

# STRUCTURE

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE BELIEVE

WORKBOOK

CHRIST  
IS HEAD

HUMAN  
OVERSIGHT

MINISTRY  
AND CARE

Life  
Community Church  
Storrington



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The Church exists to Glorify and serve Christ, it is His workmanship and His bride. Colossians 1:17-18 And He is the head of the body, the church & Ephesians 5:25-28 as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her... Christ is the head of the church and any human leader in His church must be submitted to His authority before and above every other authority.

We submit to Christ as the head of the church by being:

## **BIBLE BASED**

The nature and Character of God are revealed to us throughout His word and specifically in the life of Jesus. Jesus said in John 14:9-10 "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father ... The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does His works..."

The teachings of Jesus and the Bible in general must be held as a final authority in the structuring and running of the local church. See also 2 Tim 3:16 "All Scripture is breathed out by God..." We believe that the Bible is God's primary way of leading us in how we are to live as believers in Christ.

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## **SPIRIT LED**

Jesus told us in John 14:26 "The Holy Spirit is given to the church to be her Helper." In this same passage Jesus told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would teach them all things and bring His teaching to their memory. We believe that the Holy Spirit leads us into truth bringing revelation of scripture to us and enables us to remember and apply the word of God in our lives. He renews our minds with the word of God and empowers us to keep Christ as the head of His church. He is the one that gives Spiritual gifts and Ministry gifting to the church. As a local church we are submitted to the leading of the Holy Spirit. We believe that He guides us in to truth and reveals to us the will of the Father.

## **GOD SERVING**

The church is to serve God's vision and calling. The church must never become about the ministry of one man or about pleasing and serving man but rather we exist for the honour and glory of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31 "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Colossians 3:16-17 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, ... And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus." Our ministry as a local church must be in the light of serving God first and foremost. It is His church, for His Glory.

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## REFLECTION

Before you begin your reflection, we encourage you to get hold of a good journal to record your thoughts and answers. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you into a deeper knowledge of what each section means and should look like in your life. As you read through the Scriptures take time to meditate upon them.

In 2 Tim 3:16-17 Paul tells Timothy, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

Paul is reminding Timothy that Scripture is God's words.

**Do you accept that the Bible is God's word? Why?**

**What reasons do people have for not believing the Bible is God's word?**

Paul tells Timothy that Scripture is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.

**How has scripture done these things in your life?**

In John 14:26 we read, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."

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## REFLECTION

In this passage Jesus is telling his disciples that the Holy Spirit will teach them what to do. One of the ways we honour Christ as head of His church is to allow His Spirit to teach us and lead us into truth.

**Can you think of a time that the Holy Spirit has revealed truth to you?**

One concern that arises when we seek to be a people led by the Spirit is that we can believe something is of the Spirit when it is not.

**How can we encourage a church community to be led by the Spirit while also being careful not to be misled?**

In Colossians 3:16-17 Paul tells the Colossians, " Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

As God's church, all that we do is to be to the glory of God. We are called to serve God first and then to serve mankind.

**What things do you think can cause a church to become man serving and not God serving?**

Consider yourself, are there areas that God is not Lord of in your life? Bring those areas before the Lord in prayer. Ask God to help you submit them to Him.

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The Bible lays out a very clear pattern for local church leadership. While we believe God can bless His church however it is structured we desire to have as Biblical a structure as possible and so as a local church we are led by Elders and Deacons.

## ELDERS

In Acts 14:23 we find the title Elder, which literally means an older one. One who is recognised as senior in understanding, experience and character. In 1 Tim 3:2 we find the title Overseer. Sometimes translated Superintendent or Bishop. These terms should be understood as different names for the same office. A good way for us to understand the role of an Elder is to think of him as a father of the local church family. As churches were established in the book of Acts we see that Elders were appointed to oversee each congregation. See Acts 14:23. Elders are to be people that are known for their good character, have proven their ability to lead well and are able to teach the word of God to his people. See 1 Timothy 3:2.

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In 1 Timothy 5:17 we read “Let the Elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honour...” This idea of ‘ruling’ is not dictatorial but as a father who settles disputes and makes decisions on behalf of the family. Rule implies the idea of a guardian or protector rather than a king or dictator. There are no women Elders in the new testament church. There is debate in churches whether this means we should not have women elders today or whether this was due to the culture of the day. On weighing up the different arguments we have taken the decision to allow women Elders at Life Community Church.

## DEACONS

Scripture is not very clear on the exact role of the Deacons (Servants). It is very likely that those appointed to wait on tables in Acts 6, were the forerunners of who would later be called Deacons. The title Servant, should not mislead us. The New Testament Deacon was given position of trust and responsibility. The qualification for Deacons differ from Elders in two ways. There is no clause that they mustn't be new converts as long as they are as stated in 1 Timothy 3:10 “tested first” and the requirement to be able to teach is removed from Deacons. See 1 Timothy 3:8-13 for the full requirements of Deacons.

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## REFLECTION

There are many different models for church leadership. At the Community Church we believe the most Biblical structure is for the church to be led by a group of Elders.

See 1 Timothy 3:1-7 for the criteria for Elders.

How can a church led by a group of Elders rather than one individual be a blessing to the members of the congregation?

**What kind of personality do Elders need in order to make this kind of leadership structure work well?**

**What can you as a member of the church do to support the Elders in their responsibility of overseeing the church family?**

**To what degree do you recognise the Elders of the church as spiritual Fathers?**

A Deacon literally means servant but the requirement for Deacons is quite strict. Read 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and consider the criteria listed.

**What role do you think the New Testament Deacon played in the life of the church?**

**How do you think the role of a Deacon differs from an Elder?**



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## MINISTRY FUNCTIONS

Alongside the position of Elders and Deacons the Bible also lays out several ministry functions given to equip the church for ministry. We find these functions listed in Ephesians 4:11-13 "And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." The functions are not positions in the church but ministry gifting for the building up of the body. An Elder may also perform a function of one of the ministries outlined in Ephesians 4. People with these gifting are often obvious candidates for Eldership but the function and the position should not be confused.

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## TRUSTEES

Life Community Church is a registered charity and therefore subject to charity law. Trustees for the charity are selected from among the congregation for their ability to oversee the practical and financial affairs of the church. We choose Trustees who have experience of management and who are godly in their conduct. The Trustees work closely with the Elders and ensure that the decisions made by the Elders are in the best interest of the church.

## HOME GROUP LEADERS

As a church we encourage all our members to be part of a Home Group. These groups meet at different times in the week in different homes in and around Storrington. Each Home Group is led by one or two members of the church that look out for the spiritual and practical needs of the members of their groups. We consider Home Groups our main avenue for pastoral care in the church.

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God gives ministry gifting to His church.

**How do you think these different giftings function in a local church?**

Paul says that the different functions are to equip the saints for the work of ministry.

**In what ways have you seen these ministries equip you for the work God has called you to?**

As a church we have chosen to administer pastoral care through our home groups and we encourage all our members to join a group. These groups enable us to build deeper relationship with our brothers and sisters in the church and create a framework in which we are better able to care for our members. We recognise that there are some that are unable to be part of a home group.

**What do you believe are the benefits of being part of a home group?**

**What are some of the challenges for those that are unable to be part of a small group?**

If you are not already, please consider being in one of our home groups.