

Church Membership 8:

Presbyterianism and Structure

4. Do you promise to **submit** in the Lord to the teaching and **government** of this church as being based upon the Scriptures and described in substance in the Constitution of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America? **Do you recognize your responsibility to work with others in the church and do you promise to support and encourage them in their service to the Lord? In case you should need correction in doctrine or life, do you promise to respect the authority and discipline of the church?**

25.6. The Lord Jesus Christ has clothed His Church with power and authority. This authority is vested in the whole membership of the Church, which has the right to choose its officers from among those of its own members who possess the scriptural qualifications.

25.7. Christ has appointed in His Word a particular form of government for the visible church. It is government by elders (Greek: presbyters) and is therefore called presbyterian. Each congregation should be ruled by a session of ordained elders, elected by the membership of the congregation. Acts 15:22; Acts 14:23; Acts 13:1-4; Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18; 2 Cor. 8:19; 1 Tim. 3:1-7.

9. The responsibility of the elders is in teaching and ruling. Although all elders are to be able to teach, the Scripture recognizes a distinction in these functions. All elders are equal in the government of the Church. This office is referred to in Scripture by two terms used synonymously: elder, and bishop or overseer. 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9; 1 Tim. 5:17; Acts 20:28; Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:28; Titus 1:7.

10. The elders are organized in courts (the session, the presbytery and the Synod) to which is committed the power of governing the church and of ordaining officers. This power is moral and spiritual, and subject to the law of God.

Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:9; 1 Tim. 5:17; Acts 20:28; Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:28; Titus 1:7.

11. The diaconate is a spiritual office subordinate to the session and is not a teaching or ruling office. The deacons have responsibility for the ministry of mercy, the finances and property of the congregation, and such other tasks as are assigned to them by the session. Other officers mentioned in the New Testament were commissioned uniquely during the apostolic age for the establishment of the Church. Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tim. 3:8-13.

