

how we FUNCTION

: SOVEREIGN HOPE CHURCH

The primary purpose of this document is to serve as an instructive and informative guide to church life at Sovereign Hope Church. The direction of this document is guided by Scripture and seeks to relay the timeless vision of Jesus Christ for His church in a way that is relevant for this local church today. As a family, we are not bound to perform according to this document, instead we submit to the authority of Scripture as the final arbiter on all issues. (Psalm 119, II Timothy 3:14-17, II Peter 1:19-21) The elder body may at any time add to, subtract from or revise this document to better serve this church.

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ARTICLE 1.01

Structure & Definition

This church is shepherded by Jesus Christ through godly elder leadership in accordance with the guidelines established in God's Word. (Colossians 1:18, I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, I Peter 5:1-4) The elder body has been entrusted by God with the governing care and oversight of this local church, through the avenues of teaching, protecting, leading, disciplining, equipping and caring for the corporate church body and her individual members. The elders bear the responsibility of obediently leading the church to carry out the timeless vision of Christ for His church in a way that is relevant for today.

ARTICLE 1.02

Qualifications

The minimum qualifications for an elder according to God's Word are listed in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. Each individual who aspires to be an elder should carefully study and examine those qualifications before seeking the position of elder. In addition, each person desiring the position of elder will be examined based on those qualifications by the elder body and the church. Elders are to be male *Covenant Members* (Article 2) who fully subscribe to the **Statement of Faith** (Appendix 1) of Sovereign Hope Church and are actively involved in ministry within the church.

ARTICLE 1.03

Appointment & Removal

Step 1: Personal Reflection

Prior to seeking the position of elder, an individual should determine if he meets the immediate expectations of being a Sovereign Hope Church elder.

- **Motivated** - a person should desire the position of elder personally, not because someone else feels he will make a good elder. A desire to lead, shepherd and guide should be present through the working of the Holy Spirit in the individual's life. (I Timothy 3:1, I Peter 5:2)
- **Responsible** - a person should determine if he is willing and able to stand with the other elders of this church and give an account on judgment day for the souls of Sovereign Hope Church. (Acts 20:28, Hebrews 13:17, James 3:1, I Peter 5:1-2)
- **Capable** - a person should be demonstrating the type of exemplary lifestyle that would allow the members of this church to rightly obey the example that he is setting, both in belief and conduct.

Step 2: Expression

Once a person has prayerfully considered the call to eldership and feels the Holy Spirit's confirmation upon his life to pursue such a role, he should express his desire to pursue the position of elder by speaking to one of the members of the current elder body.

Step 3: Evaluation

Once an individual has expressed a desire for the position of elder, he will be carefully examined by the elder body to evaluate his level of qualification based on what is prescribed in God's Word. (Article 1.02). If a person is not found to be disqualified, he may enter into a season of elder apprenticeship, upon the unanimous approval of the elder body.

Step 4: Testing and Training

An elder apprentice will undergo a period of intentional discipleship with a current member of the elder body. This time of testing and training will include, but is not limited to, doctrinal instruction, personal accountability, opportunities for service and increased responsibility within the church. The time of elder apprenticeship will last for an indefinite

period of time until the individual has demonstrated faithfulness and maturity in the eyes of both the elder body and the members of the church. The elder body will regularly discuss the progress of each individual and will thoroughly evaluate the status of the apprentice no less than every six (6) months. Once an elder apprentice has been unanimously affirmed by the elder body as being fully qualified and capable of serving as an elder, the apprentice will enter into a time of elder candidacy. During this time, the elder candidate will be presented to the church for prayer. The time of elder candidacy will last for a period of nine (9) months, during which the candidate would see an increase in exposure to the responsibility of being an elder at Sovereign Hope Church. The elder apprentice may also be asked to participate in the regular elder meetings on occasion to contribute wisdom and insight.

Step 5: Confirmation

At the end of the eighth (8th) month of candidacy, the elder candidate will be presented to the members of the church for final review before affirmation. The church will then enter into a period of one month (4 weeks), during which there will be encouraged times of prayer and fasting. During this time, members will be permitted to raise any concerns or questions concerning the capability of the elder candidate. After the period of one month (4 weeks), if there are no remaining issues to be resolved, the church will affirm the individual as an elder by the laying on of hands. (Acts 14:23, I Timothy 3:10, 4:14, 5:22-25)

Step 6: Service

An appointed elder will serve indefinitely as a shepherd of this church. Upon the discretion of the other elders, a sabbatical season may be extended due to a legitimate need (e.g. illness, tragedy). During this time, the elder would transition to being *inactive* and would become a non-voting elder for a period of time determined by the elder body.

Resignation of an Elder:

To resign from the elder body, an elder must notify the other members of the elder body in writing. The

letter should state the reason for resignation. The elders will determine the most fruitful and edifying way to notify the church of the resignation.

Removal of an Elder:

Any elder may be removed from the office of elder for valid cause (moral failure, doctrinal issue, etc.). Any charges or discipline of elders must be consistent with the standards set forth in Matthew 18:15-20 and I Timothy 5:17-20. The elder body will determine specific procedures for removal. The elders shall have the sole authority to remove another elder. A written notice of proposed removal of any elder shall be given to such elder at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting at which an action to affect such removal is to be taken to ensure that the elder is given a reasonable opportunity to defend himself. The elder shall have the opportunity to answer the charges in the presence of his accusers, but shall not be present during the discussion and vote on his removal. Such removal shall take place only upon and after a passing unanimous vote of the elders at such meeting. The elder under consideration for removal shall not have voting rights.

Replacement of an Elder:

In the event that an elder resigns or is removed, the process for appointing a replacement will remain consistent with the process of appointing an elder laid out in this document (Article 1.03), the exception being the resignation or removal of the lead elder/teaching elder (senior pastor). In the event that the lead elder/teaching elder resigns or is removed, the remaining elder body will conduct a thorough search for the replacement, starting from within the current elder body. The elder body will determine the most appropriate means for this search at the given time. Once a candidate is determined by the elder body, the individual will be presented to the church. The church will have one month (4 weeks) to bring any concerns or issues to the elder body for consideration. After the period of one month, if there are no remaining issues to be resolved, the church will affirm the individual as the new lead elder/teaching elder.

ARTICLE 1.04

Expectations

A Lover of the Word:

- An elder is to lead the church as a part of the elder body in a direction that is biblically based and Christ-exalting. (Acts 14:23, 16:4, 20:17, 21:18, I Timothy 5:17, James 5:14, I Peter 5:2-3)
- An elder is to pursue doctrinal stability in the areas that Scripture is clear and handle the Word rightly through public proclamation, private counsel and exemplary lifestyle. (Acts 6:4, Ephesians 4:14, I Timothy 4:11-16)
- An elder is to be ready to teach at any given time as a minister of the Word. (I Timothy 3:2, 5:17-18, II Timothy 4:1-2, Titus 1:9)
- An elder is to protect the church from false teachings and ensure that the church is instead fed the Word in a clear, unadulterated manner. (Acts 20:28-30, Titus 1:9-11)

A Lover of the Church:

- An elder is to be pursuing discipleship relationships within the church. (Titus 1:1-8)
- An elder is to be mission minded and actively hospitable with his weekly schedule. (I Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8, I Peter 4:9)
- An elder is to pray regularly for the overall health of the church's growth and mission. (Acts 6:4)
- An elder is to oversee member care and when necessary, church discipline.
- An elder is to help plant new churches as the need arises. (Titus 1:5)

ARTICLE 1.05

Function

Meeting as Elders:

The elder body meets regularly for the purpose of a.) decision making concerning the weekly function of the church, b.) accountability and encouragement with other elders, c.) spiritual oversight/vision/ direction of the church, d.) member care, e.)

theological training f.) prayer and g.) budget development.

Serving as Elders:

The elder body serves this body of believers by a.) maintaining a lifestyle of continued learning, b.) leading a small group as a means of teaching the Word, c.) teaching at various times in different formats, d.) searching for false doctrines that spring up in mainstream Christianity and working to inform the church of their error, e.) developing a teaching direction for the church with the teaching elder, f.) meeting with other men in the church for accountability and encouragement, g.) participating regularly and faithfully in the activities of the church and h.) meeting the spiritual and physical needs of specific families assigned to their ministry.

Note: The elders seek to serve the members of Sovereign Hope by performing services like weddings or funerals as needed, and they may also perform such services for non-members at their discretion.

ARTICLE 1.06

Authority

The elder body meets regularly to maintain oversight of the church family. Oversight and decision making for the church's ministry, operations and finances fall to the elder body. In making decisions that are deemed major or extraordinary and require a vote, a passing vote by the elders must be equal to or greater than seventy-five percent (75%) of the current elder body. Percentage will be determined based on the amount of elders at the given time. The exception being in the vote of removal of a fellow elder, in which the passing vote must be unanimous. The wisdom and insight of the church may be sought at the discretion of the elders concerning these major decisions. Decisions where the elder body will consult the church include but are not limited to a.) appointment of elders b.) matters of church discipline and c.) financial matters concerning budget revisions and the taking on of debt.



membership

Reflecting Biblical Community

ARTICLE 2.01

Definition & Requirements

A covenant member of Sovereign Hope Church is defined as one who has met the following requirements for membership as defined by God's Word and the elder body of Sovereign Hope Church.

- **Salvation and Baptism** - The individual has become a genuine follower of Jesus Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit by responding in faith and repentance to the gospel. (Mark 1:14-15) In submission to the authority of Jesus Christ, the individual has also obeyed the Scriptural mandate to be baptized. (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 2:38)
- **Membership Course** - The individual has completed the membership course, designed to familiarize the individual with both the leadership and structure of Sovereign Hope Church.
- **Covenant Agreement** - The individual has willingly committed themselves to the responsibilities outlined in the Member Covenant (Appendix 5) of Sovereign Hope Church.

ARTICLE 2.02

Appointment & Removal

Appointment of Membership:

Any individual may express a desire for covenant membership by speaking with any member of the current elder body. The individual will then meet with members of the elder body and the Membership Course will be discussed. An individual may be appointed to covenant membership at Sovereign Hope Church after meeting the requirements of membership (Article 2.01) and upon recommendation of the elder body to the members of Sovereign Hope Church.

Continuance of Membership

Membership at Sovereign Hope Church is valid for one year from the time of appointment. Each year the covenant member may reaffirm their desire for membership by reviewing their commitment with members of the elder body. Members of the elder body will contact current covenant members each year about renewing their covenant membership.

Removal of Membership:

Members of Sovereign Hope Church may be removed from membership for reasons of a.) death, b.) the member's request for removal, c.) a transfer request of membership to another like minded church or d.) the church's decision based upon the procedures outlined for church discipline for the cause of unrepentant sin. (Article 2.05)

ARTICLE 2.03

Benefits

Church Discipline:

A covenant member of Sovereign Hope Church enjoys a unique relationship with other members of this church in the area of accountability, encouragement and restoration in our battle to overcome sin. Covenant members understand that just as a loving father disciplines his son, God has set in place through His Word the benefit of church discipline to protect his children from becoming hardened to sin. (Matthew 18:15-20, Galatians 6:1-2, Hebrews 12:6) The procedures for church discipline are outlined in Article 2.05.

Discipleship:

A covenant member of Sovereign Hope Church is given the opportunity to enjoy spiritual growth with other covenant members through the avenue of

personal discipleship. (Matt. 28:18-20) Special attention is given to provide opportunities for our covenant members to learn from spiritually mature men and women within Sovereign Hope Church. (Titus 2:1-8)

Service Opportunities:

A covenant member of Sovereign Hope Church is provided opportunities to use their talents, gifts and abilities to serve the covenant member body and the lost within our community. Special attention is given to our covenant members to equip them to serve within our current church ministry structure. (Ephesians 4:12)

Specific Care:

A covenant member of Sovereign Hope Church is afforded the assurance of being loved and cared for during times of distress and need. In step with the example set forth by the early church (Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-37), Sovereign Hope Church seeks to provide intentional care for its covenant members. In cases of great need, guidelines for care have been outlined in Article 3.02.

ARTICLE 2.04

Responsibilities

Specifics:

The responsibilities of a covenant member of Sovereign Hope Church are outlined in detail within the church's **Member Covenant**. (Appendix 5)

General:

In general, a covenant member of Sovereign Hope Church is expected to demonstrate love and devotion in the following areas.

- **God:** A covenant member's chief concern is to glorify God in all areas of life by treasuring Him above all things. A covenant member is expected to demonstrate love and devotion to God through striving to live faithful and obedient lives according to His Word, while waiting for Jesus to return. (Hebrews 10:23-24)

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- **Church:** A covenant member is expected to demonstrate love and devotion to God's church by committing their time, resources and energy to the building up of their brothers and sisters in Christ. (Romans 12:3-8, 14:19, I Corinthians 12:4-31, Ephesians 4:11-16, Colossians 1:27-28, I Peter 4:10-11)
- **The Lost:** A covenant member is expected to demonstrate love and devotion to the lost of this world by living a gospel worthy life that draws others into a relationship with their Creator. (Matthew 5:16, II Corinthians 5:18-20, Philippians 1:27, I Peter 2:12)

ARTICLE 2.05

Church Discipline

In order for a church to faithfully proclaim the gospel message of repentance and faith to a lost world, then that very message must be embraced as a way of life by those who make up the church. On occasion, a covenant member of Sovereign Hope Church may wander away from the fellowship of other believers and find himself ensnared by sin through ignorance or willful disobedience. It then becomes necessary for the church as a whole to actively seek the repentance and restoration of that member. On occasions of serious, willful disobedience, this responsibility especially falls to the elders of this church.

The Purpose of Church Discipline:

The purpose of church discipline is the spiritual restoration of fallen covenant members and the strengthening of the church body as a whole. The goal is not to throw people out of the church, feed the self-righteous pride of those confronting the sin, encourage divisiveness or embarrass people. Instead, the hope is to restore a sinning believer to holiness and bring him back into a pure relationship within the church body. Sovereign Hope Church encourages regular confession of sin, prayer for each other and accountability between its covenant members so that sin is defeated regularly in our lives and the steps of discipline laid out in Scripture are not needed. We recognize that we are all susceptible to being blinded

to sin (Hebrews 3:12), and we all need the aid and encouragement of other believers in our life. (Hebrews 10:22-25, James 5:16) Therefore, church discipline has been set up as protective measure by our loving Father for those who grow hardened to their own sin and are in need of being rescued from it by Him through a loving church. (I Corinthians 5:5, Galatians 6:1-6, Hebrews 12:6-11)

The Necessity of Church Discipline:

Church discipline should be considered in the following cases*.

- **Circulation of false doctrine (I Timothy 1:18-20)**
- **Actions resulting in disunity. (Titus 3:10)**
- **Repeated and consistent disobedience to the teaching of God's Word. (II Thessalonians 3:14)**
- **The violation or relaxation of standards of purity within the church. (I Corinthians 5:1)**

**Cases of clear, explicit sin or foolishness, not cases of personal preference. (Romans 14:10)*

The Process of Church Discipline:

In Matthew 18:15-17, Jesus set forth the four-step process of lovingly confronting a brother or sister who has fallen into sin.

- **Step 1 (One-on-One)** - We are to begin the process of restoring a fellow church member on an individual level, by confronting the sin alone. The person ought to boldly go in humility and gentleness, calling the person to repent by clearly addressing the sin. If the sinning member repents through private confrontation, the member should be forgiven and restored. (v. 15b)
- **Step 2 (Two-Three Witnesses)** - If the sinning member refuses to repent privately after being rebuked, and instead chooses to remain hardened in their sin, the next step is to take one or two more members along to confront the member again. (v. 16a) These members should be considered spiritually mature in nature and have a genuine love for the sinning member involved. (Galatians 6:1) The purpose of bringing other loving members is to confirm that in fact a sin is being committed and to confirm that the sinning member has been properly rebuked and has not repented. If the

- sinning member repents through group confrontation, the member should be forgiven and restored.
- **Step 3 (The Church Body)** - If the sinning member refuses to repent privately after being rebuked again, and instead chooses to remain hardened in their sin, the next step is to make the matter known to the covenant member body. This should first be done by making the matter known to the elder body so that they can properly oversee its communication to the covenant member body. This step should be seen as a last resort, and only carried out after a sufficient time has passed showing that the sinning member has no change of heart or any intention to repent. The elder body will seek out the sinning member in some form before taking the step of making the sin known to the church. The purpose of making the matter known to the church is to call all covenant members of Sovereign Hope to seek out the sinning member aggressively and plead for his repentance. If the sinning member repents through the church's confrontation, the member should be forgiven and restored and the church should be made aware.
- **Step 4 (Excommunication)** - If the sinning member refuses to repent publicly after being rebuked by the church, and instead chooses to remain hardened in their sin, the final step is to remove the sinning member from the fellowship of the church. (v.17b) The sinning member is not to be mistreated, instead, the sinning member may no longer participate in the benefits and blessings of covenant membership and should be treated as one in need of the gospel. (I Corinthians 5:9-13) The purpose of excommunication is to protect the purity of the fellowship (I Corinthians 5:6), to warn the remaining covenant members of the seriousness of sin (I Timothy 5:20) and to give a testimony of righteousness to a watching world. The church should continue to pursue contact with the sinning member for the purpose of repentance and restoration, while avoiding contact for the purpose of fellowship. (I Corinthians 5:9-11, II Thessalonians 3:6, 13-15, Titus 3:9-11, II John 9-11)

ARTICLE 3.01

Budget

Sovereign Hope Church desires to glorify God faithfully by being wise stewards of the funds entrusted to us by Him. The funds given by our covenant members are sought to be used in a way that is faithful a.) to meet the needs of our church family, b.) to minister in our surrounding area and c.) to further God's kingdom abroad.

Financial Direction:

The financial direction of Sovereign Hope Church is set by the current elder body through much prayer and discussion. Insight and wisdom may, at times, be sought from ministry leaders and individual church members throughout the process each year. Any changes to the current church budget will be presented in December so that adequate time may be given to the church family to raise any concerns or questions before the church affirms those changes. The changes to the budget would be reflected in the new fiscal year, January 1st - December 31st.

Financial Oversight:

- **Elder Body** - members of the elder body are considered "signers" on all church bank accounts and all elders have equal access to the church financial records. No one single elder is given greater insight or authority over the financial matters of Sovereign Hope Church.
- **Treasurer** - For purposes of administration and weekly oversight, one elder is chosen at any given time to serve as the Church Treasurer. The Treasurer maintains an eye on the current financial condition of the church and offers insight as to the amount of funds available at any given time for ministry and service.
- **Financial Secretary** - the Financial Secretary oversees the regular function of the church budget

- by distributing necessary funds for the expenditures of the church. These payable actions include sending regular monthly support to missionaries, distributing staff salaries and reconciling the church's monthly bills. The Financial Secretary also oversees and keeps record of all contributions made to Sovereign Hope Church.

Financial Accountability:

Money that is given to Sovereign Hope Church is counted each week by at least two deacons within the church for accountability purposes. A regular rotation is kept to avoid any one individual unintentionally knowing the giving habits of any church member. Money is deposited each Sunday after the service in the night drop deposit box.

ARTICLE 3.02

Benevolence

Sovereign Hope Church desires to glorify God faithfully by being generous as He blesses and directs us - especially to widows, orphans and the needy. (I Timothy 5:3-16, James 1:27, 2:15-16, I John 3:16-18) As in all matters of the church, we seek to let God's Word guide us in the matters of benevolent issues for Sovereign Hope.

Who Sovereign Hope Church Helps:

- **Members** - one of the benefits of membership at Sovereign Hope Church is the assurance of being loved and cared for during time of need. In step with the example set forth by the early church (Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-37), we believe the call to provide for those in need applies especially to those in our church family.
- **Believers** - we desire to help those who may not be a part of our local church body but are part of the universal body of Jesus Christ. In step with the example set forth by the early church (I Corinthians

- 16:1-3, II Corinthians 8:1-5, Galatians 6:10), we seek to provide for those we hear of in need, both individuals and churches, that are true followers of Jesus Christ.
- **The Needy** - as it is wise to do so, we desire to help those who are in genuine, temporary need. These needs and the help afforded are determined on a case by case basis. No cash gifts are given to those not attending our church.

When Sovereign Hope Church Helps:

Sovereign Hope Church seeks to help those in need as funds are available and as it is wise to help legitimate needs.

How Sovereign Hope Church Helps:

All needs and requests for help are handled by the elder body who work in conjunction with the Benevolent Team (B-Team). The B-Team is made up of covenant members who have demonstrated a giftedness in the area of compassion and mercy. The B-Team helps provide wisdom and insight to the elder body about needs within our church context and at times, help carry out the distribution of help to those in need.

- **Step 1 (Identifying Needs)** - as needs arise both within and outside our church, those needs should be expressed by church members to either a current member of the elder body or to a member of the B-Team. This ensures that those in leadership are informed in a timely manner so that adequate help can be provided to those in need. Sufficient time needs to be given for examination, verification and approval of help.
- **Step 2 (Evaluating Needs)** - as needs are brought to the attention of the elder body, the elder body, with the assistance of the B-Team, will determine the validity, scope and urgency of the need and the best course of action to help. At times this may mean calling upon the family of the one requesting help to provide the resources needed (I Timothy 5:3-8), or sitting down with the individual to help equip them to help themselves long term.

- (Ephesians 4:28, II Thessalonians 3:6-13) Each situation is evaluated on a case by case basis.
- **Step 3 (Meeting Needs)** - in situations where it is determined that the church will provide help requiring monetary funds, proper documentation is recorded and logged. The Benevolent Request Form is finalized by the person seeking help and verified by members of the elder body. For those who are part of our church family, we especially seek to help in areas related to food, clothing, shelter and health as may seem wise and as funds are available. Those not part of our church family are evaluated on a case by case basis. Anyone requiring long term financial help may be asked to submit a household budget so that the elders can give counsel and financial advice as needed to promote financial responsibility to those who are in need. Those requesting long term financial help must maintain full-time employment if physically and mentally able to do so.

ARTICLE 4.01

Structure & Definition

The elders of this church are assisted by godly deacon leadership in accordance with the guidelines and patterns established in God's Word. (I Timothy 3:8-13, Acts 6:1-7) The deacon body has been entrusted by the church (elders and members) with the care and provision of the various and ever-changing needs of this local church through the avenues of serving the corporate church body and promoting Christian unity amongst her individual members. The deacons bear the responsibility of sacrificially modeling to the church an attitude of humble service as they seek to protect the elders from removing their focus from their primary roles of ministering to the church through teaching and prayer.

A Disclaimer:

The deacons of Sovereign Hope Church are individuals who set an example of service by leading or overseeing areas of ministry while also collaborating together to assist the elders in the area of finances and member care. A member is not required to be a deacon in order to lead, oversee or serve in specific ministries. Deacons simply model that type of service which is made available to all members. The distinction between a deacon and a member lies in the collaborating effort with other deacons to assist the elders in the area of finances and member care.

ARTICLE 1.08

Qualifications

The minimum qualifications for a deacon according to God's Word are listed in I Timothy 3:8-13. While the official office of deacon is not listed in Acts 6:3, the qualifications listed are also used to affirm those appointed to the position of deacon at Sovereign

Hope Church. Each individual who aspires to be a deacon should carefully study, examine and pursue those qualifications in order to be considered for the role of deacon. In addition, each person nominated for the position of deacon will be examined based on those qualifications by the elder body and the church. Deacons may be male or female *Covenant Members* (Article 2) who fully subscribe to the **Statement of Faith** (Appendix 1) of Sovereign Hope Church and are actively involved in ministry within the church. *In addition to the biblical qualifications listed in I Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:3, the following standards have been adopted for this specific local body at this specific time.*

1. Deacons must be active in Sovereign Hope Church for 1 year prior to serving as a deacon.
2. Deacons must be a minimum age of 21 years old prior to serving as a deacon.

ARTICLE 1.09

Appointment & Removal

Step 1: Nomination

As the need arises for additional deacons (determined by the elders and current deacon body), the elders call upon the church membership of Sovereign Hope Church to nominate individuals who meet the Biblical qualifications for the office of deacon.

In those times where it is determined that additional deacons are needed to adequately service the needs of the church, the specific needs are described to help guide the church members in identifying those most qualified to serve in those specific capacities needed by the elders. The amount of nominations requested from each individual church member is determined by the elders and current deacon body, based on the immediate needs at that time.

Step 2: Elder Evaluation

Prior to recommending the installation of new deacons, those nominated by the church are carefully examined by the elder body to evaluate the individual's level of qualification based on what is prescribed in God's Word (Article 1.08). Consideration is also given to the immediate expectations (listed below) of being a Sovereign Hope Church deacon.

- **Motivated** - a person should desire the position of deacon personally in conjunction with being nominated by other church members. A willing desire to serve in this capacity is needed for an individual to be an effective deacon.
- **Responsible** - a person should be responsible in the eyes of the elders and current deacon body, having demonstrated a mature and willing spirit to accomplish tasks that were previously assigned to that individual prior to them becoming a deacon.
- **Capable** - a person should be demonstrating the type of exemplary lifestyle that would allow the members of this church to rightly follow their example of service and properly receive their provision of needs.

Step 3: Membership Evaluation and Confirmation

Out of the individuals nominated by the church for the role of deacon, the elders and current deacon body will present those who are most qualified to serve in those specific capacities needed by the elders at that time. The individuals nominated by the church membership and selected by the elder body will be presented to the members of the church for final review before affirmation.

The church will then enter into a period of 2 weeks, during which members will be permitted to raise any concerns or questions concerning the capability of the deacon nominees. After the period of 2 weeks, if there are no remaining issues to be resolved, the church will affirm the individuals as deacons.

Step 4: Service

Deacons will serve indefinitely as a support to the elders of this church unless their need is no longer warranted, or they become incapable of giving themselves to the level of required service due to a life change. Deacons that transition out of service may be nominated and affirmed again in the future, if their presence is once again needed or made available due to life adjustments.

Resignation of a Deacon:

To resign from the deacon body, a deacon must notify the elders and the other members of the deacon body in writing. The letter should state the reason for resignation. The elders and current deacon body will determine the most fruitful and edifying way to notify the church of the resignation.

Removal of a Deacon:

Any deacon may be removed from the office of deacon for valid cause (moral failure, doctrinal issue, etc.). Any charges or discipline of deacons must be consistent with the standards set forth in Matthew 18:15-20. The elders and current deacon body will determine specific procedures for removal. The elders shall have the sole authority to remove a deacon. A written notice of proposed removal of any deacon shall be given to such deacon at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting at which an action to affect such removal is to be taken to ensure that the deacon is given a reasonable opportunity to defend themselves. The deacon shall have the opportunity to answer the charges in the presence of his accusers, but shall not be present during the discussion and vote on his removal. Such removal shall take place only upon and after a passing unanimous vote of the elders at such meeting.

ARTICLE 1.10

Expectations

A Supporting Presence:

- A deacon at Sovereign Hope Church supports the ministry of the elders by alleviating any duties or concerns that would detract the elders from their primary ministries. Deacons at Sovereign Hope Church should be motivated by a mindset of support to empower the elders to shepherd well. The deacons therefore become an extension of the elders into the lives of the individual members of the this local church.

A Serving Presence:

- A deacon at Sovereign Hope Church leads by example as they help encourage an overall mindset of service within the church.

A Unifying Presence:

- A deacon at Sovereign Hope Church helps the elders identify and resolve any opportunities for discord to arise that would jeopardize the unity of this local church. Deacons keep a careful eye on the temperament of the church and help protect the elders from any potential blindspots that are being missed.

ARTICLE 1.11

Function

Meeting as Deacons:

The deacon body meets quarterly (and at other scheduled times when needed) with the elders for the purpose of a.) budget review and development b.) member care and benevolence c.) guidance towards the resolution of any church related issues d.) added wisdom regarding any church related decisions.

Serving as Deacons:

The deacon body serves the elders and this body of believers by a.) maintaining a lifestyle consistent with the standards of God's Word b.) participating regularly and faithfully in the activities of the church c.) taking an active role in serving within the ministries of the church d.) leading a monthly C-Group meeting (males only) e.) communicating

regularly with members of their C-Group to stay updated on the spiritual and physical needs of each family and f.) assisting the elders in meeting those needs that arise.

ARTICLE 1.12

Authority

The deacon body answers directly to the elders and yields final authority regarding church related matters to them as the shepherds of this local church. Oversight and final decision making for the church's ministry, operations and finances fall to the elders rather than the deacon body.