

## Elder Training on Measuring Faithfulness “Marks, Notes, and Ends”

(\*this training could go between 15-60 minutes depending on discussion)

From the *Book of Order*, **G-2.02**, ff ...

**Deacons:** Ministry of Compassion and Service

**Teaching Elders:** Ministry of Teaching and Pastoral Care

**Ruling Elders:** Ministry of Discernment and Governance

Interesting to note: If there are no Deacons, the Ruling Elder take on those responsibilities. If there is/are no Teaching Elder(s), the Ruling Elders take on those responsibilities. If there are no Ruling Elders, there is no Presbyterian church. Think about it ...

**Being an Ordained Ruling Elder ...**                      “Ruler = 12 inches”; see *also* Yardstick.

*G-2.0301 Ruling Elder Defined*

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 as well as the whole church, including ecumenical relationships. When elected by the congregation, they shall serve faithfully as members of the session. When elected as commissioners to higher councils [Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly], ruling elders participate and vote with the same authority as teaching elders [Ministers of Word and Sacrament], and they are eligible for any office.

## **Serving on the Session ...**

### *G-3.0201 The Session - Responsibilities*

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 **marks** of the Church (F-1.0302), the **notes** by which Presbyterian and Reformed congregations have identified themselves throughout history (F-1.0303) and the six **Great Ends** of the Church (F-1.0304).

From the *Book of Order*, **F-1.03** ...

### **Four Marks ...**

The Church Universal is “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.”  
-- *From the Nicene Creed of A.D. 381*, Book of Confessions **1.3**

### **Three ‘Notes’ ...**

The Church is located ...

- 1) where the Word is truly preached and heard;
- 2) where the Sacraments are rightly administered; and
- 3) where ecclesiastical discipline is uprightly ministered.

“Then whenever these notes are seen and continue for any time, be the number complete or not, there beyond any doubt is the true Kirk of Christ, Who, according to His promise, is in its midst.”  
-- *From the Scots Confession of 1560*, Book of Confessions **3.18**

## ***And Six Great Ends ...***

The Great Ends of the Church are ...

1. The proclamation of the Gospel for the salvation of humankind;
2. The shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God;
3. The maintenance of divine worship;
4. The preservation of the truth;
5. The promotion of social righteousness; and
6. The exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.

Have posters of each *Great End* and have elders stand under the *Great Ends* with which they most resonate or simply have elders discuss which one with which they most identify.