

## **Lead Pastor Role in Relation to the Lay Elders**

The Board is composed of the lay Elders and the Lead Pastor. The Lead Pastor shall serve as a continual Elder and member of the Board. Associate Pastors or other staff members will not serve as Elders, but may be invited to participate with the Board in strategic planning. The Lead Pastor is responsible for all activities of the organization, and is accountable to the Board.

The role of Lead Pastor consists of the following duties and responsibilities:

- Spend appropriate time with God, his family, and in rest
- Prepare and deliver sermons
- Develop and implement the vision of the church, with counsel from the board
- Design and implement programs, structure and methodology, with counsel from the board
- Lead and shepherd the Associate Pastors and staff
- Delegate responsibility and authority to Associate Pastors and staff, as he deems appropriate
- Perform limited miscellaneous duties, when appropriate (weddings, funerals, counseling, etc...)

Our belief is that the Lead Pastor has been called by God and the congregation to lead and provide direction for the lay

Elders and together with them, for the church. The basis for this belief is that the Lead Pastor has both the time and training necessary for the role. He is immersed in the problems and opportunities full-time and usually knows the people and organization very well. In addition, his education, experience, and network of fellow pastors provide him with a unique wealth of information from which to draw.

Every group or organization needs leadership that the group cannot provide for itself as a group. In other words, committees do not lead, leaders lead. And vision and leadership is what the Lead Pastor has been hired to provide. To establish any other Elder with this role is to needlessly confuse and set the two in competition with each other. It would also ask the lay Elder to duplicate the knowledge, experience, and investment the Lead Pastor already has made.

A related concern may be whether a strong leader can be controlled. Some people believe that strong leadership and domination are synonymous. Of course this could just as easily be a problem for a lay Elder leading the Board. Installing policies that provide checks and balances is a realistic response to this concern. The following are policies adhered to by the Board to keep leaders healthy and ease concerns:

- The Lead Pastor presents drafts, not demands. Not every idea from the Lead Pastor is to be seen as the voice of God. Rather, the lay Elders are fellow leaders seeking God's will and direction.

- The Lead Pastor is open and honest with the lay Elders. Counseling matters are usually confidential but at times need to be shared with lay Elders, when permission is sought and granted from counselees. The information the Board needs to make a decision is crucial and must not be hidden.
- The Lead Pastor needs to follow the lay Elders' advice. The Lead Pastor does not always know what is best and needs to listen carefully to the lay Elders' opinions and counsel. The lay Elders respect the Lead Pastor's leadership and do everything to follow his lead, while the Lead Pastor values highly the lay Elders' advice and does everything to respond to their care for him and the church. The Lead Pastor looks to the lay Elders to confirm his convictions as to God's leading and direction.
- The Lead Pastor does not control decisions or demand his way. This would obviously be in direct opposition to Jesus' example of servant leadership. Decision making normally seeks to achieve consensus by the Board. When consensus cannot be reached on matters not specifically required by the Bylaws, the lay Elders decide how much agreement is needed and whether to go forward with a non-consensus decision.
- The Bylaws require Board approval for staffing changes for anyone with the title of "Pastor", but delegate the selection and removal of non-pastoral employees to the Lead Pastor. However, the Lead Pastor is still expected to consult with the lay Elders regarding non-pastoral staffing decisions that have significant impact on the church as a

whole (e.g. Worship Minister). For staffing decisions of lesser impact (e.g. Administrative support), the Lead Pastor needs only to keep the lay Elders informed of any changes.

- The lay Elders provide care, oversight and accountability to the Lead Pastor. Therefore, Associate Pastors will not serve as Elders, as this would create a dual role situation, with the potential for conflicts.
- Campus Pastors will function as elders for their local flock, providing care and oversight under the overall leadership of the Lead Pastor. However, Campus Pastors are not responsible for the oversight and care of the entire organization, as is the Lead Pastor. Therefore, Campus Pastors will not serve as Elders or be members of the Board. They may be invited to participate with the Board in strategic planning.

In summary, strong leadership is not only needed in the Body of Christ, it is given by God to be exercised and not feared. Our job is to keep all leaders healthy to function well, to protect them from temptation, to pray for them, and to follow their lead. We believe the best approach to leadership at First Christian Church is through a Board comprised of duly elected lay Elders, with leadership from the Lead Pastor.