RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HEAD ELDER

GREENEVILLE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

In addition to the duties of an Elder (separate document), the Head Elder serves in the following ways. This is not an exhaustive list, but a summation of the main duties.

1. Stand by the Pastors as a sounding board, counselor, supporter and helper (in many different forms) as may be requested or observed need.

2. Meet with the pastoral and office staff (generally on a weekly basis) at a mutually agreed-upon time to deal with church business, strategize, counsel and develop plans together.

3. Attend Church Board meetings regularly. While it is customary in most churches for the Senior Pastor to chair the Church Board, he may elect to ask you to serve in that capacity.

4. Develop and disseminate a schedule for the Presiding Elder duties and assignments.

5. Serve as a regular member of the Sabbath School Council, Finance Committee, Evangelism Committee and on other committees (both standing or informal) as may be requested. This includes the monthly Elders' meetings.

6. Promote a spirit of cooperation, collaboration and effective service among your colleagues, so the responsibilities of the elders can be accomplished well, consistently and in a timely manner.

7. Serve as a guide, mentor and consistent example to the Assistant Head Elder, thus preparing him to be able to serve in your role as may be requested in the future.

8. Faithfully fulfill the duties of an Elder, thus providing an example for your colleagues to follow and emulate.

9. Balance the principles of the "golden rule" and a member's right to privacy with the responsibility of the leadership to deal appropriately with sin in the camp.

10. Take a firm stand to protect the purity of church doctrine and the standards of the church.

11. Promote and nurture a Christ-like spirit among the members of the church family, encouraging personal Bible study, an active prayer life, a forgiving spirit, compassionate acts of kindness to those in need and the nurture of children and youth.

DUTIES OF THE ELDERS IN THE
GREENEVILLE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Attached please find excerpts taken from the current Seventh-day Adventist *Church Manual* pertinent to the general role and responsibilities of the Elders in a local church. Please study this carefully so you may have an accurate understanding of what service in this capacity entails as a spiritual leader.

Also attached is an outline of the customary duties and responsibilities of the Elders as structured in this local church. It has been (and continues to be) our practice that the Elders work closely with the Pastoral staff, to provide counsel, support, personal effort and spiritual leadership on an on-going basis wherever and whenever it is required, requested or seen to be appropriate – always in a spirit of prayerful humility and servant-leadership.

It is a privilege and honor to be invited to serve in this capacity. More important, however, is the fact that this role places an awesome responsibility on every participant, for it is nothing less than a holy calling, requiring moral and religious fitness and supreme dependence upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It demands and is worthy of our very best efforts.

Pertinent passages of Scripture that refer to this (and other similar roles in the church) are Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy 3:2-13; 2 Timothy 2:2; Titus 1:3-11; Titus 2:1, 7, 8; 1 Timothy 4:12-16; Acts 20:17, 28-31; 1 Peter 5:1-3.

Elders

Religious Leaders of the Church—Elders must be recognized by the church as strong spiritual leaders and must have good reputations both in the church and community. In the absence of a pastor, elders are the spiritual leaders of the church and by precept and example must seek to lead the church into a deeper and fuller Christian experience. Pg 71

Elders should be able to conduct the services of the church and minister in both word and doctrine when the assigned pastor is unavailable. However, elders should not be chosen primarily because of social position or speaking ability, but because of their consecrated lives and leadership abili- ties.

Elders may be reelected, but it is not advisable for them to serve indefinitely. The church is under no obligation to reelect and may choose others whenever changes seem advisable. Upon the election of new elders, the former elders no longer function as elders but may be elected to other church offices.

Ordination of Elders—Election to the office of elder does not in itself qualify one as an elder. Ordination is required before an elder has authority to function. Between election and ordination, the elected elder may function as church leader but not administer the ordinances of the church.

The ordination service is performed only by an ordained pastor currently credentialed by the conference. As a courtesy, a visiting ordained pastor may be invited to assist. However, only on the specific request of conference officers would a visiting ordained pastor or a retired ordained pastor conduct the ordination.

The sacred rite of ordination should be simply performed in the presence of the church and may include a brief outline of the office of elder, the qualities required, and the principal duties the elder will be authorized to perform. After the exhortation, the ordained pastor, assisted by other ordained pastors and/or local elders who are participating in the service, will ordain the elders by prayer and the laying on of hands. (See p. 38.)

Once ordained, elders need not be ordained again if reelected, or upon election as elders of other churches, provided they have maintained regular membership status. They are also qualified to serve as deacons.

Relationship to the Pastor—If the conference committee assigns a pastor or pastors to the congregation, the pastor, or senior pastor if more than one, should be considered the ranking officer and the local elders as assistants. Since their work is closely related, they should work together harmoniously. The pastor should not assume all lines of responsibility, but should share these with the elders and other officers. The pastor regularly serving the church acts as the chairperson of the board. (See pp. 33, 125, 126.) There may be circumstances, however, when it would be advisable for an elder to act as chairperson. The pastoral work of the church should be shared by the pastor and the elders. In counsel with the pastor, the elders should visit
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members, minister to the sick, foster prayer ministries, arrange or lead out in anointing services and child dedications, encourage the disheartened, and assist in other pastoral responsibilities. As undershepherds, elders should exercise constant vigilance over the flock.

If the pastor is a licensed minister, the church or churches served should elect the pastor as an elder. (See p. 34.)

Because the pastor is appointed to the position in the church by the conference, the pastor serves the church as a conference employee, is responsible to the conference committee, and maintains a sympathetic and cooperative relation to and works in harmony with all the plans and policies of the local church. Elders, who are elected by the church, are responsible to that body and to its board. (See below.)

Work of Elders Is Local—The authority and work of elders are confined to the church in which their election has been made. It is not permissible for a conference committee by vote to confer on an elder the status that is granted to an ordained pastor to serve other churches as elder. If that need exists, the conference committee may recommend to the church needing an elder that it invite and elect the elder of a nearby church to serve. Thus by election one individual may, when necessary, serve more than one church. Such an arrangement should be made only in counsel with the conference committee. Authority to elect elders is inherent in the local church and not in the conference committee. The only way one may be qualified for serving the Church at large is by ordination to the gospel ministry. (See pp. 33, 72, 73.)

Conducting Church Services—Under the pastor, or in the absence of the pastor, an elder is responsible for the services of the church and must either conduct them or arrange for someone to do so. Communion services must always be conducted by an ordained/commissioned pastor or local elder. The pastor usually chairs the business meeting. In the absence of the pastor, and with approval of the pastor or the conference president, an elder should serve as chairperson.
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To Foster Tithing—By faithfully returning tithe, elders do much to encourage other members to return a faithful tithe. (See pp. 130, 131, 163.) Elders can foster tithing by public presentation of the scriptural privilege and responsibility of stewardship and by personal labor with members in a tactful and helpful manner.

Elders should regard all financial matters pertaining to members as confidential and shall not give such information to unauthorized persons.

To Foster Bible Study, Prayer, and a Relationship With Jesus—As spiritual leaders, elders are responsible for encouraging members to develop a personal relationship with Jesus by strengthening their habits of personal Bible study and prayer. Elders should model a commitment to Bible study and prayer. An effective personal prayer life of every member, supporting all ministries and programs of the local church, will enhance the church's mission. Elders may ask the board to appoint a council to assist in this role of development and encouragement.

To Foster All Lines of Work—Under and in cooperation with the pastor, elders are spiritual leaders of the church and are responsible for fostering all departments and activities of the work. Elders should maintain a mutually helpful relationship with other officers.

To Cooperate With the Conference—The pastor, elders, and all officers should cooperate with conference officers and departmental directors in carrying out approved plans. They should inform the church of all regular and special offerings, promote all the programs and activities of the church, and encourage all officers to support conference plans and policies.

Elders should work closely with the treasurer and see that all conference funds are remitted promptly to the conference treasurer at the time established by the conference. Elders should see that the clerk's report is sent promptly to the conference secretary at the close of each quarter.

Elders should regard all correspondence from the conference office as

important. Letters calling for announcements should be presented at the proper time.

In the absence of the pastor, the first elder (see p. 110) should see that the church elects delegates to conference sessions and that the clerk sends the names of delegates to the conference office.

To Foster Worldwide Work—Elders also should foster world mission work by carefully studying the worldwide work and encouraging members to personally support mission work. Their kindly, tactful attitude will encourage liberality of members both in church services and Sabbath school.

Training and Equipping of Elders—The Ministerial Association, in cooperation with the departments, promotes the training and equipping of elders. However, the pastor has the primary responsibility for training elders. (See Notes, #2, p. 167.)

Free to Work Effectively—Elders especially should be left free of other burdens to perform effectively their many duties. It may be advisable in some cases to ask elders to lead the outreach (missionary) work of the church, but even this should be avoided if other talent is available.

First Elder—It may be advisable, because of church size, to choose more than one elder because the burdens of the office are too great for one person. If the church elects more than one elder, one should be designated "first elder." The work should be divided among the elders in harmony with their experience and ability.

Limitation of Authority—Elders do not have the authority to receive or remove members. This is done only by vote of the church. Only the board may recommend that the church vote to receive or remove members. (See pp. 49, 54, 55.)

Page references 71 through 75 taken from:
2010 General Conference Edition
Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual

Customary Duties of Greeneville SDA Church Elders
(Not necessarily a complete and comprehensive list)

1. Full voting membership (and regular attendance as frequently as possible) on the Church Board (meets 2nd Monday of each month in the Fellowship Hall at 7:15 p.m.).

2. Attendance at monthly meetings of the Elders with the Pastoral staff (generally on a Sunday evening; spouses may attend and light pot-luck meal served). Occasionally such a meeting may be replaced by an "executive" session for Elders and Pastors only, when a sensitive issue needs discussion.

3. Participate on one or more church committees/councils/leadership meetings, as structured by Nominating Committee, Church Board or as requested by Pastoral staff.

4. Serve as Presiding Elder (approximately once per quarter) for the selection and instruction of rostrum participants for the Sabbath church service (pastoral prayer, Scripture reading, call for offering, children's story) and for greeters at exit doors after the service.

5. Assist the Pastoral staff with home, hospital, nursing home and other visitation (such as inactive members) as requested/structured by Elders during monthly meetings.

6. Assist the Pastoral staff as requested (support during evangelistic and similar outreach meetings/activities, anointing of the sick, communion services) etc.