

An Exposition of the 2nd (1689) London Baptist Confession (Chapter 26.8-11: Of the Church)

26.8 A particular church, gathered and completely organized according to the mind of Christ, consists of officers and members; and the officers appointed by Christ to be chosen and set apart by the church (so called and gathered), for the peculiar administration of ordinances, and execution of power or duty, which he entrusts them with, or calls them to, to be continued to the end of the world, are bishops or elders, and deacons.^a ^a Acts 20:17, 28; Phil. 1:1

1. Christ intends for each particular church to be gathered and organized according to His mind.
 - a. When complete, each will consist of officers who are chosen and set apart by the church.
 - i. Bishops or elders (Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5).
 - ii. Deacons (Ministry Directors in our context).
 - b. It should consist of members.
2. The officers of the church have been entrusted with...
 - a. The administration of the ordinances.
 - b. The execution of power or duty (Hebrews 13:17).

26.9 The way appointed by Christ for the calling of any person, fitted and gifted by the Holy Spirit, unto the office of bishop or elder in a church, is, that he be chosen thereunto by the common suffrage of the church itself;^a and solemnly set apart by fasting and prayer, with imposition of hands of the eldership of the church, if there be any before constituted therein;^b and of a deacon that he be chosen by the like suffrage, and set apart by prayer, and the like imposition of hands.^c ^a Acts 14:23 ^b 1 Tim. 4:14 ^c Acts 6:3, 5–6

1. Christ appointed the way a church is to call a bishop or elder (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).
 - a. He is to be chosen by the “suffrage” (voting or formal affirmation) of the church itself.
 - b. He is to be solemnly set apart by fasting and prayer and the laying on of hands (Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 4:14).
2. Christ appointed the way a church is to call a deacon.
 - a. He is to be chosen by the vote or formal affirmation of the church itself (Acts 6:3).
 - b. He is to be solemnly set apart by prayer and the laying on of hands.

26.10 The work of pastors being constantly to attend the service of Christ, in his churches, in the ministry of the word and prayer, with watching for their souls, as they that must give an account to Him;^a it is incumbent on the churches to whom they minister, not only to give them all due respect, but also to communicate to them of all their good things according to their ability,^b so as they may have a comfortable supply, without being themselves entangled in secular affairs;^c and may also be capable of exercising hospitality towards others;^d and this is required by the law of nature, and by the express order of our Lord Jesus, who has ordained that they that preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.^e

^a Acts 6:4; Heb. 13:17 ^b 1 Tim. 5:17–18; Gal. 6:6–7 ^c 2 Tim. 2:4 ^d 1 Tim. 3:2 ^e 1 Cor. 9:6–14

1. The work of pastors is to...
 - a. Attend the service of Christ in His churches (Colossians 3:24).
 - b. Minister the word and prayer (Acts 6:4).
 - c. Watch over the souls of the people given to them and give an account for them (Hebrews 13:17).
2. Given these responsibilities, it is incumbent on the churches...
 - a. To give their pastors all due respect (1 Timothy 5:17-18).
 - b. To pay them according to the ability of the church so as they...
 - i. May have a comfortable living without the need for extra jobs (2 Timothy 2:4).
 - ii. May be able to exercise hospitality.
3. The financial maintenance of pastors is required...
 - a. By the law of nature (Galatians 6:7)
 - b. By the express order of our Lord Jesus (1 Corinthians 9:6-14).

26.11 Although it be incumbent on the bishops or pastors of the churches, to be instant in preaching the word, by way of office, yet the work of preaching the word is not so peculiarly confined to them but that others also gifted and fitted by the Holy Spirit for it, and approved and called by the church, may and ought to perform it.^a

^a Acts 11:19–21; 1 Pet. 4:10–11

1. Pastors have the primary responsibility of preaching the word in season and out.
2. Preaching may be performed by those who are not pastors but who are...
 - a. Gifted and fitted by the Holy Spirit for it.
 - b. Approved and called by the church to do it.