

## **Alliance Bible Fellowship**

### **GOVERNING STRUCTURE**

We believe the most biblical approach to church government is found in the offices of Elders and Deacons/Deaconesses (Acts 6:1-6; 20:17-36; Romans 16:1; Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

#### **Elders**

We believe the spiritual oversight of the church should be granted to a plurality of godly, qualified men who are responsible to lead, feed, protect and equip the church. The New Testament uses the words elder, overseer and pastor interchangeably, referring to the same office or position. Some of our Elders serve on our paid staff, and are culturally referred to as pastors (1 Corinthians 9:8-14; 1 Timothy 5:17-18).

#### **The Qualifications of Elders**

The first qualification for an Elder at ABF is the Spirit-led aspiration to this position of leadership. Paul said in 1 Timothy 3:1, "It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do." Paul then proceeds to give the qualifications of an Elder in 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:5-9. At ABF, Elders serve a two-year term, and there are no term limits. Elders, who must be church members, are nominated by the church body to the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee, having prayerfully considered those nominated, submits a slate of Elders to the church membership for affirmation. Affirmation by the church body consists of a majority vote.

The Senior Pastor and Executive Pastor serve on the Elder Board. Other staff pastors serve on the Board at the invitation of the Elders. Currently, ABF has 16 Elders (12 Lay Elders and 4 Pastors).

Elders are also given the great privilege of anointing with oil and praying for those facing physical or spiritual weakness or sickness (James 5:13-18). If you would like the Elders to pray for you, contact one of the men above who will schedule a time with you to meet with some or all of the Elders.

#### **Deacons/Deaconesses**

The word Deacon or Deaconess (Romans 16:1) speaks of a servant in the New Testament. These are godly men and women who serve our church body, largely behind the scenes, allowing the Elders the opportunity to focus on spiritual oversight through the Word of God and prayer. While the specific word for Deacon/Deaconess is not used, we believe the first Deacons were appointed in Acts 6:1-6.

## **Qualifications for Deacons/Deaconesses**

The qualifications for Deacons/Deaconesses can be found in Acts 6 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. While they serve as servants, it is interesting to note the significant spiritual qualifications for the role.

At ABF, Deacons/Deaconesses serve a two-year term, and there are no term limits. They must be church members and are nominated by the church body to the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee, having prayerfully considered those nominated, submits a slate of Deacons/Deaconesses to the church membership for affirmation. Affirmation by the church body consists of a majority vote.