

Session Ministry Description

1. Attentive to God
 2. Guide and Govern
 3. Shepherd Teams
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Book of Order excerpts Regarding Session

G-1.0103 GOVERNED BY THE CONSTITUTION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

*“The members of a congregation put themselves under the leadership of the session...**The session is responsible to guide and govern the life of the congregation.** The session leads the congregation in fulfilling its responsibilities for the service of all people, for the upbuilding of the whole church, and for the glory of God.”*

G-2.03 RULING ELDERS: THE MINISTRY OF DISCERNMENT AND GOVERNANCE

As there were in Old Testament times elders for the government of the people, so the New Testament church provided persons with particular gifts to share in discernment of God’s Spirit and governance of God’s people. Accordingly, congregations should elect persons of wisdom and maturity of faith, having demonstrated skills in leadership and being compassionate in spirit. Ruling elders are so named not because they “lord it over” the congregation (Matt. 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life. ***Ruling elders, together with teaching elders, exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation...When elected by the congregation, they shall serve faithfully as members of the session.***

G-3.0102 ECCLESIASTICAL JURISDICTION

Councils of this church have only ecclesiastical jurisdiction for the purpose of serving Jesus Christ and declaring and obeying his will in relation to truth and service, order and discipline. ***They may frame statements of faith, bear testimony against error in doctrine and immorality in life, resolve questions of doctrine and discipline, give counsel in matters of conscience... They have power to establish plans and rules for the worship, mission, government, and discipline of the church and to do those things necessary to the peace, purity, unity, and progress of the church under the will of Christ. They have responsibility for the leadership, guidance, and government of that portion of the church that is under their jurisdiction.***

G-3.02 THE SESSION

The session is the council for the congregation. The session shall have responsibility for governing the congregation and guiding its witness to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that the congregation is and becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness. As it leads and guides the witness of the congregation, the session shall keep before it... the six Great Ends of the Church (F-1.0304).

The great ends of the Church are:

the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind;
the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God;
the maintenance of divine worship;
the preservation of the truth;
the promotion of social righteousness; and
the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.