violence, but is a peace maker
- Reacts calmly, coolly, and gently
- Is he cooperative in working with others, not quarrelsome and competitive?
- Not contentious and easily drawn into an argument?

not greedy for money (3:3; 1:7)

- μη αισχροκερδη
- ESV – not greedy for gain (omits in I Timothy, but there in Titus)
- Not a man who joins a good cause for the sake of material advantage
- Not the man with the mercenary spirit who goes all out in his search for riches
- Are material possessions the ambition of his life?
- Are family and spiritual life sacrificed on the 'altar' of his job?
- Is he quick to give to people in need?

gentle (3:3)

- ἐπιεικής
- ESV – same
- Considerate, genial, forbearing, and gracious; pardons human failure; doesn't hold a grudge
- Is he approachable?
- When dealing with others is he patient and kind?
- Is he sensitive to the feelings of others so that his words and actions reflect tenderness and promote understanding and unity?
- Is he willing to suffer wrong, or not demand what is rightfully his for the sake of Christ?

not quarrelsome (3:3)

- αμαχον
- ESV – same
- Averse to fighting
- Similar to “not violent”
- Why does Paul repeat this concept? How much fighting is there in the church?

not covetous (3:3)

- Αφιλαργυρον
- ESV – not a lover of money
- The acquisition of earthly treasure is not his chief goal in life.
- Love of money is often a major motivator for false teachers.

- Again, Paul repeats a concept. How many have sinned because of greed, or been disqualified from ministry because of financial deceit?

one who rules his own house well (3:4-5; 1:6)

- Having his children in submission with all reverence (3:4)
- For if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God? (3:5)
- Having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination (1:6)
- Matthew Henry on 1:6 – children are obedient and good; brought up in the true Christian faith, and living according to it, at least as far as the endeavors of the parents can avail
- Is he clearly the loving head of his home, the one in charge of his family?
- Does he lead them in family worship?
- If he has children, does he spend time with them and lovingly discipline them?
- Are they well-behaved, not known for being out of control or wild?

not a novice (3:6)

- μη νεοφυτον
- ESV – not a recent convert
- *Lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil (3:6)*
- Emphasis is on spiritual maturity, not age so much
- Has he been saved long enough to have faced some spiritual tests proving that his faith is genuine?
- Does he have a humility deep enough to not let his position of eldership "go to his head" or puff him up with pride?

a good testimony among those who are outside (3:7)

- ESV – well thought of by outsiders
- *Lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil (3:7)*
- Satan wants to trap him in a sin that will discredit the man, the church, and the name of Jesus.
- Do those outside of the church respect him for his consistency of life and conduct? Good reputation with neighbors, relatives, and work associates? Pay his bills on time? Honor his promises even if unwritten?
- Is he submissive to authority in the church, at work, and in civil government?
- Is he known to worldly people as a man of character, a man against whom it is not possible to level any just charges of shameful activity? Is his name without genuine blemishes in his community?

not self-willed (1:7)

- μη αυθαδη

- ESV – not arrogant
- Not self-indulgent to the point of showing arrogance to others by being more concerned about his own agenda than Christ's
- Is he flexible when dealing with people and ideas not clearly addressed in Scripture?
- Is he stubborn and insistent on getting his own way in matters of private judgment and personal preference?
- Is he so wrapped up in his own ideas that he is insensitive to the thoughts and feelings of others?

not quick-tempered (1:7)

- μη οργιλον
- ESV – same
- Similar to “not quarrelsome” (3:3) and “not violent” (3:3; 1:7)
- Is he easily angered?
- Is he touchy and quick to defend his own rights?
- Does he blow up when receiving abuse and unkind words and actions from others?
- Is he forbearing in love?

a lover of what is good (1:8)

- φιλάγαθος
- ESV – a lover of good
- Does he have a delight in the good things which God delights in?
- Does he willingly avoid things which have an evil influence over him or his family?
- Is he known not only for the evils he is against, but also the good he is for?
- Does he delight in doing what is beneficial to others?

just (1:8)

- δίκαιος
- ESV – upright
- Encourages that which is proper, right, and fitting
- Emphasis on one's duty toward man
- Is he equitable in his decisions and counsel?
- Is he fair in all his dealings?
- Does he avoid showing unjust favor to people because of social status, wealth, personal relationship, political affiliation, race, or power?

Holy (1:8)

- ὅσιος
- ESV – same
- Devout; living in line with God's purpose and scriptural direction
- Emphasis on one's duty toward God

- Are the Scriptures clearly his standard for living?
- Can it be seen that his desire is to be like Jesus Christ?
- Is he fighting against sin and seeking to please God?

self-controlled (1:8)

- ἐγκρατής
- ESV – disciplined
- Possesses the moral strength to curb or master one’s sinful drives and impulses
- Lives an exemplary life on the outside because of submission to the Holy Spirit’s control on the inside
- Is he controlled by his senses, appetites, and desires instead of ruling over them?
- Is he mastered by anything other than Christ?

holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught (1:8)

- ESV – he must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught
- *That he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict* (1:9)
- Does he love, respect, study, believe, and obey the Word of God?
- Does he believe and teach the doctrine of Jesus Christ and the Apostles?
- Does he agree with the doctrines set forth in the church’s doctrinal statement?
- Does he possess that holy stubbornness not to be moved from the Scriptures, not to be wishy-washy?
- Is he committed to encouraging believers in truth, exposing erroneous doctrine (showing from the scriptures why a teaching is false), and confronting those whose lives do not conform to Scripture?

Q5. What is the office of deacon?

A. A deacon is a God-ordained servant attending to common, everyday needs in the local church.

The Title of “Deacon”

- δίακονος – diakonos – deacon (transliterated)
- Common word meaning “servant” or “minister”
- Can mean someone serving as a way of life, or in an official capacity
- “Deacon” as a church officer: one who manages and administrates the physical and mundane needs of a church (definition from Greg Nichols)
- Mundane: common or ordinary, such as mowing the lawn or paying the water bill

Principles of Acts 6:1-7

- Many consider this to be the origin of the office of deacon.

- Spiritual issues behind a physical concern (justice)
- Commitment to prayer and the ministry of the Word as well as benevolence
- The need for organization
- The use of wisdom
- The involvement of the congregation
- The authority of the apostles delegated to the seven
- The blessing of God on their attempts to organize
- The need both for the Holy Spirit and for structure

The Office of Deacon

- Clearly became a second office
- Philippians 1:1 -- **"Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons..."**
- I Timothy 3:1-2 – **"This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. ²A bishop then must be blameless..."**
- I Timothy 3:8 – **"Likewise deacons must be reverent..."**
- I Timothy 3:10 – **"But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless."**

Duties of Deacons: "Servants attending to mundane needs in God's house"

- Benevolence – policy, identifying those in need, meeting with them, considering options
- Business – the work of treasurer, counting and depositing offerings, paying bills, payroll, legal matters, real estate transactions
- Facilities – construction projects, maintenance, building use, utilities
- Assemblies – climate control, AV, ushering, nursery, child safety, security
- Ministries – logistics: literature and audio distribution, theological education, missions trips, conferences, website

(Largely taken from a lecture by Greg Nichols)

Q6. What are the qualifications of deacons?

A. Acts 6:1-7 & I Timothy 3:8-13

of good reputation (6:3)

- μαρτυρουμενους
- ESV – of good repute
- Above reproach; an example of integrity and godliness
- Is he a man of sterling reputation?
- Can he be trusted with large amounts of money and other resources?
- Is he the kind of man that we would want to represent Arbor Church?

full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom (6:3)

- ESV – full of the Spirit and of wisdom
- Fully yielded to the Spirit's control in every area of his life

- Ability to apply biblical truth to everyday life
- Is his life marked by the fruit of the Spirit? (Gal 5:22-23)
- Is he noted for his sympathy and compassion toward people?
- Does he have good judgment in practical matters?
- Is his wisdom pure, peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy? (James 3:17)

whom we may appoint over this business (6:3)

- ESV – whom we will appoint to this duty
- Is he already using his gifts to serve others in the congregation?
- Does he possess the ability to carry out diaconal functions?
 - Benevolence (physical needs)
 - Business (finances, legal, real estate)
 - Facilities (construction, maintenance, utilities)
 - Assemblies (logistics of meeting together)
 - Ministries (logistics of disciple-making)
- Does he have the desire to serve in this official capacity?

reverent (3:8)

- σεμνας
- ESV – dignified
- Men of respectability who take the task seriously
- Does his moral character evoke esteem from others?
- Does he possess a dignity that fits the task of interacting with people about needs that could be embarrassing?
- Does he understand the spiritual nature of his physical ministry?

not double-tongued (3:8)

- μη διλογους
- ESV – same
- Does not say one thing to one person and something different to another
- Example: a power-hungry deacon trying to get rid of a pastor
- Is he a man of his word?
- Is his word reliable and truthful and void of deceit and manipulation?

not given to much wine (3:8)

- μη οινω πολλω προσεχοντας
- ESV – not addicted to much wine
- Similar to qualification for elder earlier in the chapter
- Is he a man of moderation and self-control, not only in the consumption of alcohol, but in all areas of physical appetites?
- Is he careful not to cause another person to stumble while he is enjoying his own liberty?

- A deacon or an elder struggling with a lifestyle of drunkenness, gambling, and excess is not a man that you want in charge of large sums of money or a great deal of resources.

not greedy for money (3:8)

- μη αισχροκερδεις
- ESV – not greedy for dishonest gain
- Same as for elders in I Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:7
- Not a man with a mercenary spirit who goes all out in his search for riches or uses his office as a means to make money
- Does he handle his own finances in accordance with the Scriptures?
- Does his practice of giving demonstrate a lack of greed?
- Is he clearly a man who would not use his position to embezzle funds entrusted to him?

holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience (3:9)

- ESV – they must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience
- Similar for elders “holding fast the faithful word” in Titus 1:8
- Does he have a firm grasp of and commitment to the essential truths of the Christian faith found in the Word of God and summarized in the church’s statement of faith?
- Does he maintain a clear conscience by living out the things he believes?
- Does his life adorn the doctrines that he confesses?

first be tested; blameless (3:10)

- δοκιμαζεσθωσαν πρωτον
- ανεγκλητοι – same word as Titus 1:6 & 7 for elders
- ESV – be tested first; blameless
- Has he already proven himself as committed to sound teaching (v. 9) and living a life above reproach?
- Is his life so consistent that he does not provide opportunities for reproach and blame to be validly attached to him?
- Has the church been able to observe his character for a sufficient period of time to know what he believes, how he lives, and how he serves?

wives (3:11)

- γυναικας can be translated either “wives” or “women”
- Three common interpretations: deacons’ wives, deacons’ helpers, or deaconesses
- Reverent – σεμνας; dignified; same as deacons in 3:8
- Not slanderers - μη διαβολουσ; not malicious gossips
- Temperate – νηφαλιουσ; same as elders in 3:2; sober-minded; vigilant; a clear thinker who abstains from excess

- Faithful in all things - πιστας εν πασιν; reliable; trustworthy; able to handle money and confidences

the husbands of one wife (3:12)

- μιας γυναικος ανδρες
- ESV – the husband of one wife
- Same as for elders in I Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6
- This is not just a marital status, but an inner and outer purity: “a one-woman man.”
- If the man is married, is he a one-woman man? Is his moral character unquestioned at this point?
- Is he exemplary in his love and faithfulness to his wife? Does he nurture and cherish her?
- Is he discreet in his contacts with other women?

ruling their children and their own houses well (3:12)

- ESV – managing their children and their own households as well
- Similar to elders in I Timothy 3:4 and Titus 1:6
- Is he clearly the loving head of his home, the one in charge of his family?
- If he has children, does he spend time with them and lovingly discipline them?
- Are they well-behaved, not known for being out of control or wild?
- Is he a good manager of his whole household, including money and possessions?

A Concluding Incentive (3:13)

- “For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.”
- A good standing – faithful deacons who humbly serve others are exalted by God and respected and honored by the congregation.
- Great boldness in the faith – deacons who faithfully serve God in the congregation and see God’s grace and their gifts at work will be encouraged to serve with joy and effectiveness. It will also foster confidence among the congregation.

So What?

Q7. How do we raise up church officers at Arbor Church?

A. The existing elders lead the congregation in recognizing God’s gifts of church officers by looking for men who are biblically

qualified as elders or deacons. The elders periodically ask the people for their thoughts, and then the elders consider that input along with their own observations. After getting feedback from the existing deacons, the elders then may choose to set a man before the congregation for consideration as a deacon or

an elder. After sufficient time has passed to consider and pray, a vote will be taken, and if affirmed, the new officer will be ordained with the laying on of hands at a service of the church.

Q8. What is the practical value of both plurality (more than one) and parity (equality of authority) of elders?

A. Those two elements help to maintain careful balance in all areas of church life, greater wisdom in decisions, and stronger accountability in ministry. It's more effective in avoiding the extremes, foolishness, and sin that tend to be seen when one man has all of the control. It can be a powerful preventative both for the abuse of sheep as well as false accusations against elders.

Arbor Church Constitution on Church Officers

ARTICLE VIII

Government of the Church

Section 1. Offices. Jesus Christ alone is head of the church, governing His church through men entrusted with oversight in the church. According to the New Testament there are only two offices; elder and deacon.

Section 2. Officers. Those who hold the office of elder or deacon are to be men recognized by the church as having gifts and graces necessary to their office. Elders must be able to teach and rule. Deacons must be able to care for the church's temporal and practical concerns. Those who hold these offices do so by the consent of the church. The number of those who hold each office is not set but is determined by the church's requirements and common sense.

Section 3. Recognition of Officers. The recognition of men as elders or deacons is the responsibility of the whole church. The existing elders shall recommend gifted men to the church for office. Only such men who are members in good standing, and who can and will affirm and uphold the Confession of Faith and Constitution of this church, shall be recommended. Appointment to office requires a two-thirds affirmation of the members present and voting at a meeting convened for that purpose.

Section 4. Term of Office. Elders and deacons shall continue in their respective offices so long as they are willing and able to function in that capacity, and so long as they continue to meet the requirements for their respective offices. The same rules of discipline apply to them as to every other member.

Section 5. Specific Matters Relating to Elders. The qualifications for elders are clearly set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Ordinarily, God may be expected to give them in plurality to a church; however, if there is but one, this is not to be

considered irregular. All elders are subject to one another, none having superior authority.

The church shall financially support elders who are set apart to devote themselves exclusively to their office. This support shall be adequate for their families' welfare (1 Timothy 5:17).

It is the duty of the church to discover, formally recognize, and submit to its elders, and it is the duty of the elders to faithfully and scripturally order the church's affairs and labor for its maturity (Ephesians 4:11-14, Colossians 1:28, 1 Peter 5:2,3).

Section 6. Specific Matters Relating to Deacons. The qualifications for deacons are clearly set forth in Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

Deacons have general executive powers to administer the ordinary business, to maintain the meeting place, and to manage the benevolent concerns of this church. Their duties are to be faithfully performed so that the elders may devote themselves, without distraction, to their pastoral duties. The deacons have a real authority in these matters.

The deacons have authority to disburse the church's funds and are to keep such in order so as to present a report before the church at its Annual Meeting. Major decisions may be submitted to the church for its approval, but the ordinary business of the church is entrusted to the discretion of the deacons.

Deacons must fulfill the duties of their office in cooperation with and in subjection to the elders.

The deacons shall perform such legal and business transactions as are particularly required by the civil authorities. In the discharge of these duties they nevertheless act at the discretion of the elders.

For Further Study

Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*

Stan Reeves, *Confessing the Faith: The 1689 Baptist Confession for the 21st Century*
http://reeveshome.org/modern1689/1689_modern.pdf

Steven B. Cowan, *Who Runs the Church?*

Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*

Wayne Grudem & Erik Thoennes, *Systematic Theology Laminate Sheet*