

Elders and Leaders Agreement – Code of Ethics

PREAMBLE

The Code of Ethics for elders, pastoral team members and leaders is designed to edify and to promote the safety and well-being of all in the body of Christ. The code is intended to be a living document that is reflective of our being clothed with new life in Christ (Col 3:5-17) – a new life formed by the Spirit to become more and more Christlike – a life receiving and exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit. (Gal 5:22-26). We pray it will be embraced by all elders and leaders of the church serving in any and all congregational or administrative responsibilities.

As Christian leaders we recognise that Jesus Christ lives in us through the Holy Spirit. We ask him to change us, so that the reality of his resurrected life is evident in our thoughts and actions. The ethical guidelines and principles in this code of ethics for elders are intended to express the coherence of our leadership activities with this transcendent reality of our life in Christ.

Therefore, as elders, pastoral team members and leaders in the body of Christ we must endeavour to conduct our lives according to the spirit of the ethical guidelines and principles set forth in this code of ethics for elders and leaders.

As elders and church leaders, we must submit ourselves to the Word of God and allow the Holy Spirit to guide us in the application of ethical principles of Scripture. Our Christian conduct must be based on the life and teachings of Jesus, the teachings of New Testament writers, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The New Testament calls leaders and elders to the highest standard of reputation, ethics and conduct.

Practising our religious beliefs is an integral part of our faith. Week by week, we share in Christ together as we gather to worship, immerse ourselves in the scriptural story, pray and seek forgiveness, and fellowship. We welcome others as we share the sacraments of baptism and communion and celebrate and grow towards maturity in Christ. As we live and share the gospel, these practices demonstrate our faith in common with one another.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CODE OF ETHICS AND FULFILMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Therefore, as a servant of Jesus Christ in the role of Church Elder, Pastoral Team member or Leader of a Grace Communion International, I agree to commit and dedicate myself to conduct my service to the congregation in accordance with the spirit and terms of the Code of Ethics set out in this document. I also commit to fulfilling my ethical Responsibilities as they are set out below. Based on these standards, I will strive to conduct my ministry in a manner acceptable to God and the church in a manner beneficial to all people.

CODE OF ETHICS

- If I have the opportunity to preach or teach, I will be a responsible teacher giving adequate time to prayer, study and preparation. I will give sermons, or other presentations, that are biblically based, in theological agreement with the church, clearly communicated and relevant to the life of the church.
- I will strive to practice Matthew 18 in interpersonal conflicts. If I hear accusations or gossip about a member or fellow leader, I will first contact that member about the allegations if facts and circumstances permit and deem such conduct reasonable and prudent. I understand that it is unethical to pass along such accusations or make decisions without first talking to the accused. I will abide by the terms and spirit of the church's current published grievance procedure.
- I will be trustworthy in all areas of confidentiality.
- I will respect the dignity of the people I serve. I will strive not to embarrass, humiliate or intimidate a person, publicly or privately. If I am called upon to give guidance or correction, I will strive to do so with concern, gentleness and love.
- I will not use my place on the team to influence or coerce any person for my personal benefit.
- I will be above reproach in the management of church resources.
- Where I am responsible for doing so, I will delegate positions within the congregation responsibly, considering the spiritual gifts of each member, as well as Congregational endorsement.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Being an elder, pastoral team member or leader at Grace Communion International bestows responsibilities to church headquarters and ecclesiastical and administrative supervisors, to the local congregation, and to the local community.

All elders, pastoral team members and leaders are required to strive to fulfil the following responsibilities-

To God and the body of Christ:

As a member of the body of Christ we share union and deep fellowship with Christ. According to the New Testament pattern, we grow into the fullness of Christ as we both build up, and are built up, by each other.

- To be a responsible servant of God and the body of Christ.
- To exercise faithful stewardship in your devotional life using spiritual disciplines, the gifts of the Spirit and acts of service.
- To exercise faithful stewardship of financial, physical and intellectual resources.
- To accept accountability for your actions and avoid situations that could reflect negatively on the name of Jesus Christ.
- To maintain sexual purity.
- To exercise Christ's servant leadership.

To Family:

- To keep family responsibilities as a high priority – second only to your relationship with God within the body of Christ.
- To spiritually, emotionally and physically support your family.
- To be faithful to your spouse.
- To be a responsible, safe, and dedicated parent to your children.

To the Greater Body of Christ:

- Avoid soliciting members from other church fellowships.
- Seek to work in harmony with other Christian leaders and programs to

strengthen the body of Christ and advance the kingdom of God.

- To respect the greater Body of Christ by not degrading or slandering other fellowships.

To the Denomination:

- To patiently and prayerfully study all doctrinal materials presented by headquarters.
- Support and carry out all administrative decisions and policies of ecclesiastical supervisors. If you cannot in good conscience do this, to immediately notify your supervisors.
- To not publicly endorse doctrines contrary to the official statements of the headquarters of the church.
- To not share disagreements with church policy or doctrine with church members.
- To be respectful and honouring in discussions about elders, church leaders, and denominational leaders - past and present.
- To cooperate with and support fellow elders, church leaders and denomination leaders working together to further the work of Christ in the church.
- To support the various ministries and focuses of the church locally, nationally, and worldwide.
- If, at some time you cease to be an elder, pastoral team member or leader, to ensure your departure is as smooth as possible, causing the least amount of conflict for the local congregation and the (church) denomination.

Within and To the Congregation which you serve locally:

- To act with justice and mercy, striving to express the proper balance between strength and gentleness in all situations.
- To provide sound and clear pastoral, spiritual leadership.
- To refrain from giving counsel or advice beyond your area of expertise.
- Not do for others what they should be responsible for doing for themselves.
- To respect the administrative boundaries of another elders, pastoral team

members or leader's area of responsibility.

- To act co-operatively and humbly with elders, pastoral team members and leaders and avoid any competition or conduct designed to enhance your own status or position.
- To provide personal and practical support to other elders, pastoral team members and leaders.
- To develop yourself by accessing books and other materials pertinent to your service in the church.
- To accept and encourage evaluation of the effectiveness of your service from members of the congregation, your peers, and ecclesiastical supervisors, both periodically and on an ongoing basis.
- To help church members develop their spiritual gifts and to mentor spiritual leaders in the congregation.
- To give sermons that are biblically based, in theological agreement with the church, and relevant to the life of the church.
- Be committed to prompt reconciliation of interpersonal conflicts. This includes taking responsibility to courageously and tactfully face opposition and seek help from peers and/or ecclesiastical supervisors if necessary.
- Be trustworthy in all areas of confidentiality, except as you are legally required to disclose. To not disclose personal information without that person's prior knowledge and consent.
- Be fair and consistent in all dealings with parishioners and people in the church community.
- To honour and respect all cultures, genders, and races.

To the Local Community:

The local church is an integral part of the community in which it resides. Taking an active, appropriate role in the community serves as a Christian example of love and is a witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is acknowledged that a motivation to love others and the desire to improve the lives of others in the community can arise without an explicit commitment to our religious beliefs and practices. Therefore, in cases where there is an alignment of values with other organisations, GCI will seek to partner with them and work collaboratively to improve the lives of everyone in the broader community. In those situations, GCI does not require our volunteers to affirm our statement of beliefs; however, they

must act within certain guidelines, agreed to in the Volunteer Agreement.

In taking an active role in the community, Elders, pastoral team members and leaders have the following responsibilities.

- To support the church's efforts at being impactful in local neighbourhoods by bearing witness to the love of Jesus.
- To actively find ways of personally investing in ministries and cooperative partnerships with other organisations to serve the spiritual and practical needs of the local community.
- To read, understand, and respect the [contents of the GCI Volunteers Agreement](#) and to treat with dignity and acceptance all those who serve under such Agreements.
- To respect the differing beliefs of others engaged in service to the community and not share personal disagreements on matters of doctrine, religious beliefs, or politics with them.
- To focus with positivity on the shared values which have led to the collaborative partnership between the church and other organisations.
- To seek to work in harmony with other volunteers irrespective of whether they are a member of GCI church, are volunteering under a Volunteers Agreement for GCI, or are from another partnering organisation.

Responsibility of Denominational Leadership to Elders

In the spirit of Christian fellowship, denominational supervisors are responsible to provide support as well as just and fair treatment for elders. This means if you are in a supervisory position, you have the following additional responsibilities:

- To be accessible and promptly respond to requests from elders.
- To provide sound and clear spiritual, ecclesiastical and administrative leadership
- To openly and respectfully communicate to an elder any serious complaints brought against him/her.
- To provide reasonable time for feedback to requests for information from elders.
- To handle sensitive and confidential information about an elder in a responsible manner.
- To be sensitive to the personal and family needs of elders.

- To be open and responsive to questions from elders.
- To be subject to periodic performance evaluations.
- To provide reasonable notice of moves, terminations and salary or benefit changes.

Name:_____

Signature_____

Date:_____

Appendix A

Who is a leader in GCI?

1. **Pastoral Leadership:** Pastors are central to the leadership structure, often leading the congregation in worship, teaching, and community outreach. They are responsible for the spiritual well-being of the members and often carry a significant burden of responsibility
2. **Team-Based Approach:** Leadership is not solely the responsibility of the pastor. GCI emphasises a team-based approach where ministry leaders, elders, deacons, deaconesses, pastoral team members and others work together to support various aspects of church life.
3. **Ordination and Commissioning:** Elders are ordained to serve as pastoral leaders, ministry leaders (deacons and deaconesses), and pastoral team members and others are commissioned to assist in specific areas of service
4. **Spiritual Gifts:** Leadership within GCI recognises that different individuals are endowed with various spiritual gifts. These gifts are meant to be used collaboratively for the common good of the congregation

Overall, a leader in GCI is someone who embodies the principles of servant leadership, working collaboratively with others to fulfil the church's vision and mission and support the spiritual growth of its members.