

Healthy and Unhealthy Church Governance

UNHEALTHY APPROACHES TO ELDERSHIP and GOVERNANCE BY CHURCH BOARDS

1. **The Rubber Stamp Eldership** – mindless endorsement of every proposal from the pastor and ministry leaders; extreme “hands-off” passive approach.
2. **Gatekeepers** – suspicious, distrustful watchdogs, protecting the status quo, blocking pastoral or leadership initiatives.
3. **Keepers of the Peace** – highest goal is to keep everyone happy; peace at any price; often held hostage by “matriarchs and patriarchs”.
4. **Representative democracies** – see their primary function as representing “fairly” various groups (often factions) within the church; extreme emphasis on everyone having an equal voice on all issues.
5. **Micromanagers** – an extreme hands-on approach, seeking to direct the detailed operations of the church in every ministry area.

HEALTHY APPROACHES TO ELDERSHIP and GOVERNANCE BY CHURCH BOARDS

1. **Establishing Direction, Policies and Priorities**
Policies function like the boundaries, goal posts and scoreboard on a sports field. They enable team members to know when they have stepped out of bounds, how much progress they have made and when they have kicked a goal. Key areas for establishing policies include:
 - Church mission – purpose, vision, values and goals.
 - Board function
 - Board-Senior Pastor relationship
2. **Clearly Delegating Leadership**
The board empowers the pastor to lead the church forward.
 - Calling a Pastor and appointing Key Governance Groups
 - Senior pastor's position description and delegation
 - Working with the Pastor to structure positions and appoint ministry leaders
3. **Monitoring Progress**
Leading the processes of reflecting on and discerning the direction of the church
 - Spiritual health
 - Ministry direction
 - Financial integrity
 - Pastoral performance
4. **Facilitating and communicating decisions**
Leading the church in it's decision making processes.
Keeping consultation and communication channels clear.