

# Elder Requirements and Agreement Form

The mission of Candlelight Christian Fellowship is to communicate the good news of God's grace, to all men, through the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ; and to equip believers through the literal interpretation of the Scriptures; by the power of the Holy Spirit, through a pre-millennial, pre-tribulational, dispensational hermeneutic.

We purpose to teach and train believers to be men and women who worship the Lord in Spirit and in truth. We desire to see each person firmly established in the faith, and able to defend the truth, engaging in the work of ministry.

**Candlelight Christian Fellowship** is a body of believers gathering together under the Lordship of Jesus Christ to worship Him, to be instructed in His Word, to grow in our love for one another, and to be equipped for the work of the ministry. We intend to share the good news of Jesus Christ and declare the Gospel to all men, both at home and abroad.

We believe the Church is the Body of Christ: the habitation of God through the Spirit. Every born again believer is an integral part of His body. We believe the Church belongs to Jesus. It is His work. Jesus said, *"I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."* (Matt. 16:18)

Paul the Apostle said that God has placed men and women in the Church to assist others as they grow in faith. He told the Ephesians *"...He Himself (Jesus) gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head; Christ; from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love."* (Eph. 4:11-17 NKJV)

## Our Vision

In the passage above, we learn that it is God's will that men and women are matured and become fruitful as members of the body of Christ. Therefore, the vision of Candlelight Christian Fellowship is to equip saints for the work of the ministry. The Lord has set into His Church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, for this very purpose.

Some people are convinced that the work of the ministry is the work of the Pastor(s) and Elder(s). However, Paul clearly states that the responsibility of the Pastor(s) and Elder(s) is to equip *the saints* for the work of the ministry. As Believers grow and mature in the faith, they are directed by the Holy Spirit into various areas of service. Every believer in Jesus has gifts, talents, and a calling that the Lord has specifically designed for their usefulness and fruitfulness in His work.

Paul the apostle revealed a four-fold replication process of seeing believers come into fruitfulness in the ministry. It is found in his exhortation to Timothy. *"And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."* (2 Timothy 2:2)

Paul, as an elder in the Church, found Timothy faithful in his service to the Lord. Timothy became Paul's student in pastoral ministry. As part of the training process, Paul gave Timothy the responsibility to seek out other "*faithful men*" who could be trained to repeat the process.

It is therefore the responsibility of the Pastor(s) and Elder(s) to equip members of the body to serve. They oversee, teach, encourage, administrate, pray for, and support the local body.

## **Deacons and Elders**

God gifts, and calls believers to various functions in the Church as He sees fit. Some are called as deacons. Deacons are servants to the Lord, and His Church. They are responsible for administrative and task oriented duties in the Church. Generally they are the ones who handle the church finances, administrate the benevolence ministries, and attend to natural functions of the Church. They may also be charged with the care and oversight of the church building and grounds, transportation, etc. Others are called as elders. Elders are overseers. They pastor and teach. The Elders are responsible for the overall health and spiritual leadership in the Church. They are called to teach the Scriptures, and equipping the body. They lead the congregation in worship and prayer. They provide encouragement, counsel, prayer for the sick, and when necessary, the administration of Church discipline.

Believers in the local church are encouraged to trust the Lord for specific direction and gifting. When given responsibility, they are called to faithfully execute their assignments thoroughly, and completely, with integrity, and enthusiasm.

In addition to the "offices" in the Church, the Lord has gifted every member of His body with Spiritual gifts for the edification, exhortation, and comfort of the Body of Christ.

## **Attributes and Responsibilities of Elders and Deacons**

A person holding the office of elder at Candlelight Christian Fellowship is responsible for the spiritual oversight and health of the fellowship. They are called upon to counsel, admonish, and hold accountable the Senior Pastor - as he leads.

Candlelight Christian Fellowship is not an elder run church in the sense that the elders are a separate entity, and the pastor is hired or retained by the eldership. At Candlelight, the pastor serves as chairman of the "Elder Board" and serves as one of the elders. He is accountable to others in the overall ministry.

The Senior Pastor seeks the counsel of the other members of the "Elder Board" and may seek counsel from other senior pastors in the community or abroad, to which he is also accountable. When the elders are not in agreement over a particular issue or direction the issue is given to prayer and further discussion until such a time as the elders come to an agreement on a direction.

In the process of raising men and women into places of service and leadership, we desire to follow the specifically designated guidelines as described by the Scriptures.

## Concerning Elders and their Wives

In the letters of instruction given to Timothy and Titus we read:

*"This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work."* (1 Timothy 3:1 NKJV)

When writing to Timothy, Paul used the word "episkopos" to describe the elder. "Episkopos" is defined as a superintendent, or officer in general charge of a local church. He is a bishop, pastor/teacher and overseer.

*"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."* (1 Timothy 3:2-7 NKJV) (See Also Titus 1:5-9)

## Doctrine and Philosophy of Ministry

It is necessary to have those who serve as leaders in the local assembly, share a common view on the fundamental doctrines of the Bible as described in our "Statement of Faith". We also believe it is important to share a common philosophy of ministry. (Amos 3:3)

Paul mentions in his comments to Timothy and Titus, that one of the distinguishing marks of an elder is that they are *"able to teach."* (1 Tim. 3:2) Therefore, those who serve together as elders, work together and in harmony for the common good of the body.

Paul exhorted: *"Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."* (1 Cor. 1:10) *"But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine."* (Titus 2:1)

Because there are various and distinct methods of leadership in the churches today, it is necessary that those who serve as leaders agree upon the methods and mannerisms employed. This agreement will help to avoid confusion and discouragement to the body."

*"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"* (Psalm 133:1) *"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."* (Eph. 4:1-3)

All who serve as elders at Candlelight have studied and support our "Statement of Faith" and "Philosophy of Ministry".

## **Spirituality**

It has become increasingly popular to utilize methods developed by humanistic and secular society to dictate the programs, methods and directives of the local Church. However, we believe that the local Church is to be led by the Spirit of God. Therefore, men who serve as leaders in the local assembly are to be men who, first of all, are men of the Word. We are called to "*study*" (2 Tim 2:15) the Scriptures and "*be ready always to give an answer to every man...*" (1 Peter 3:15) We are to be men whose lives are directed by and submitted to the Holy Scriptures.

Secondly, men in leadership should be men who are in the habit of spending time in prayer, waiting in the presence of God. An elder should be a man who faithfully brings up the needs of the fellowship before the Lord in prayer. Paul said: "*(We)...do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.*" (Col. 1:9-12)

Jesus is the ultimate example of Christian leadership and has left for us an example of His discipline and dependence upon His Heavenly Father - spending time in prayer. If He spent time in the presence of His Father, consider the greatness of our need to do the same.

## **Accountability**

Men in leadership should be men who humbly adhere to counsel and make themselves accountable to fellow believers. No man will ever be a great leader who has not first learned to be a faithful follower. It is of greatest importance to understand that a leader in the body of Christ is a servant to the body of Christ, not a ruler who dictates to and lords over the flock of God. An independent, glory seeking, power hungry and/or self-willed spirit must be set aside if one is to be a servant/leader to the body of Christ.

Because people look to the elders and deacons in the local assembly as examples, it is important that their lifestyle depicts integrity, consistency and faithfulness. Paul told Timothy to: "*...be...an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*" (1 Tim. 4:12)

## **Commitment**

An elder should be a man who is committed to the flock. Not a hireling who when persecution, opposition, and difficulty arises, flees and leaves the body unprotected and un nourished.

Jesus said: "*The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.*" (John 10:13) He went on to say that He is "*the good shepherd; and (that He) know(s) (His) sheep, and (is) known by (His) own.*" (John 10:14) We are called to follow this model.

Men in leadership at Candlelight are those found in the habit of regularly attending Sunday services, Wednesday evening prayer meetings, and small groups. We look for those who are willing servants and

who are generally among the first to arrive and last to leave. There are always things to do and people to serve. Those in leadership are willing to do any task that serves the Lord and His Church.

Secondly, as leaders and examples to and for the local Church, men in leadership should be men who faithfully support the local assembly through the giving of financial support.

The Old Covenant principle declares, *"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."* (Mal. 3:10)

It is obvious to everyone that there are financial responsibilities that accompany the work of the ministry. We are of the opinion "where God guides, He provides". However, it is clear from the Scriptures that in the Church Age, God has chosen to use the body of Christ as the primary avenue by which He provides the needed finances for the operation of the ministry.

### **Visibility and Availability**

Serving in leadership is much more than filling a position in the church. It is a passion for the body of Christ. Therefore, we believe that elders and deacons should be available (as much as is possible) 24 hours a day, ready to serve in times of crisis and as under-shepherds ready to assist the local body with its growing need.

Peter said, *"Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock, and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away."* (1 Peter 5:2-5)

*"If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work."* (1 Tim. 3:1)

I \_\_\_\_\_, agree with the above declaration. I have read and agree with the Philosophy of Ministry and Doctrinal Statement of Candlelight Christian Fellowship. I am a member of the church, and as such agree with and practice what is required of one in membership.

I agree to serve on the elder board and note that my service is voluntary. Should I at any time be in disharmony with the above stated policy I will gladly submit my resignation from service and as a member of the Elder board.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_