

Leadership in the New Testament

In the New Testament, Jesus is the Church's leader, its 'head'. The individual local churches mentioned in the New Testament were overseen by people who worked 'under' Jesus to make sure that the people in the church were:

- taught how to follow Jesus, using the Bible and personal example.
- cared for spiritually and practically.
- held accountable for their belief and behaviour as Christians.

These people were called overseers, elders, bishops or shepherds. The name varied but the role remained the same, in short, to grow an authentic community of Jesus-followers.

It is clear, however, that these recognised 'servants' of the church (to use another New Testament word), were not the ones who took all of the decisions about life in the community. The Holy Spirit had been given to *all* believers, and therefore *all* could hear God together and contribute to community decision-making.



Some Bible references:

Mark 10:42-45
Acts 2:17,18
Acts 6:1-6
Acts 15:22
Acts 20:17,28
1 Corinthians 12:7,27
Colossians 1:18
Titus 1:5-9
1 Peter 5:1-4

Thornbury Baptist Church

This leaflet explains the way that leadership is exercised at Thornbury Baptist Church, and in particular the important role of all members of the church family in shaping our common life and mission..

Thornbury Baptist Church is an independent local church. We are not affiliated to any national denomination or outside governing body. We are financed solely by the giving of TBC family members.

The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all.
1 Corinthians 12:7 (GNB)

General Enquiries

Email: office@thornburybaptistchurch.org.uk

Phone: 01454 419118

Thornbury Baptist Church Family Forum



seeking God together for
our shared life and mission

Different Ways Churches are Led

Every church has a way in which decisions are made, direction is set, information is shared and authority is expressed. Broadly there are three different approaches:

- **Episcopal** - where ultimate authority sits with one or more bishops e.g. Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches.
- **Presbyterian** - where the final authority rests with a central gathering of elected members, in which clergy usually play a big part e.g. Methodist and URC churches.
- **Congregational** - where responsibility and authority rests with the local congregation, who together seek the will of Jesus for the direction of the church.

Congregational churches vary in that some are governed by the church Members' Meeting and others give a group of elders delegated authority to lead.

Leadership at TBC

At TBC we are somewhere between these two forms of Congregational Leadership. The elders are free to take the initiative in day-to-day leadership, but they are always mindful that the members of the TBC family as a *whole* are a key part of the decision making processes of the church.

What Do Elders Do?

The elders are responsible for ensuring that members of TBC are:

- taught how to follow Jesus, using the Bible and personal example.
- cared for spiritually and practically.
- envisioned and equipped for individual and corporate mission and service.
- protected from false teaching.

They also oversee many of the practicalities of church life and may formulate ideas for ways in which the life and mission of TBC might develop.

What Does the Family Forum Do?

The Family Forum is the meeting in which:

- **information is shared**, for example about future vision or financial matters.
- **issues are discussed** relating to the life and mission of TBC.
- **decisions are made** as together we seek the mind of Christ.

Clearly not every decision can be taken to a Family Forum. In terms of the day-to-day running of the church the elders are free to make all necessary decisions. However a Family Forum will be involved:

- **in all eldership and other staff appointments.**
- In anything that marks a **change of direction or vision** (e.g. the proposal to start a new mission project).
- in anything which **affects TBC in the long-term** (e.g. changes to leadership structure, or affiliation to external bodies).
- in anything that has **big budgetary implications** (e.g. modifications to the building or the appointment of staff).
- in anything that **affects the whole church family** in some way (e.g. major alterations to Sunday service times).

What Happens at a Family Forum?

All TBC Family members will receive advance notification of a Family Forum meeting. It is helpful if anyone unable to attend sends their apologies to the church office in advance.

Typically the meeting will include:

- **Worship** - reminding ourselves that Jesus is the leader of the church!
- **Input** - the elders or others might give an update on current issues within TBC and bring specific proposals for the Family Forum to discuss.
- **Discussion** - usually in small groups with feedback to the whole meeting.
- **Prayer** - as a means of listening to God and of committing matters under discussion to him.
- **Financial Reporting** - in some of the Family Forum meetings TBC's budget is presented, and reviewed.
- **Affirming Leaders** - When the Family Forum is considering the recognition of new elders there is also a more formal process of affirmation.



Notes are kept of decisions made at a Family Forum and kept in a safe place for future reference.