



FPC Officer Training



Church Government



- 1) What two tenets do we hold in common with the church catholic?
 - Trinity
 - Incarnation

- 2) What two tenets do we hold in common with all heirs of the Protestant Reformation?
 - Justification by grace through faith
 - Scripture is the Word of God

- 3) Which tenets are expressly characteristics of the Reformed Tradition?
- Sovereignty of God
 - Election
 - God's involvement in the covenant community
 - Stewardship of resources and the earth
 - Sin of idolatry
 - Commitment to justice and obedience

Presbyterianism offers the whole Church a unique gift of governance.

- ☞ Presbyterians are governed by ordained
 - presbyters or ruling elders

- ☞ They share power with
 - teaching elders (ministers of Word and Sacrament)

What are the values in this form of government and how does this polity differ from the other two major forms of government?

- ∞ Values – representative or democratic style ... decision-making is joint by elected representatives.
- ∞ Differences – hierarchical; power is from top down (individual to congregation).
- ∞ Congregational – power from the bottom up; masses make decisions.
- ∞ Presbyterians are in the middle – small group elected from the masses makes decisions, no one person.

True or False?

- ∞ Associate pastors are not entitled to vote at Session meetings. (*Book of Order, G-3.0201*)
 - False

- ∞ Confessing members of other Christian churches may present children for baptism. (*Book of Order, G-1.04.04*)
 - True

- ∞ Each church shall elect a board of deacons. (*Book of Order, G-2.0202*)
 - False

- ∞ The minutes and records kept by each Session shall be reviewed annually by the presbytery. (*Book of Order, G-3.0305*)
 - True

True or False?

- ∞ The pastor shall be a member of the church nominating committee, serving ex-officio and without vote. (*Book of Order*, G-2.0401)
 - True

- ∞ The Session has original jurisdiction in a disciplinary case involving a pastor of the church. (*Book of Order*, D.3.0101)
 - False

- ∞ The Diaconate shall prepare and adopt a church budget and determine the distribution of the congregation's benevolences. (*Book of Order*, G-3.0205)
 - False

- ∞ To do regular business a Session needs a quorum of more than half its elder members plus its moderator. (*Book of Order*, G-3.0203)
 - False

Form of Government



Composition and Responsibilities (*Book of Order*, G-3.0201)

- ☞ The Session is the council for the congregation.
- ☞ It shall be composed of those persons elected by the congregation to active service as ruling elders, together with all installed pastors and associate pastors.
- ☞ All members of the Session are entitled to vote.
- ☞ The pastor shall be the moderator of the Session.
- ☞ 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.

- ∞ The Session has responsibility and power to:
 - a. provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard.
 - b. provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received.
 - c. nurture the covenant community of disciples of Christ.

Relations with Other Councils (*Book of Order*, G-3.0202)

- ∞ The Session has responsibility to participate in the life of the whole church. It is important that Sessions:
 - a. elect, as commissioners to presbytery, ruling elders from the congregation;
 - b. nominate to presbytery ruling elders from the congregation who may be considered for election as commissioners to synod and General Assembly;

- c. see that the guidance and communication of presbytery, synod and General Assembly are considered, and that any binding actions are observed and carried out;
- d. welcome representatives of the presbytery on the occasions of their visits;
- e. propose to the presbytery such measures as may be of common concern to the mission of the church; and
- f. send to presbytery and General Assembly requested statistics and other information, as well as voluntary financial contributions.

