

Responsibilities of Deacons & Elders According to the Book of Order

Deacons

The office of deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of sympathy, witness and service after the example of Jesus Christ. Persons of spiritual character, honest repute, of exemplary lives, brotherly and sister love, warm sympathies and sound judgment should be chosen for this office. It is the duty of deacons, first of all, to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress both within and beyond the community of faith. They shall assume such other duties as may be delegated to them from time to time by the session, such as leading the people in worship through prayers of intercession, reading the Scriptures, presenting the gifts of the people, and assisting with the Lord's supper.

Elders

Elders are chosen by the people. Together with ministers of the Word and Sacrament, they exercise leadership, government, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of a particular church as well as the church at large, including ecumenical relationships. When elected commissioners to higher governing bodies, elders participate and vote with the same authority as ministers of the Word and Sacrament, and they are eligible for any office. Elders should be persons of faith, dedication, and good judgment. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel, both within the church and the world. It is the duty of elders, individually and jointly, to strengthen and nurture the faith and life of the congregation committed to their charge. Together with the pastor, they should encourage the people in the worship and service of God, equip and renew them for their tasks within the church and for their mission in the world, visit and comfort and care for the people with special attention to the poor, the sick, the lonely and those who are oppressed. They should inform the pastor and session of those persons and structures which may need special attention. They should assist in worship. They should cultivate their ability to reach the Bible and may be authorized to supply places which are without the regular ministry of the Word and Sacrament. In specific circumstances and with proper instruction, specific elders may be authorized by the presbytery to administer the Lord's Supper in accord with G-11.0103z. Those duties which all Christians are bound to perform by the law of love are especially incumbent upon elders because of their calling to office and are to be fulfilled by them as official responsibilities.

Source:

The Office of the General Assembly, The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church USA Part II Book of Order. 2007-2009. Louisville, KY: The Office of the General Assembly, 2007.