

What Form Of Governance Do You Want Your Church To Use?

Two Options

- 1) A Traditional Presbyterian Governance
 - All elders vote on all important church issues and perhaps shepherd and teach
 - Either have all elders permanently “on session” or if a very large church, rotate a certain number each year to “off session”

- 2) An Elder Commission
 - The elders elect a commission of elders which rotate through the commission. The only staff on the commission is the pastor who acts as moderator, voting only in case of a tie.

Elder Commission (6 questions)

1. Is it biblical?
 - If not unbiblical, it is deemed as acceptable.
 - In fact, most large churches that use a traditional session, allow their Senior Pastor to focus on certain areas and not others (such as preaching, but not counselling). They focus on their strengths.
 - Some say inappropriate to not have all elders vote on all issues and then rotate many off each year. Those off session don't vote on any issues for several years until they rotate back on.

2. Is it acceptable according to the BCO?
 - Yes. Commissions can be formed by a session to make decisions for the larger body of elders whenever they deem it helpful.
 - Roy Taylor, PCA's previous stated clerk for many years, was asked if a governing commission meets the spirit of the BCO. He replied:
 - "Yes. As long as the commission reports back to the full session at least annually."
 - Charles Donohoe, in response to being questioned about its appropriateness, said,
 - "I basically authored the BCO and I not only see a governing commission as permitted, but I see it as more and more wise for many churches."

3. What are the benefits of an elder commission?
 - 1) It frees a majority of the elders to focus more and better on shepherding, teaching, etc.
 - 2) It maintains a small enough body for everyone to give their input so as to more quickly make the best decisions.
 - 3) It better stewards different strengths and spiritual gifts – some making decision (wisdom, etc.) and other's pastoring or teaching.
 - 4) Keeps the decision making board fresh regarding perspectives and history (1 old, 2 new) and enables to more easily achieve greater diversity in age, culture and ethnicity.
 - 5) Allows the commission to function as a family versus that of a congress.

- 6) Allows the pastor to be better held accountable and shepherded.
 - 7) Allows shorter meetings.
 - 8) Enables all men who aspire to the office of elders & who are spiritual qualified to become elders (never too many)
-
4. What is the best size of a commission?
 - No less than 5, no more than 12, plus the Senior Pastor
 - Perimeter has 9 plus our Senior Pastor
 - Odd number is preferable
 - 3 year terms best
 - John Carver, author of Policy Governance, says:
 - “The rule of thumb is that you should have to justify any number over 7.
 - One reason for 9 + pastor is because of travel, a few are usually gone.
 - One survey study says that for every # of team over 7, the decision making effectiveness goes down by 10%
 5. What is the history of using a governing commission?
 6. What other PCA churches are using an elder commission?