

## THE PLANNING GROUP

**Purpose:** To maintain consistency and continuity of long-term planning, and guidance of the body. Allow individual members to **function as elders** without either the title or permanent status of eldership.

**Primary Functions:** Maintain basic doctrines, minister the Word, represent the church in external affairs, plan long-term policies and priorities, and develop spiritual gifts among the church body.

**Constituents:** A team of brothers and sisters who have demonstrated spiritual maturity, trustworthiness, servanthood and spiritual gifts. Collectively, the group members should provide complete and balanced spiritual gifts for serving the church body.

**Calling and Term:** Members shall be called from present and retired deacons through consultation, nomination and unanimous confirmation. The calling of the members will be reconfirmed yearly by the Deacon Board for up to 10 consecutive years. Fulltime workers will have a sabbatical in the eleventh year, while other members will retire for a full year before they can rejoin the group for another term.

**Termination:** In addition to conditions described in the By-Law, termination may occur when circumstances renders it difficult for a member to continue serving in the Planning Group, or when conflicts occur in basic doctrines and body ministry principles. Termination is effective after unanimously approved by all members of the Deacon Board.

**Relationship to Deacons:** Called from the Deacons, the Planning Group shall join with the Deacon Board to seek unanimity on all decisions. Each year, one member of the Planning Group shall serve as the chairman of the Deacon Board.

**Full-Time Workers:** Based on the policy of "Calling for Full-Time Ministry Workers," the Planning Group may recommend candidates for full-time ministry workers to the Deacon Board for consideration. Once called, such workers shall join the Planning Group as brothers and sisters. They will serve in the same capacities as and be subject to the same restrictions as other members.

## GUIDELINES REGARDING THE CALLING OF FULL-TIME MINISTRY WORKERS

### **Statement of Order**

Jesus Christ is the head of the Church and the Church is His body. The church has no other spiritual leader. Based on the model of the early churches, individuals serving the roles of elders and deacons naturally emerged to minister to the body of Christ. The qualifications and functions of elders and deacons are clearly described in the New Testament.

### **Calling**

We believe that full-time workers are specially called by the Lord to serve the church body. They should demonstrate the key Christ-like character, servanthood, love, care for others, ministering of the word, submission and spiritual discernment. The Eastside Chinese Christian Church will call for full-time workers under these conditions; (1) Specific spiritual gifts and services are needed but cannot be provided by members of the church either now or in the foreseeable future, and (2) Growth of the body exceeds the capacity to serve the church body effectively.

### **Identification and Timing**

The Planning Group should identify specific needs requiring full-time worker(s). Once these needs are unanimously confirmed by the deacons, such calling will start from within the church body. According to body ministry principles, maturity of the church body will result in the recognition and development of many full-time servants of the Lord.

If no candidate from the body emerges within a reasonable period of time, external candidates may be considered if the deacons unanimously agree that it is clearly the will of the Lord. Candidates should be recommended by the Planning Group and reviewed by deacons based on the candidate's actual demonstration of spiritual gifts and services in meeting these needs. Sometimes, candidates are encouraged to participate in ministry to the body for a period of time until their spiritual gifts and other qualities can be clearly presented to the church body.

### **Office**

Full-time workers will perform the function of elders and will join the Planning Group to serve the church body by unanimity with the deacons. No single person should have authority over any area, including church planning, ministering of the word, or spiritual discernment. To establish the fact that they are neither the authority nor the leader of the church, full-time workers may not be given any formal title or position. Full-time workers should not be employees of the church. Financial needs (not salary) will be

provided out of the church budget as well as individual contributions from brothers and sisters, similar to the supporting of missionaries.