

Elders @ GCWP

Updates from the Elders of GCWP

What is the Role of an Elder @ GCWP?

At the Elders' Annual Day Away in Banstead last December, we set about clarifying the role of elders according to the Bible and therefore what that looks like at GCWP...

1 SHEPHERDS

Elders are to be shepherds for the Good Shepherd's flock. The New Testament is clear that this is achieved through teaching the Word and protecting sound doctrine. Ezekiel 34 fleshes out the role of a shepherd: they are to 'lead to pasture' (evangelism and teaching)... 'bind up' (spiritual/pastoral care)... and 'make them lie down' (protect by upholding sound doctrine and church practice) (Ezekiel 34:13-16, 1 Peter 5:2, Acts 20:28-32)

This means:

- Elders strive to pray privately every day for the church, and pray together monthly to reflect their dependence on the Good Shepherd.
- Elders will teach by: preaching at least once a year; leading a Bible-study group and/or teaching in a children's or youth group. Elders will also pray about and give input into teaching series ideas.
- Elders will evangelise by maintaining an outward-looking ethos as a church. This is seen in the new 'Engage' and 'Evangelism' Ministries.
- Elders care by promoting good church fellowship and overseeing the pastoral care of the flock, seeking to ensure that all are cared for, especially during hard times.
- Elders will protect by speaking up against any false teaching in the church, feeding back regularly to those with a public teaching role (usually via/to the Senior Pastor) and making decisions on church policies, church discipline and doctrinal issues at Elders' meetings (of which there are six a year).

2 OVERSEERS

While an Elder's primary role is as a shepherd (by teaching, caring for and protecting the flock from false teaching) the term 'overseer' is often used for elders in the New Testament and implies oversight or management of all aspects of biblical church ministry (Titus 1:7).

This means:

- Each Elder will participate in one of the five Ministry Teams (Engage, Evangelise, Establish, Equip and Enlist).
- Ministry teams will be held accountable to the Eldership. In practice this will happen through each ministry team submitting 'Highlights and Significant Changes' to all Elders after meetings, providing opportunity for any Elder to schedule a discussion at an Elders' meeting.

3 SERVANTS

Elders will be asked by Jesus upon his return to give an account of their care for the church (Hebrews 13:17).

In light of this, Elders will act in all humility and selflessness to further the kingdom of God at Grace Church.

They exist to serve the church and will endeavour to serve Grace Church before themselves.

In return, the church ought to: 'Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you. Pray for us.' (Hebrews 13:17-18a)

We know many of you pray for us, and we are very grateful.

4 HUMAN

We are planning on introducing a sabbatical system to give non-staff elders a chance to: review the ways in which they are serving and perhaps spend time studying and praying about important aspects of ministry.

Elders (not on staff team)

@ the 10am service: Martin Reynolds and Carl Laferton

@ the 4.30pm service: James (Jeab) Burstow, Chris Sharpe and Matthew Gill

Elders (on staff team)

Senior Pastor: Sam Williamson

Assistant Pastor: Tim Guest

