



# The Resolved Church

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## The Resolved Church Government/Polity: Plural Eldership

*The purpose of this document is to outline the ecclesiology of The Resolved Church as a plural elder church government and what we mean by that.*

I. The Resolved Church belongs to the Acts 29 Network and prescribes to the Acts 29 Doctrinal Statement and is under a covenant commitment as an Acts 29 church.

A. From the Acts 29 Doctrinal Statement: "We believe local churches should be governed by godly husbands and fathers who are biblically qualified elders serving under the Lord Jesus Christ who is the Head of the church."

B. From the Acts 29 Doctrinal Statement: "We are not egalitarians and do believe that men should head their homes and male elders should lead their churches with masculine love, like Jesus Christ."

C. From the Acts 29 Church Covenant: "We agree that our church will meet all biblical requirements for elders, including that the church will be governed by a plurality of qualified male elders."

II. The Resolved Church understanding of a Biblical Elder

A. An elder has the regular pattern of life and character of as prescribed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

1. Above Reproach (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:6,7)
2. One Woman Man (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:6)
3. Temperate / Not self-willed / Has Self-control (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:7,8)
4. Prudent / Sensible (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:8)
5. Respectable (1 Tim 3:2)
6. Hospitable (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:8)
7. Able to Teach / Teachable (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:9)
8. Does not get Drunk (1 Tim 3:3; Tit 1:7)
9. Not Quarrelsome (1 Tim 3:3; Tit 1:7)
10. Gentle (1 Tim 3:3)
11. Peaceable (1 Tim 3:3)
12. Not a Lover of Money (1 Tim 3:3; Tit 1:7)
13. Godly Husband & Father (1 Tim 4:4; Tit 1:6)
14. Not a New Convert (1 Tim 3:6)
15. Missional with Non-Christians (1 Tim 3:7)
16. Dignified (1 Tim 3:8)
17. Not Double-Tongued (1 Tim 3:8)
18. Has Faith in Jesus with a Clear Conscience (1 Tim 3:9; Tit 1:9)
19. Has proven himself over time (1 Tim 3:10)
20. Is Slow to Anger (Tit 1:7)
21. Loves What is Good and Just (Tit 1:8)
22. Responsible, Dependable, Committed (Tit 1:8)
23. Able to Identify and Refute False Doctrine (Tit 1:9)

B. An Elder is a Pastor, who shepherds through protecting, teaching, leading, managing and caring for the practical needs of Jesus' people. An Elder is not merely a council or board member who only weighs in on church financial decisions and/or plans (1 Peter 5:1a,2a)

1. Protects the Flock from Moral and Heretical Wolves (Acts 20:28-30)
2. Feeds the Flock with Sound Biblical Doctrine (Acts 20:27; 1 Tim 4:13; Tit 1:9)

3. Disciplines the Flock in a Labor of Love (1 Thess 5:12; 2 Cor 2:4)
  4. Prays for the Flock with Spiritual Alertness (Acts 20:31)
  5. Is Courageous to Lead and Sacrifice for the Flock (Deut 31:6; Jn 10:12-14)
  6. Manages and Rules over the Flock (1 Tim 3:4-5; 5:17; 1 Pet 5:5)
  7. Works Hard to Care for the Flock (Acts 20:34-35)
  8. Attends to the Practical Needs of the Flock (Js 5:14)
  9. Raises up other Leaders to Care for the Flock (Eph 4:12)
- C. An Elder is male only
1. Godly husbands and fathers (1 Tim 4:4; Tit 1:6) are the heads of their home (Eph 5:23) which is the model for the church (1 Tim 3:5).
  2. Males were instituted by God as the leaders and females were instituted by God as the helpers. This pattern of authority was instituted by God before mankind collectively fell in sin through Adam (Gen 2:18-23).
  3. According to the created order females are "not to have authority over a man (1 Tim 2:11-13)."
  4. Jesus selected only male elders to lead his church (Acts 1:13-26).
  5. Only male elders were allowed throughout the Old Testament (Ex. 18; Num 11:16).
- D. An Elder aspires to be an Elder
1. He aspires eagerly without motives for power or prestige (1 Tim 3:1; 1 Pet 5:2).
  2. He aspires because he is called by God to serve as an elder (Rom 1:1; 11:29; Col 4:17)
  3. He aspires because he is gifted by Christ to fulfill the eldership calling (Rom 11:29; Eph 4:1-13).
- E. An Elder is appointed as an Elder
1. After a three year preparation period according to the pattern of Jesus' preparation of the apostles (Luke 13:7), Paul's preparation in Arabia (Gal 1:18), and preparation of the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:17,26,31).
  2. After calling and gifting can be proven/demonstrated during the preparation period (1 Tim 3:10; 5:22-25).
  3. After calling, gifting, and pattern of life and doctrine may be examined by the current Elders and the congregation during the preparation period (1 Tim 3:10; 5:22-25).
  4. By the current Elders (Acts 14:23; 1 Tim 5:22; Tit 1:5).
- III. The Resolved Church understanding of Plural Elder church Polity/Government
- A. Jesus is the Head or Senior Pastor (Eph 4:15; 1 Pet 5:4).
- B. Under Jesus two or more Elders lead his church
1. Plural Elders are directly prescribed (Tit 1:5; 1 Pet 5:5).
  2. Plural Elders are clearly described (Acts 14:23; 20:17; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 5:17; 1 Pet 5:1; Js. 5:14).
  3. Plural Elders are needed and added to care for the numerical increase of people (Ex. 18; Num 11:16).
- C. A Variety of Giftings may exist among the Eldership
1. Eldership giftings may include: Evangelists, Pastors, and other Teachers (Eph 4:11).
  2. Apostles and Prophets are no longer gifts given by Jesus today since they were the foundation of Jesus' church in writing Scripture (Eph 2:20).
  3. Giftings among the eldership ought to be complementary (Eph 4:12,16).
  4. A gifting involving public preaching and teaching is a distinct gift (Acts 1:15; 1 Tim 5:17).
  5. An elder serving with a preaching and teaching gifting ought to be financially supported by the church (2 Cor. 8:14; 1 Tim 5:17).
- D. Decisions are made through unanimous agreement among the Elders (Acts 6:1-7; 15).