

Church Leadership

The Bible identifies two roles of leadership in the church—elders and deacons. As the book of Acts tells the story of the start of the church, these positions were identified and appointed in each church to provide the leadership needed to make those churches healthy and strong (see Acts 14:23). Additionally, the New Testament letters provide limited instructions for church leadership. At BridgePointe, we look to Scripture to define what is best for the church. When Scripture speaks clearly, we trust and follow its instructions. When it is silent on a matter, we use wisdom and discernment to do what is best. With these as our guiding principles, we seek to structure church leadership according to the model provided in Scripture.

Elder-Shepherds

The terms “elder,” “overseer,” and “shepherd” are used interchangeably to refer to those entrusted to be leaders over the church (Acts 14:23, 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:1; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:2). Because of the sacred responsibility, those serving in this role are held to the highest standard of character, as described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Because of the model provided in Scripture, we believe that each church should be led by a team of elder-shepherds. Biblical church leadership is modeled after family leadership. Therefore, this role of elder-shepherd is the one role within the church that is specifically designated for men. At BridgePointe men serve in this role with the support and partnership of their wives.

At BridgePointe, we refer to those who serve in this role as shepherds. While the Bible is clear about who they must be, it doesn't say much about what they must do. Therefore, the image of a shepherd provides the best understanding of how elder-shepherds provide leadership for the church. The first responsibility of this role is to *oversee the flock*, described as “directing the affairs of the church” (1 Timothy 5:17) and being responsible for the health and sustainability of the church. As shepherds who oversee the flock, they guide and guard the integrity, unity, and theology of the church. The second responsibility of this role is to *care for the sheep*, described as “watching over them” and “being examples to them” (1 Peter 5:2-3). As shepherds who care for the sheep, they work with the staff and ministry teams to ensure that all the sheep receive the care they need.

Deacons

The second leadership role in the church is called “deacons.” This term simply means “one who serves” and refers to an individual or team of people who provide leadership for a specific ministry of the church. We see an example of this in Acts 6, when a team is appointed to oversee the distribution of food to the widows in the church in Jerusalem. Like with elders, deacons are held to a high standard of character as described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. In the early church, we see examples of Godly men and women serving in this role (1 Corinthians 16:1-2), which is also true of deacon teams at BridgePointe.

BridgePointe currently has three leadership teams that serve in the role of deacons for the church. The Administrative Leadership Team (ALT) provides oversight for all things related to finances, budget, policies, and operations. The Outreach Leadership Team (OLT) provides oversight of the development of local and global missions partnerships and the distribution of missions funds. And the Ministry Leadership Team is the BridgePointe staff who provides oversight of all ministries of the church.

These three leadership teams serve under the oversight of the Shepherd Team, with the goal of Shepherd representation on each. The goal of all church leadership, shepherds and deacons, is to work toward organizational (the flock) and individual health (the sheep) by equipping the people of the church to do their part to make the whole church healthy and strong.

Leadership Positions

BridgePointe is continuing to move to a system where all leadership roles, with the exception of members of the staff team, will have a term limit. This will help create healthy expectations for those serving and infuse new ideas and perspectives into our teams. It is our intention to add new leaders to these teams on a regular basis. This includes a 6-month process of prayer and discernment for the Shepherd Team and a shorter and less formal process for the OLT and ALT.