



# DEFINING LEADERSHIP

**AT KING'S**

An explanation of what we believe about leadership in the local church, why we only appoint men as elders, and what this looks like at King's as we encourage everyone to get involved, with a list of resources for further exploration.



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# 1. What and who are elders?

## What do we call our leaders?

When I (Luke) am asked what my job is, I use a different word according to who is asking. If I'm speaking to a non-Christian I usually choose "leader" because that's a commonly-understood term. If I'm speaking to a Christian from another church tradition, I might say "pastor". When I'm applying for car insurance, the best option available usually is "minister". The word we use at King's is "elder" but with so many other words available, "elder" not being used much in everyday language, and it meaning quite a different thing in the Church of Scotland (to say nothing of the Mormons!), it's important to be clear on what eldership is.

## Where do we get this idea from?

We believe that the Bible is God's timeless and authoritative word to all people, so it shapes our understanding of church. We are trying to build King's on the principles we see described and defined in the New Testament. This is not a view held by every Christian or church tradition, hence the variety of models of leadership within churches. Even among those who share our perspective on the Bible there are different practices, but this article represents the conclusions we have come to as we seek to follow Jesus faithfully.

Let's start with Jesus' final command to His followers before He ascended to Heaven:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19-20)

Their response to this command was to declare the good news that Jesus is Lord and Saviour, and establish local communities of people who believed their message: churches. These churches were led by teams of elders (the term is always plural in the New Testament):

"When [the apostles Paul and Barnabas] had preached the gospel to [Derbe] and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed." (Acts 14:21-23)

"This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you." (Titus 1:5)

"Now from Miletus [Paul] sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him." (Acts 20:17)

## What is eldership?

“Elders” is not the only word used to describe church leaders in the New Testament but it is the most common. Looking at all the material about church leadership helps us understand what this role involves:

- In Acts 20:17-38, Paul speaks to the “elders” of the Ephesian church (verse 17). He uses the metaphor of shepherding to describe what they must do (28-29). This was well-known Old Testament language for leadership, and Jesus had used for Himself and His disciples (1 Chronicles 11:2, John 10:11, 21:15-17). (The word “pastor” comes from the Latin word for “shepherd”). Paul also describes an elder as an “overseer” (28), which might sound to us like a supervisor but in the original Greek has more the sense of being a watchman. He goes on to remind them of the importance of public teaching (27) and personal instruction (31) to protect those they have been given responsibility for.
- Ephesians 4:11 lists “the shepherds and teachers” (probably the same role) as one of the gifts given by Jesus to His church for the equipping and maturing of believers.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 states that certain people have the responsibility to lead and teach the church.
- 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 are parallel job descriptions for the same role, referred to as “elders” (Titus 1:5) and “overseers” (Titus 1:7, 1 Timothy 3:1-2). Those doing this are also described as “stewards” (Titus 1:7) and have to be able to manage their household because this corresponds to the church (1 Timothy 3:5). The ability to teach is the only other skill listed (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:9), the emphasis is on their character.
- 1 Timothy 5:17 speaks of “elders who rule well” and again mentions teaching.
- Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24 refer to “leaders”, and includes teaching (7), being a good example (7), and overseeing (17) as part of their job. They are “those who will have to give an account” to God for their care of the church (17).
- 1 Peter 5:1-4 addresses “elders” (1, 5) and calls them “shepherds” (2) who are to oversee those in their church (2) and be a godly example (3).

In summarising this material, Andrew Wilson writes:

“At root, the New Testament language about elders, shepherds, overseers, leaders and teachers is bound up with serving the church by protecting and guarding her from harm. Elders, biblically, are guardians.”

The words used in the New Testament consistently suggest that elders have authority to govern in the local church. They do this in several ways:

- Display (e.g. Hebrews 13:7). Elders are to live lives which show the truth of the gospel to the members of the church and the watching world. They are to be an example to the church of how to live as a child of God, a follower of Jesus, someone full of the Holy Spirit.
- Direction (e.g. 1 Timothy 5:17 NIV). They pray and seek God for where He is wanting to take the church, make plans to achieve this, and ensure that it is happening. They

receive input from apostolic ministry (see Appendix I) and advice from others to help with this.

- Define (e.g. Acts 15). God has revealed Himself definitively through His Son, to whom the Bible and the Holy Spirit testify. Elders are charged with preserving and passing on this truth. This happens primarily by ensuring that the church is taught what the Bible says – which can happen in a variety of contexts – and also in the weighing of prophecy when it is given.
- Discipline (e.g. 1 Corinthians 5). This involves protecting the church and its individual members from sin by warning all, challenging those who are sinning, and – if necessary – barring those who are unrepentant from the benefits of church membership. Discipline is always done in the hope that it will make the church aware of the dangers of disobeying God, and that the individuals concerned will repent and be restored.
- Delegation (e.g. Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27). Elders are not meant to do everything: the New Testament is emphatic that every member of the church is to be involved in its life and mission. Elders encourage this by creating opportunities for everyone to serve, identifying and developing gifted people, and ensuring that all members are helped to become mature disciples. They retain the responsibility for keeping watch over all areas of church life, without doing it all themselves, through appointing other leaders and giving them training and feedback in accordance with how the church should be led.

All the New Testament references we've looked at here assume a team of elders rather than an individual leading the church. This is an important principle that shows our dependence on God and each other. It also demonstrates the glorious diversity in unity that exists in the Trinity and that Christ is creating in His church. It is much healthier for everyone: within the team there will be elders with different strengths so the church can be effective in many areas, and together they can cover each other's weaknesses. They will have different levels of experience, a variety of perspectives and ministry gifts. They keep each other accountable. All this should produce a fullness that is impossible with just one person.

As important as elders are in the life of the church, they are also servants of the Church's Lord, Jesus Christ. He is the great and chief Shepherd (Hebrews 13:7, 1 Peter 5:4, Revelation 7:17), and all elders must submit to Him.

### **Who should do this?**

The simple answer is: someone who is recognised as having the character and ability to fulfil the role as described in the New Testament, and who is appointed to this task.

Any Christian leadership must be modelled on Christ. His life and ministry taught us that all leadership is service:

“When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, ‘Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher,

have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you." (John 13:12-15)

"Jesus called them to him and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'" (Matthew 20:25-28)

The two places where the specific qualifications for eldership are described are in Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus, who were continuing his work of planting and establishing churches. These churches (following his pattern in Acts 14:21-23) needed elders:

"The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil." (1 Timothy 3:1-7)

"This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you – if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it." (Titus 1:5-9)

Both of these descriptions are primarily about character rather than gifting but the element of an elder's identity that we need to discuss in more detail because of its currently-controversial status in our culture is his gender.

## 2. Why do we only appoint men as elders?

### What male eldership does not mean

Eldership is not a role that any man can do, but it is a role that only a man can do. It's helpful to begin thinking about why this is the case by dismissing several false assumptions:

Firstly, and most importantly, this is not a question of who is better than whom. In both creation and salvation men and women are treated the same and shown as having the same value:

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1:27)

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).

It's not because the writers of the New Testament were blinded by their culture's sexism. Unlike many other Jewish teachers, Jesus taught women (Luke 10:39, John 4:5-26), had good friendships with them (John 11:5), used them as positive examples in His teaching (Luke 18:1-5, 21:1-4), and declared their spiritual equality with men (Luke 13:16). The writers of the gospels also show that women supported His mission with finance and hospitality (Luke 8:3, John 12:2), and that it was almost only women who stayed faithful to Him when He was being crucified (Matthew 27:55-56). Women were recorded as being the first witnesses of the empty tomb and the resurrected Jesus (Luke 23:55-24:11, John 20:10-18), even though at that time the testimony of a woman was not accepted by itself in law. They believed before the male disciples did (Luke 24:11).

It's not because Paul disliked women. His letters tell us that Paul was friends with and worked alongside many women. Phoebe in Romans 16:1-2 is thought to have been Paul's envoy, taking his letter to the church. She is described as a fellow-worker and Paul's patron. Among the other women mentioned in Romans 16, Rufus's mother is said to have been “a mother to me also.” Wife and husband team Priscilla and Aquila are mentioned in Acts 18:2, 18, Romans 16:3-4, 1 Corinthians 16:19, 2 Timothy 4:19 – they were both heavily involved in Paul's mission, and Priscilla is often mentioned first, which may indicate that she was especially prominent. Lydia is the first European convert named in Paul's journeys and hosts the missionary team in Acts 16:14-15, 40. At Corinth, Paul is in contact with “Chloe's people” (1 Corinthians 1:11), and he talks of Eudoia and Syntyche from Philippi as “fellow workers” who have “laboured side by side with me in the gospel” (Philippians 4:3).

It's not because women weren't educated when the New Testament was written. Many of them were, and the New Testament never makes good education a qualification for leadership anyway (Acts 4:13).

It's not because women are not allowed to do anything in the New Testament churches: the examples above prove that many of them were very involved. The power of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts were given to both men and women (Acts 2:17-18, 1 Corinthians 12:7), so women could pray and prophecy in public (specifically mentioned in 1 Corinthians 11:5), along with all the other activities Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 12:8-11. He repeatedly exhorts everyone in the church, men and women, to encourage one another, and he includes teaching in this (Colossians 3:16, Romans 12:6-7, 1 Corinthians 14:26).

Moreover, early church history shows that women were especially attracted to Christianity because it recognised their dignity as fully equal with men. There is a strong argument that the western concept of equality came to us from Christianity, and research into cultures reached with the gospel more recently shows this pattern continuing even today. Although some churches have mistreated women, they did so by ignoring their Saviour and Scriptures.

Now let's look at what the Bible says about men and women, in order to understand why the New Testament clearly assigns the role of eldership to certain men only.

### **A very brief theology of gender**

Genesis 1 and 2 were written so that we could understand who God is, and who we are. Genesis 1 shows us a sequence of related pairs in God's creation: Heaven and Earth, land and sea, etc. This sequence comes to a climax with the final pair to be described, man and woman. Our biology displays this theological truth: we are different yet the same, we are meant to fit together.

In Genesis 2 we see Adam meeting and naming all the animals in creation, but he is alone: there is no-one like him. God then makes Eve from Adam, and seeing her makes Adam sing:

"This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." (Genesis 2:23)

These accounts teach us that men and women are the same, and not the same. In Timothy Keller's phrase, "we are equal but not equivalent". There can be no sense of superiority / inferiority between Christian men and women because the Bible teaches us that we are made different for each other.

We are also made different for God's sake: both man and woman are made in God's image and we can only comprehend this image by rejoicing in both maleness and femaleness:

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:27)

The idea that men and women are different is denied by some people in western culture but gender differences are gifts from God that should not be abused or ignored, but celebrated.

(For an extensive list of contemporary research that observes the differences between males and females, see Alastair Roberts' article referenced in Appendix III, specifically his section headed, "Aimee Byrd, Glenn Stanton, and Gender Roles." And for further consideration of what these differences may look like, see Andrew Wilson's talks "A Theology of Femaleness" "A Theology of Maleness".)

### **Differing roles**

The two areas of life in which the Bible assigns different roles to men and women are marriage and church leadership because these are profoundly related to each other. The husband's role as head of the household is equated with that of a church elder, so eldership is a role given only to certain men who have proved themselves qualified for this.

Paul teaches that marriage is about more than a man and women loving each other:

"Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her... 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church." (Ephesians 5:22-25, 31-32)

Marriage is ultimately a picture of Christ's love for the church which should demonstrate to the world how Jesus treats the church and how the church responds to Him. Within a marriage, the role of illustrating Christ is given to the husband, and illustrating the church to the wife. When Jesus returns and we are with Him forever, marriage will have served its function and neither husbands nor wives will play the roles they currently do (2 Corinthians 11:2, Revelation 19:9, Matthew 22:29-30).

The interplay between a husband and a wife is not meant to be how all men and all women relate to each other, as Hannah Anderson and Wendy Alsup explain:

"Being a wife is a role; being a husband is a role; being a servant is a role; being a citizen is a role. Being male and female are not roles. While our biological sex necessarily shapes the roles we hold (in marriage, a woman will be a wife and not a husband), submission does not stem directly from gender but from a role that exists in the context of relationship. A wife submits to her husband not because he is a 'man' but because he is her husband and has committed himself to certain vows and duties in the context of their marriage... Submission happens in context of specific privileges and responsibilities found in specific relationships bound by specific covenants."

Submission is the voluntary yielding of authority to another. All Christians are called to do this to each other (Ephesians 5:21) as part of a lifestyle of humble service. It has almost entirely negative connotations in our culture but the Bible shows us that it is Christlike. Jesus' submission to the Father's will is celebrated in Philippians 2:5-11. He was not coerced into submitting to the Father, He delighted to do so. He did not give up His intelligence by submitting but used it fully. He was glorified because of it. To demonstrate this is a great privilege, and it anticipates the coming day when the church will be presented to Christ as His pure bride, the eternal destiny of all of us, male and female (2 Corinthians 11:2, Revelation 21:2). We will all live in joyful submission to God forever, and it will be wonderful.

A Christian husband and wife need to work out what the roles they've been given look like where they live. The sociological changes of the past century have given women new and more opportunities, which encourage us to affirm the Bible's clear teaching of men and women being equal in dignity as God's image-bearers. What we risk losing amidst this is the fact that men and women have essential and vital differences which should be celebrated.

Paul established the connection between marriage and the church in Ephesians 5, and elsewhere in the New Testament the church is called the household of God (Ephesians 2:19, Galatians 6:10, 1 Timothy 3:15, Hebrews 3:6). Most early Christian communities met in private homes rather than public buildings, but "household" was also a powerful description of the familial nature of the relationships Christians are to have. Using this image, elders are called to take the role of head of the household. This is why elders are men – and usually husbands and fathers, because they have proved their trustworthiness for the role in the corresponding areas.

### **In summary**

This teaching of "equal but not equivalent" is known as complementarianism. For us at King's, this means:

- All women and men are equal in value in God's eyes and ours.
- Gender is a God-given blessing which glorifies God when it is recognised and respected.
- Within marriage and church leadership there are distinct roles for men and women to play.
- Eldership in the church is equated with the role of the husband in the family, so only men should be appointed as elders.

### 3. What does this look like at King's?

#### Our eldership team

King's has a team of elders: Matthew Clifton-Brown, Luke Davydaitis, and Dan Hudson.

Dan is recognised as leading the team. Every team needs a leader, and this is even modelled for us by the Father within the Trinity. Dan is called the lead elder, a title that intentionally doesn't separate him from the other elders but does emphasise his unique role in setting the team's agenda, and thus the agenda for the church, as well as caring for the other elders.

Paul asserted that elders could be paid, especially those who were involved in teaching (1 Timothy 5:17-18). Currently all three of the elders at King's are paid members of staff but this doesn't have to be the case.

Other than there needing to be more than one elder, the New Testament doesn't specify how many elders a church should have. There should be enough elders to ensure that the church is able to do all that God has called it to.

We believe that four parties are involved in the appointing of elders:

1. God (Acts 20:28). "Spiritual authority comes from God's ordaining, not man's attaining" (Matthew Hosier). We are looking for evidence of God's work in a man that would qualify him to serve as an elder. This evidence would include a godly character and spiritual authority.

2. Apostles (Acts 14:23, see Appendix I). Apostles serve in ensuring that the local church has a solid foundation in God's truth and is being built according to God's pattern, so they are especially concerned with eldership. Paul appointed elders in all the churches he planted, and when he couldn't be there in person told his delegates to do so (Titus 1:5). We welcome Dave Holden's apostolic ministry, along with others within New Ground to whom he delegates this.

3. Other elders (1 Timothy 4:14). New Testament churches always had plural elders, so any new elder will be joining a team. The team's confidence in God's anointing of him, and ability to work with him, is essential for the healthy functioning of the church.

4. The local church (Acts 14:23). A congregation should know those who are being appointed as elders – their character and gifting – which should give them confidence in the decision being made. In order to ensure this is the case, the current elders announce their intention to appoint someone as an elder, and then have a period of time in which the church can ask questions of them share its perspective on them, which will be taken into account.

The New Testament does not give a job description for an elder's wife, so we don't either. Of course they have unique access and insight but they don't have defined roles and responsibilities in the life of the church: how they serve the church is up to them and the gifting God has given them.

### **Everyone involved**

The requirement of elders to delegate is a great delight to us: we love to see people flourishing in the church, and believe that when every part of the body is operating as it should, we will be powerfully effective together. Here are just some of the areas that we encourage and expect people to be involved in:

- Our leadership training programme, New Ground Academy, is open to anyone with leadership potential, and we invest in male and female leaders through this and in other ways.
- Small groups are usually led by men and women together, either in a pair(who may or may not be married) or a three.
- We try to have both men and women serving in all areas of church life, and any ministry or serving team can be led by either a man or a woman.
- We expect spiritual gifts to be received and used by women and men.
- We welcome input and ideas from everyone.
- Because the New Testament consistently describes teaching as a key part of an elder's role, most of our Sunday preaching will be done by the elders. Men and women from within and outwith King's can be invited to speak by the elders but do not do so with the same authority to direct the affairs of the church.

### **Who speaks on a Sunday?**

The point above about preaching is a recent change in our practice. We have always believed that the New Testament celebrates women explaining the gospel (Acts 18:26) and prophesying (Acts 21:9), and it encourages both women and men to be "teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom" (Colossians 3:16) and expecting the Holy Spirit to give them "utterances of wisdom" (1 Corinthians 12:8). Previously we have defined a sermon at a Sunday meeting as different to those contributions which are open to all, wanting to do justice to Paul's admonition in 1 Timothy 2:12 that women "should not teach or exercise authority over a man." This isn't an easy passage to understand when considered alongside all of Paul's other encouragements of women to contribute, but it seems to be saying that women should not teach the church in a manner that resembles an elder teaching. As we've continued to think this through, we've been helped by recent scholarship to see what Paul is and isn't prohibiting here.

In *Hearing Her Voice*, John Dickson shows that:

"There are numerous public-speaking ministries mentioned in the New Testament – teaching, exhorting, evangelising, prophesying, reading, and so on – and Paul restricts just one of them to qualified males: 'teaching'".

Dickson defines “teaching” in those first churches as knowing and sharing the sayings and actions of Jesus, and the apostles’ commentary on them, which were transmitted orally by the apostles to the churches they founded. A teacher was responsible for ensuring that the church stayed faithful to what it had received. In one sense this preservation and communication process came to its completion with the establishment of the New Testament, the once-and-for-all record of God’s revelation of Himself and His salvation in Jesus Christ. In another, highly significant sense, the process continues in every church to this day in what is interpreted, taught, and practiced as divinely-revealed truth, and passed on as such to the next generation.

We think that “preserving and passing-on” is a role for elders in the church, as it fits with the call to guard the church and the emphasis in the New Testament on elders being able to teach. They are to set the doctrinal agenda for the church. As Dickson says:

“The person who shapes what the church hears as apostolic truth – the right balance of Old and New Testament material, the appropriate topical and evangelistic diet, the proper doctrinal emphases, and so on – is assuming the maximum teaching authority in the congregation. If anyone is preserving and laying down the apostolic deposit, it is such an individual.”

We don’t have an individual who does this alone, but the eldership work on it together.

Naturally, the Sunday sermon is an important context for ensuring this kind of “teaching” is given, but it is not the only context, nor does a sermon have to be “teaching” in this way. Often it could be more accurately described in New Testament terms as exhortation – bringing challenge and encouragement – or even prophecy – bringing revelation of God’s will. This being the case, elders can invite anyone gifted who is gifted, male or female, to speak on a Sunday. Elders will continue to do the majority of preaching, and will have the final say on what is taught and how. This is what we mean by the elders having governmental authority in their preaching and leading. This is also why we always try to ensure that there is at least one elder present at every Sunday meeting, serving the church with loving oversight.

## Appendix I. What and who are apostles?

During His ministry on earth, Jesus called many people to follow Him. Among those, He especially called twelve men to be His apostles:

“And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons.” (Mark 3:13-15)

Mark gives us the definition of an apostle: they are a “sent one.” Jesus is the original sent one, sent from the Father to Earth, the great apostle (Hebrews 3:1). We see apostles at work throughout the New Testament: spreading the good news of Jesus (Acts 2:14-40, 13:1-4), doing miracles (Acts 3:6-7), establishing churches and making sure those churches were built on good foundations (Acts 8:14-16, 14:24-28, 1 Corinthians 3:10).

We believe that Jesus still appoints apostles today, which is an unusual position among evangelical Christians. Many are concerned that someone today is claiming the level of divine inspiration and authority as the writers of the New Testament. Because the Bible has been completed, the argument goes, there is no need for apostles today.

The main objection to this objection is that not all of the original twelve apostles were involved in writing the New Testament (in fact only Matthew, John, and Peter were) and large parts of it were written by people who weren't in the original twelve: Paul, Mark, Luke, James and Jude the brothers of Jesus, and the unknown writer to the Hebrews. Paul is generally acknowledged as a “special case” as he is so clearly apostolic but this still doesn't account for the others.

There is also the fact that other men described as apostles: Barnabas (Acts 14:14) and James the brother of Jesus (Galatians 1:19). Some have made the case that others such as Apollos (1 Corinthians 4:6-9), Timothy and Silvanus (1 Thessalonians 1:1 and 2:6), Andronicus and Junias (Romans 16:7) were considered apostles.

Moreover in Ephesians 4:11-14 Paul speaks of apostles as one of Christ's gift to the church for her maturity, including them in a list with prophets, evangelists, and pastor teachers. The grammatical structure of the sentence doesn't allow for some of the gifts on that list to be considered for the present and others to be for a fixed time only. Paul says that these gifts will be given to the church “until we all attain to the unity of the faith and ... to mature manhood,” which suggests that they will be needed until Jesus returns.

He elsewhere defines apostolic ministry as providing a foundation in 1 Corinthians 3:10. We take this to mean both ensuring that the church believes the right stuff and does the right stuff. Like the maturing process of Ephesians 4, surely this is as vital now as it ever has been.

Newfrontiers is an apostolic family of churches, which means we are linked by our relationships with each through the apostolic ministry of Terry Virgo. As Newfrontiers developed to containing many apostolic ministries like Terry's, we now describe each of these ministries as a sphere, following Paul's language in 2 Corinthians 10:13-14 (NASB). The sphere we are part of is led by Dave Holden, whose apostolic gifting we recognise and welcome, and is called New Ground. Dave's vision for New Ground has become ours too, we relate to other churches in our sphere, and we receive input from Dave as a church and as elders.

## Appendix II. What and who are deacons?

In his letter to the church in Philippi, Paul greets its deacons alongside the elders: “To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons” (Philippians 1:1). This shows that there were people with the recognised role of deacon within that church. More confirmation of this comes in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 where Paul discusses the qualifications for an elder, and then for a deacon.

Defining a deacon’s job description is more difficult than an elder’s because there isn’t the same amount of Scripture devoted to it. Acts 6 probably describes the establishment of deacons: the apostles appoint others to organise the daily distribution of food to those in need so that the apostles can focus on preaching the word and prayer. The word “diakonos” is a general word for “servant” and is used in a variety of contexts in the New Testament, some of which are clearly not referring to a role in the life of the church (e.g. the Roman emperor in Romans 13:4). Some church traditions have given much more definition to the role of deacon than is seen in the Bible, including suggesting that they are priests in training (Roman Catholicism) or a governing body separate to the pastor (Baptist). It is perhaps because of those other traditions that churches like ours have been hesitant to identify people in church as deacons. We agree with John Stevens’ summary:

“The most that can be said is that deacons were set apart as recognised servants of the church. Their function was to help the leaders of the church to care for the people of the church, enabling them to delegate tasks and responsibility, especially for the care of the needy in the congregation.”

We’ve seen that eldership is a role only for certain men, with its correspondence to husbands as head of the family / household. The same cannot be said about deacons: they are never described as having governmental authority, nor of needing to be able to define the church’s doctrine. Although some Bible translations of 1 Timothy 3:8-13 take Paul be referring to the wives of deacons in verse 11, others translate it “women” (it’s the same Greek word and can be used for either meaning according to the context). Paul’s description of Phoebe as a “servant / deacon of the church at Cenchreae” in Romans 16:11, along with what we have just said about the difference between elders and deacons, would seem to suggest that women and men can be deacons. We know from Christian and non-Christian sources that the early church had “deaconesses.”

Although we don’t currently use the term, the elders do give men and women (who fit the biblical qualifications) these kind of responsibilities, in leading ministries and small groups in the church.

## Appendix III. Further resource

The topics discussed here are some of the most controversial in evangelical churches, so there is plenty to read. Listed below are some of the resources that we've found helpful.

*Made For More*, Hannah Anderson, 2014, Moody

*The Eternal Subordination of the Son (and Women)*, Hannah Anderson and Wendy Alsup: <http://www.theologyforwomen.org/2016/06/the-eternal-subordination-of-son-and.html>

*Why This Issue Now?*, panel discussion with Don Carson, Kathy Keller, Tim Keller, Kathleen Nielson, and John Piper: <http://resources.thegospelcoalition.org/library/why-this-issue-now>

*Hearing Her Voice*, John Dickson, 2014, Zondervan

*Jesus, Justice, and Gender Roles*, Kathy Keller, 2012, Zondervan

*The Meaning of Marriage*, Timothy Keller with Kathy Keller, 2013, Hodder & Stoughton

*Can Women Be Deacons?*, John McKinley: <http://www.biblestudytools.com/blogs/the-good-book-blog/can-women-be-deacons.html>

*Shepherds After My Own Heart*, Timothy S. Laniak, 2006, IVP Academic

*Women, Stop Submitting to Men*, Russell Moore: <http://www.russellmoore.com/2011/12/05/women-stop-submitting-to-men/>

*Natural Complementarians: Men, Women, and The Way Things Are*, Alastair Roberts, <https://calvinistinternational.com/2016/09/13/natural-complementarians-men-women/>

*Primer: True To Form*, ed. David Shaw, 2016, FIEC

*Can Women Become Deacons?*, John Stevens: <http://www.john-stevens.com/2016/08/can-women-become-deacons.html>

*The Spirit-Filled Church*, Terry Virgo, 2011, Monarch

*A Theology of Eldership*, Andrew Wilson: [http://thinktheology.co.uk/blog/article/a\\_theology\\_of\\_eldership](http://thinktheology.co.uk/blog/article/a_theology_of_eldership)

*A Theology of Femaleness*, Andrew Wilson: <https://vimeo.com/122319773>

*A Theology of Maleness*, Andrew Wilson: <https://vimeo.com/113589260>

*Teaching with a Little "t" and a Big "T"*, Andrew Wilson: <http://thinktheology.co.uk/blog/article/teaching-with-a-little-t-and-a-big-t>

*The Bible's Big Picture of the Complementarity of Man and Woman*, Professor N.T. Wright: <https://youtu.be/AsB-JDsOTwE>