

The Appointment of Elders and Deacons

Chapter 26, Paragraph 8 and 9 of the 1689 currently read:

Paragraph 8: A particular church, gathered and completely organized according to the mind of Christ, consists of officers and members; and the officers appointed by Christ to be chosen and set apart by the church (so called and gathered), for the peculiar administration of ordinances, and execution of power or duty, which he intrusts them with, or calls them to, to be continued to the end of the world, are bishops or elders, and deacons.

Paragraph 9: The way appointed by Christ for the calling of any person, fitted and gifted by the Holy Spirit, unto the office of bishop or elder in a church, is, that he be chosen thereunto by the common suffrage of the church itself; and solemnly set apart by fasting and prayer, with imposition of hands of the eldership of the church, if there be any before constituted therein; and of a deacon that he be chosen by the like suffrage, and set apart by prayer, and the like imposition of hands.

The 1689 seems to conflate the two methods for the appointment of elders and deacons. What we receive from the Biblical example is two distinct methods of appointment for each office. According to Acts 6, deacons are to be chosen by the congregation and then appointed to the office by the elders. According to Titus 1:5, Acts 14:23, 1 Timothy 5:22 as well as other passages, the Biblical pattern for the appointment of an Elder consists of the current eldership both choosing and appointing new elders.

With this understanding, the above two paragraphs, being amended by Emmaus Road Church should now read: A particular church, gathered and completely organized according to the mind of Christ, consists of officers and members; and the officers appointed by Christ are to be chosen and set apart. The elders are to be chosen by existing elders, and the deacons are to be selected by the members of the church (so called and gathered) who are then appointed by the elders. The offices of elder and deacon exist for the peculiar administration of ordinances, and execution of power or duty, which Christ entrusts them with, or calls them to, to be continued to the end of the world.