

Local Church Governance Model: Balanced Elder-Pastor Structure

1. Leadership Structure

- - Elder Board: 5–9 members; majority must be independent (not staff or relatives of Lead Pastor).
- - Lead Pastor(s): Serves as a member of the Elder Board but not as Chair.
- - Chair of the Board: Must be an independent Elder selected by the Board annually.

2. Term Limits

- - Lead Pastor(s): 5-year renewable term; requires formal performance review and 2/3 Board re-approval.
- - Elders: 3-year term; eligible for one renewal, must step down for 1 year before reappointment.
- - Leadership Team: 2–3 year renewable term; appointed by Elders, not solely by Lead Pastor.

3. Job Descriptions and Accountability

- - Clearly define roles for Lead Pastor, Elders, and Leadership Team.
- - Annual performance reviews for all roles, conducted by a Personnel or Governance Committee.

4. Checks and Balances

- - Lead Pastor cannot vote on own review, compensation, or term renewal.
- - Elder appointments require congregational advisory vote and external reference.
- - Leadership Team reports to the Board, not just the Lead Pastor.

5. Transparency and Member Engagement

- - Annual town hall with reports on finances, membership, and leadership health.
- - Anonymous congregational feedback reviewed quarterly by the Board.
- - Major decisions require 2/3 Elder vote + congregational affirmation.

6. Vineyard USA Accountability

- - Clause: This church affirms Vineyard USA's right to investigate and advise on misconduct, governance, or theology, and agrees to comply with disciplinary processes recommended by national leadership.