

Elders Handbook

Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends Church

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Index

Introduction	3
Why an Elders' Handbook?	4
The Biblical Basis for Elders	5
A Bit of History—The Rise of Elders Among Friends	6
Friends and Leadership	8
Elders and Pastors: Learning to Work Together	10
Responsibilities for Pastors	11
Responsibilities for Elders	13
Reality Check:	
But how do we <i>actually</i> work well together?	16
Practical Suggestions:	
Ideas for carrying out the work of elders	20
Pastoral Care	20
Oversight and Support of Pastor(s)	23
Promoting Membership	27
Overseeing Worship	28
Church Discipline/Restoration	30
A Few Additional Thoughts	33
Sample Calendar of Events	34
Appendix	36
Suggestions for Further Reading	37

Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends Church Elders' Handbook for Local Churches

Introduction

Since the beginning of creation God has continued to reveal Himself to and relate with humanity. Certainly the greatest and most powerful act of self-disclosure was the Incarnation—as Jesus gave flesh to God's presence in the way we can best comprehend it. In Jesus' life, death and resurrection, God did more than restore our broken relationship and make possible eternal life. Equally important, Christ dwelt among us to give us a living, breathing picture of what it can mean for humanity to live in harmony with God and one another.

The wonder of incarnation took a surprising turn in Jesus' return to glory at the close of His earthly life. He promised His followers that He would not leave them alone, providing a Comforter and Guide to abide with them, bind them together in one great fellowship, and empower them to continue His mission in the world (*John 14 – 17*).

This gathering of Jesus' people is the church. As the ongoing physical expression of Jesus on earth, the Body of Christ continues the incarnational work of God. Though we do not do this perfectly, to the extent that we live in the Life and Power of the Holy Spirit, we have the capacity to do even greater things than Jesus did (*John 14:12*) and bring glory to God (*Ephesians 3:21*).

To be part of the church is one of the greatest blessings and responsibilities given to those who know and obey our Lord. In this fellowship of brothers and sisters, we are being shaped into a people who reflect God's glory to a watching world. Together we bear the joyful burden of the cross and the ministry of reconciliation that is entrusted to us (*2 Corinthians 5:8*).

No one said this work would be easy. A quick read of the New Testament highlights the process of personal transformation—the move from sinner to saint—as life-long and difficult. We come to Christ conformed to the image of this world (*Romans 12:2*). Now paired with *other not-yet-perfect people*, the challenge of being in community further highlights our need for Christ and the Holy Spirit's transforming power. However, as we become a people marked by

sacrificial love, forgiveness, grace, holiness and the other fruits of the Spirit, we do bear witness to the truth that Christ is, indeed, risen and present among us.

A lovely image of the church moving toward spiritual maturity is found in Ephesians 4. Within the local fellowship of believers, God calls and empowers us to *experience* a unity in Christ that is capable of transcending all of our human barriers and differences. Furthermore, in this community, we are being equipped for service and coordinated in the mission of Christ. As Paul writes, the Christian community prepares

...God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (Ephesians 4:12-16)

Within a healthy Christian fellowship there is a God-orchestrated mix of gifts and ministry roles. Each spiritual gift is important and every role within the Body is critical to the whole if we are to be the church God intends. As the text from Ephesians 4 also reveals, there are unique leadership gifts and ministries that need to be operating in the Body if it is to become mature and fruitful. Those called to leadership are not better members of the Body—they simply have been called and gifted by God to exercise unique responsibilities that help us all grow up together in the life of Christ.

Why an Elders' Handbook?

One of the vital leadership functions for the health and growth of the Body comes through the ministry of elders. One reason local churches sometimes struggle is that we do not always adequately identify, train and support those whom God has called to minister in this way. On occasion, individuals wind up being asked to serve

who may not be called or mature enough to serve. Sometimes those gifted and called may not know the expectations or responsibilities that actually come with being an elder. Maybe the members of the Body have vastly different understandings about the function and authority of the elders. Any or all of these can lead to a deep sense of frustration and confusion for those involved and limit the effectiveness of the whole community.

The Northwest Yearly Meeting (NWYM) Board of Elders is committed to helping our local churches in identifying, training and supporting faithful leadership. Through the *Elders' Handbook* and the resources that are available online (www.nwfriends.org) and through the NWYM office, we seek to develop local church elders who will serve Friends faithfully and effectively.

In addition to what you will find in the *Handbook*, the NWYM elders and NWYM staff are available to assist your local church with on-site training, prayer support and mentoring as requested.

The Biblical Basis for Elders

The Bible gives us guidelines for those who will serve in the role of elders or overseers. Notable passages from 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 address how elders are to live their personal lives and also serve the church. Being an elder is a noble task, but anyone who aspires to it should also be ready to take it seriously. Elders are to live above reproach: they live a life of integrity and are respected by those inside and outside of the church.

When it comes to matters of the family, a married elder is to be a faithful spouse; an elder with children is to be a godly parent and manage the children well. While some believers interpret these passages to only allow for male elders, Friends and many other Christian traditions affirm women in these roles, as well. Many Scriptural passages highlight God's call to and the effective ministry of women in leadership. Consider Deborah (Judges 4), Huldah (2 Chronicles 34 and 2 Kings 22), Nympha and Lydia (Acts 16:13-15, 40), Chloe (1 Corinthians 1:11), Apphia (Philemon 1:2), the Elect Lady (2 John 1), Pricilla (Acts 18:2, 18-19, 26 and Romans 16:3), the female apostle Junia (Romans 16:7), and the deacon Phoebe (Romans 16:1) as examples. Within the broader context of biblical teaching, the

few Pauline passages that seem to exclude women are rather interpreted as reflecting the culture of biblical times in that particular location. Therefore, Friends affirm women and men in the role of elders, whether single or married. The key issues are personal commitment to Christ, maturity in the faith, and giftedness to serve the church in this and other leadership positions.

An elder gains respect by living a self-controlled life characterized by temperance and hospitality rather than drunkenness, violence, quarreling, and greed. Elders should not be new Christians simply because of the need to grow in maturity of faith before leading the church. This is, in part, for their benefit that they may not take an unhealthy pride in their position. An elder is a gentle and humble servant of Christ and the church, not perfect, but one who leads by example.

In the Old Testament, elders are depicted as community leaders who make decisions on behalf of God's people. As we move to the New Testament, 1 Peter 5 points out that elders are to be willing servants, shepherds of God's flock, who serve not out of greed or desire to "lord over" others, but to be helpful and caring. Ephesians 4 reminds us that the roles of leadership in the church are given to develop and maintain unity for the purpose of helping believers grow in maturity of faith. Galatians 5 discusses the fruit of the Spirit which should characterize the life of devotion to God.

Elders are called to love people as Christ loves us all. From a Scriptural perspective, elders must be wise leaders who deeply care about others, know how to communicate that care effectively, and able to discern God's leading for the future of the church they serve.

A Bit of History—The Rise of Elders Among Friends

Along with the biblical basis for elders serving among us, Friends have their own unique history when it comes to elders in the church.

In the early days of the Friends movement, there was a great deal of fluidity in the form and structure of the community. At the heart of the movement was a shared conviction that Christ Himself would lead His people. Whether in worship, fellowship or service, individuals were admonished to attend to and mind the leading of the Lord. At the same time, bold and charismatic leadership among

Friends provided clear teaching/preaching, evangelistic zeal and administrative gifts to help shape and nurture the emerging Body.

Within this era a paradoxical truth emerged. On the one hand, Friends acknowledged that Christ alone is Head of the Church. Coupled with the truth that Christ is available to all people and may choose to speak through anyone, human forms of leadership based simply on position or title were rejected. Since all believers are called to ministry and have the same access to the Holy Spirit, all should exist as equal members within the Body.

On the other hand, early Friends recognized that there are some who are called and gifted to serve in ways others are not. Robert Barclay suggested that some members are given a unique gift for ministry that is different, not better than, other gifts. William Dewsbury, another early Friend, counseled each Meeting that there should be “one or two who are most grown in the power of the Life [to] take care of the flock in the place.” George Fox believed the same, encouraging Friends to recognize those called and gifted to serve and oversee the church.

Among those identified leadership roles were the elders. In his book, *A Living Faith: An Historical and Comparative Study of Quaker Beliefs*, Wilmer Cooper offers a brief and helpful description of how the role of Friends elders developed over time.

The Society of Friends began with a belief in the true church as spiritual, invisible, and beyond form and structure, but they were not able to hold strictly to this belief for long. Very early it became clear that a wholly spirit-centered theology and polity would be unable to deal with those within the Quaker fold who took liberties beyond the bounds of propriety. As soon as efforts were made to restrain such excesses, a debate arose between those who advocated complete freedom of the Spirit and those who felt the need for order and discipline.... The issue of the freedom of the individual in relationship to the common good of the Meeting became a problem for Friends, and has continued to this day. Throughout their history Friends have swung between antinomianism (bordering on anarchy) and a desire to establish disciplinary guidelines in both thought and behavior.

According to Cooper, the work of elders was sometimes distinguished from “overseers.” The elders generally made arrangements for the Meeting and shepherded the ministry and worship life of the fellowship. Overseers focused on moral discipline for the whole community and the pastoral care of members. Both groups were guided in their work by a growing body of Friends’ *Advices and Queries* that eventually formed the first Discipline or *Faith and Practice*. In addition, they worked together to make sure that the “public ministers”—those Friends who evidenced gifts for preaching and teaching—were being faithful in word and deed to the Christian convictions shared by the Quaker community.

As the years progressed, the work of elders took different forms. In many places, the role of elder and overseer merged. With the advent of the pastoral system, in which ministers were released by a local church to provide pastoral care, preaching, discipleship and administration, the elders also became responsible for issuing calls to new pastors and for working alongside them in shepherding the flock.

An overview of Friends history quickly reveals that elders have not always functioned effectively. The days of rigidity and legalism are well-chronicled in Quaker history. In more recent times, it is also possible to find examples where elders provide little or no counsel or moral guidance to people in spiritual crisis and sin. In some settings, elders have been guilty of abdicating all responsibility and authority to pastors. In other situations, elders exert tight-fisted control over the pastor and others in the church. None of these reflect the vision or values of Friends.

At our best, the elders of Friends churches have focused on helping the congregation to become a mature and Christ-like people. Through their prayerful attention to Christ, wise counsel, compassion, truth-telling, encouragement and commitment to Scripture and the testimonies of Friends, elders provide the kind of shepherding leadership that enables the church *to be the Body of Christ*. Whatever *power* they have comes through the Holy Spirit and it is a power exercised *for others* rather than *over others*.

Friends and Leadership

As noted above, Friends have strong convictions about Jesus being the Head of the Church. He is our Present Teacher and Guide and

our first work as a community is to learn to attend to, discern, and mind His leading. Therefore, we trust the Holy Spirit to speak to us individually and communally and to illuminate the Scriptures, so that we might faithfully obey the will of God. Worship after the manner of Friends most often leaves generous time for listening in silence. Out of such silence God may call on anyone in the Body to minister words of grace and truth. In our meetings for business, we do not gather to debate or vote for our preferences, but to discern the voice of Christ together. When it comes to individuals serving as human leaders among us, they serve expecting no special treatment, higher honor or exalted status. As a people under the headship of Christ, we are careful to treat one another with respect as equals, even when our roles in community differ.

There are times, however, when this simple truth gets quite complicated. Some of us in leadership positions *do not really want to be mere equals*. The thought of *a little exalted status, just a bit of honor, a few special privileges* can sound pretty appealing! Though we may want to invite the input of others in decision making, we *really want to be the ones to decide*. Instead of recognizing leadership as a call and gift from God and a function within the Body, we are tempted to make it a status or position that defines *who we are* rather than *how we serve* for the sake of Christ and others.

Another complication, however, springs from a few Friends' deep suspicion of leadership. Vigilantly guarding our testimony of equality or our respect for each person's ability to listen to God, some Friends have a biased distrust for those in leadership and for institutional authority. From this perspective, any distinctions of role or function in the Body are questioned. Instead of creating a climate where leaders are freed to serve, decisions are readily criticized and challenged. Behavioral/ theological guidelines or corporate disciplines get described as power plays or unnecessary, outward legalisms. In this context of mistrust and under a steady diet of criticism, the work of leadership is undermined and the ministry of the church thwarted.

Other factors can complicate the working out of leadership and followership in the life of a Friends Church. For instance, the size and complexity of a local church needs to be taken into account as leadership roles and activities are initiated. A congregation of 50 people cannot function the same way that a congregation of 500 does. In the

larger gathering, it makes sense for the whole Meeting to delegate more responsibility *and* authority to individuals or sub-groups. Giving them the power to make decisions and act for the sake of the whole allows the work of the church to move forward in timely and effective ways.

A final piece in the leadership puzzle is the sometimes unclear relationship between local church elders and the pastor or pastoral staff. *How do they work together? What responsibilities do they share? Within the group, who is leading and who is following?* This concern will be more fully considered in the next section.

Finding a way forward through some of these tension points is imperative if Friends are going to thrive. We need to create communities where Christ's active leadership is coupled with the free exercise of appropriate human leadership gifts and roles.

Elders and Pastors: Learning to Work Together

Among NWYM Friends, local churches generally call a pastor or pastoral team to help carry out the ministry of the church—whether that work is teaching, discipleship, administration or outreach. In the best sense, the ministry of the pastor among Friends is focused on *equipping others for ministry*.

In our community of faith—everyone is a minister. Friends have rejected the idea of “hireling ministers.” We do not pay people to do the work of ministry for others. For the sake of a healthy, growing, increasingly mature local church, however, we may release certain people with the call and gifts to help us grow into the image of Christ and continue His mission in the world. Among Friends, both men and women may be freed by the local church to serve and lead the flock in these ways.

At the same time, we also establish a committee of elders—three or more women and men—with the spiritual maturity, gifts and call to give oversight and direction to the spiritual well-being of the congregation. In the best situations, these elders work in partnership with the pastor(s) to provide spiritual leadership for the community.

This relationship between pastors and elders can sometimes feel like an awkward dance. Consider, for instance, the following queries:

- *In a culture that prizes hierarchy, how do pastors and elders*

learn to work as a team of equals?

- *In a situation where pastors receive a salary from the church and are asked to serve for a particular period of time—for instance, a three-year call of service—how can the elders provide appropriate oversight and evaluation without treating the pastors as employees rather than partners?*
- *How can the pastors and elders work together to discern when a call ought to continue or conclude?*
- *How do pastors, who may have great experience, advanced education, and the privilege of devoting full-time to serving/leading the church, work patiently alongside volunteer elders who may have limited time, experience or training?*
- *How can (or can?) pastors be honest and vulnerable about their own doubts, struggles or concerns with the people who are responsible for overseeing their ministry?*

If you have been a pastor or an elder, these questions reflect just a few of the issues that can sometimes complicate the relationship in this group.

Through this handbook, we hope to provide help in defining this relationship by clarifying the responsibilities and authority of both the pastors and elders. It is important that each local church do this work for their unique setting and to do so before confusion and conflict cloud the relationship. As mentioned before, factors like the size of the congregation and the particular make-up of the meeting/church are variables that ought to be considered in all of this. In the next section of this *Handbook*, you will find the responsibilities for both pastors and elders as stated in the NWYM *Faith and Practice*. These can be used as a starting place as your church creates appropriate job descriptions for each group.

Responsibilities for Pastors

Occasionally, someone will pronounce that Quakers are against pastoral ministry. In truth, the rejection of a “clergy” by early Friends had less to do with a person being financially supported, than it did when some seemed to make the ministry more of a job than a calling. For Friends, pastoral ministry is a specialized ministry within a community of ministers. Along with exercising their own gifts and

offering their own prophetic word to the community, pastors focus their ministry on developing and releasing the gifts of others and the whole community.

As other Friends have stated: “Pastors provide public leadership for the Meeting; they are in charge of access to the ministries of the Meeting, including its ministries of equipping of all believers and the ministries of proclamation and pastoral care. This does not mean that they need to do all of these public things, but they have the visibility, freedom, authority and accountability to ensure that they happen reliably and that they are biblically grounded and reflect the beliefs of the church.” (North Carolina Yearly Meeting)

Local churches in NWYM generally release pastoral ministers, both full and/or part-time, to provide leadership and service within the congregation and in the larger community. The NWYM *Faith and Practice* describes their general role and function this way:

The pastor and elders share responsibility for the spiritual care of the church. The pastor should in no sense dominate the church but should serve it, helping members through individual encounter and organized endeavor to become more effective in Christian proclamation, fellowship, and service. The pastor should take care that in meetings for worship the members of the congregation are afforded opportunity for their exercise of ministry, as the Lord may lead. The pastor is particularly responsible, in agreement with the elders, to:

- Affirm through public ministry the *Faith and Practice* of the Yearly Meeting.
- Facilitate systematic religious visitation among members and other attenders.
- Provide individual counseling to persons seeking spiritual and moral guidance, and to those preparing for marriage.
- Call on the sick, the bereaved, and the needy, and facilitate the compassionate interest of others on their behalf.
- Preach for the edification of the church, as led of the Lord, working with the elders in arrangements for worship and other preaching ministries.

- Lead the church in programs of evangelistic outreach.
- Serve as an advisory member of the church committees and departments, giving counsel to organizations such as the Sunday school and Friends Youth, reinforcing their concerns through public ministry.
- Provide systematic preparation for membership.

These responsibilities, of course, may be modified depending on the particular context of the local church and its needs for pastoral ministry. In addition, most churches craft job descriptions to match the unique call and gifts of individual pastors. Examples of job descriptions and information on how to create a pastoral job description are available through our on-line resources.

Responsibilities for Elders

Working alongside the released pastors, the elders have an equally crucial role in the leadership of the Meeting. Again, as other Friends have written:

Elders have the crucial role of ensuring accountability between all of the ministers of the Meeting (whether or not they are pastors) and the Meeting as a whole. Their concern is nothing less than the spiritual health of the Meeting and the acceptability of its public ministry. They care for the ministers and hold them accountable for the faithfulness and effectiveness of their ministry; they also help the ministers hold the Meeting accountable in its response to the Gospel and the Holy Spirit... They help identify the mission and priorities of the church—experiencing the Lordship of Jesus Christ as a church community; ensuring reliable access to Gospel teaching and the historic voice of the church; building a church community in which people are born, experience life transitions, are cared for in growth and in trauma, and are valued regardless of social status or temperament or intelligence; providing access to Christian community for unbelievers; identifying and meeting community needs in the name of Jesus. (North Carolina Yearly Meeting)

In the NWYM *Faith and Practice*, the role and function of local church elders is described this way:

The Committee of Elders is composed of three or more active members of the church (men and women) who are collectively responsible to the church for its pastoral leadership and for the oversight of its spiritual and moral welfare. Elders should be recognized for lives guided by the Holy Spirit and for spiritual discernment and maturity. They should be experienced in Friends practices and committed to Friends beliefs as set forth in this book of *Faith and Practice*. They serve for terms of three years, the terms of one-third expiring each year. Normally, service is limited to no more than two consecutive terms unless another qualified person is unavailable. When circumstances require, subcommittees or individuals may be appointed for special responsibilities, such as counseling, pastoral relations, evangelism, and fine arts if there is no separate committee; and some tasks may be delegated to the Administrative Committee. Although the Committee of Elders is to maintain oversight of the church generally, it is specifically charged with the following responsibilities:

- Uphold the Christian beliefs of Friends as set forth in this *Faith and Practice* and see that officers, ministers, missionaries, and teachers affirm them.
- Determine policies concerning worship and Christian fellowship; encourage members of the church to attend these meetings faithfully; appoint and supervise ushers and greeters for all regular church meetings.
- Recommend to the church the calling of pastors and other ministers, with their terms of service, after consulting the superintendent of the Yearly Meeting.
- Support the pastoral ministries through cooperation and counsel.
- Oversee programs of evangelism, discipleship, and community outreach; arrange for special and supply ministry in consultation with the pastor.
- Seek out those whom God may be calling into ministry or missionary service, nurturing their spiritual growth, discerning and fostering their gifts, and, as appropriate, facilitating their process of recording if they are in harmony with the Faith and Practice of the Yearly Meeting.

- Counsel members in respect to their spiritual welfare and maturity, possibly providing a loving discipline of members whose conduct is unbecoming the Gospel.
- Review, prepare, and recommend applicants for membership.
- Encourage private devotions and the practice of Bible reading and prayer in families.
- Encourage the formation and maintenance of Bible study groups.
- Foster a concern for Ministry Points and help secure persons for such outreach ministry.
- Nominate members to serve on the church Nominating Committee.
- Keep in touch with nonresident members.
- Consider a member's request for short-term service within the Yearly Meeting.

Furthermore, the elders of a local church initiate arrangements for pastoral services, consulting with the superintendent of the Yearly Meeting and after prayerful deliberation making recommendation to the church. When the church unites with the judgment of the elders, it extends the call to a minister for pastoral leadership. When a new pastor comes from another Friends yearly meeting and when this person's membership and ministerial standing have been accepted, the church requests the clerk of the Yearly Meeting to issue a minister's certificate. The pastor chosen should accept the Christian beliefs as held by Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends Church.

As the nominating committee for the local church works at discerning whom they will recommended to serve as elders, several questions ought to be considered:

- Does the individual meet the biblical qualifications for elders? (See above.)
- Does the individual evidence gifts of wisdom, discernment and pastoral care?
- Does the person understand the duties and responsibilities after reviewing the job description, and is there a match with his/her own gifts and interests?
- Is this person a member of the local church and does he/she affirm the *Faith and Practice* of NWYM Friends?

- Does the person have adequate time to serve at this point in his/her life?
- Is there evidence of a growing relationship with Christ and integrity with others?
- After taking time to pray about the possibility, does the person sense a genuine call/leading to serve rather than self-serving motives?

Reality Check: But how do we *actually* work well together?

While well-crafted and mutually understood job descriptions will help to eliminate some of the misunderstanding and challenges between pastors and elders, that is not enough. This is a relationship not primarily a contractual agreement. For pastors and elders to serve as partners in ministry there must be a growing spirit of trust, mutual respect, and intentional love for one another.

In many ways, the relationship between the pastors and elders ought to serve as a model for the kind of community being created throughout the whole fellowship. Within this subset of disciples, there should be a growing intimacy with Christ, a deepening practice of love and fellowship, and active service that builds up the church and advances the Kingdom. The core group of leaders, recognized for their spiritual maturity, ought to possess the life we profess.

Within this mix of individuals, of course, are many variables that complicate the relationship. Each of us comes to the group with baggage, weaknesses, and limits. At any time during a person's ministry as a pastor or elder, another need or crisis can draw their attention away from the responsibility of being a church leader. Sometimes the quirks and peculiarities that we bring cause friction in the group. All of these (and other issues) keep us from ever becoming the perfect picture of what the church should be. But rather than giving up, mature leaders turn again to Christ in repentance and faith. They commit again to the practice of love, long-suffering and forgiveness. And they re-submit themselves one to another and to the calling they have received, in order that God's work and will for the whole Body will be carried out in them.

What follows are a few more suggestions that might prove helpful as you continue to learn to work together as pastors and elders. These

are intended as a starting place and set of ideas as your local elders discern how best to serve your church.

- On a regular (at least annual) basis, spend time together for an extended retreat. You need this time to function more effectively during the “normal” elders’ meetings. During different retreats focus on some or all of the following:
 - Play and laugh together.
 - Pray for each other, your families, what God is seeking to do in and through you.
 - Worship together.
 - Focus on community building in a way that builds trust and highlights strengths and abilities within the group. Plan a retreat centered on communication patterns, community/organizational dynamics, how each person processes information and/or personality differences within the group. (Check out resources and recommendations for further reading on the website.)
 - Plan for the coming year and/or work on long-range visioning for the church. (See the website for resources.)
 - Bring in an outside person to offer elders’ training or to do teambuilding with the group.

- Have the (lead) pastor and clerk of the elders meet well in advance of each elders’ meeting.
 - Work together to create an agenda for the upcoming meeting:
 - Consider which issues are for information, discussion or action
 - What issues will need the most and best time?
 - Are there matters on the elders’ calendar that need attention?
 - Are there particular personal or community concerns the pastor wants to bring to the meeting?

- Send a reminder and agenda out to the rest of the group in advance, along with minutes from the past meeting.
 - This will increase the likelihood that the assignments given to members will be carried out.

- Expect that each person will come spiritually prepared to meet by praying about the concerns/issues you will be discussing.
- When discussing and/or deciding on an issue, consider some of the following ideas:
 - Before someone (for instance the pastor) receives or takes the responsibility to develop a plan of action, clarify his/her responsibility. Is he/she charged with bringing a recommendation back to the group for approval or is he/she being given the authority to make a decision and report back?
 - This is particularly important for pastors who typically have more time to work on plans/programs than elders. It can be frustrating for a pastor to work many hours on a plan and get it ready to implement, only to have it delayed for weeks and months by elders who also need time to process and own a proposal. Recognizing this complication helps the group know when it is better to hand off the responsibility and authority to the pastor or recognize and state upfront that a decision is likely to take longer to process.
 - When possible, provide appropriate information/background documents to all the members in advance of the meeting. Most people are helped by having time to consider a matter before being asked to make a decision. If something is important and is time sensitive, it is important enough to prepare people to discuss it. Thorough preparation and advance planning for an elders' meeting needs to be a pastoral staff and clerk priority.
 - At the point of making a decision, clarify whose responsibility it will be to implement it. For instance, if it is decided to plan an all-church retreat, who is designated to carry it out and are they free to do it as they are led? Or is there an expectation that the elders will need to oversee and approve the details? Taking time to clarify this issue of responsi-

- bility and authority often decreases confusion and frustration and frees people to act with confidence.
- When the team of elders/pastors are ready to make a decision or a recommendation to the Monthly Meeting, be sure there is genuine unity. If you cannot all own the decision/ recommendation and bear the responsibility for the outcome, do not proceed. Nothing harms trust more than when either the pastor(s) or the elders distance themselves from each other around a decision that may not have been either well received or well conceived.
- At least on an annual basis, host an honest conversation about how you are functioning as a group in terms of decision making and division of labor.
 - Is your pastor feeling micro-managed by the group? Or is she/he feeling left alone without any supervision/partnering?
 - Is anyone unintentionally dominating discussion?
 - Is everyone practicing good, prayerful discernment skills?
 - Is every member actively contributing to the discussion and work?
 - Do we understand each other's role within this group? For instance, who are the idea people? The visionaries? The implementers? Who understands the pulse of the community we are serving? Is each individual being well deployed within the group to advance the ministry of the church?
 - Are there ways that communication within the group can be improved?
 - Similarly, hold an annual, honest conversation to see how well you are focusing on your shared role as elders/leaders. Use this as an opportunity to evaluate your work from the year you have just completed.
 - Are you fulfilling the job description/purpose statement that governs your work?
 - Do you see signs of spiritual growth in the Body? Are new people coming to Christ? Is there greater love and fellowship within the group? Are people

- being sent out to serve in the world in ways that are bearing fruit?
 - Did we fulfill our stated ministry plan (prayerful priorities, goals and concrete actions steps) from the past year?
 - As you plan your new year's budget, consider what things God may be calling the group to focus on in the coming year. Construct a ministry plan and a budget that will allow you to move in this direction.
- Recommit to practicing healthy accountability and conflict resolution skills within the group. Evaluate how you have been doing.
 - If you have not already done so, consider the creation of a “committee covenant” (see resources) that outlines shared expectations for how the group will function together.
 - Honestly assess whether or not there are any unresolved conflicts or barriers within the group.
 - Consult the “Peacemaking Resources” suggested in the appendix for further help in dealing with conflicts between people

Practical Suggestions: Ideas for carrying out the work of elders

Sometimes elders can feel overwhelmed with the immensity and diversity of their responsibilities. Without pre-planning and an intentional way of handling important responsibilities, it is possible to be continually sidetracked by the urgent demands and (occasional?!?) crises that arise. In an effort to help focus the elders' work, a list of suggestions/ideas for carrying out some main duties is provided below.

Pastoral Care: Alongside the released pastor(s) of the local church, the elders assist in providing pastoral care for the congregation. In addition to responding to emergency or crisis intervention, pastoral care should also include the ongoing spiritual development of the people who form the Meeting.

- Create a list of all of the families and individuals connected with the local church. Assign members equitably to the elders, utilizing existing relationships and natural connections.

Develop a plan for regularly checking in on each household alongside the pastoral care/visitation carried out by your pastor(s).

- Consider using a set of queries during these contacts. For instance, on an annual basis elders can ask each person:
 - How would you describe your relationship with God? What are some ways you are learning to know and obey God more faithfully? Are there things that are hindering your spiritual growth?
 - Are there ways the Meeting can better support your spiritual growth and ministry?
 - How would you describe your relationship with others in the Meeting?
 - Do you have concerns or questions about the Meeting that you would like to share?
 - How are you currently involved in ministry? In what ways did you see God using you in this or other areas?
 - Are there new ways you are feeling led to be involved either within the congregation or in outreach to the community?
- Set aside a regular time to pray with interested people
 - Create and publicize a regularly scheduled elders' meeting just for the purpose of prayer. Invite individuals/couples seeking prayer support to join you
 - Create a prayer team—including people not currently serving on the elders' committee—to meet with people at scheduled times or as requested.
 - Have one or two of the elders available to pray with people at the end of each worship service. Station them near the front of the sanctuary or in another room and announce their availability at the rise of the meeting for worship.
- Recognize that some elders may be more gifted for pastoral care than others. As time allows, have those elders accompany the pastor(s) during visits to the hospital, homes, and other venues. These elders might serve best by focusing on mentoring and one-on-one visitation rather than some of the other administrative functions within the larger group. As

- you look at the make-up of the elders' committee, work at dividing labor along the lines of giftedness and passion.
- Make public the names and contact information for the elders. Encourage people to call the elders with questions/prayer requests/etc.
 - Have the elders establish funds for:
 - Benevolence: Create an accessible fund to help individuals/families in times of financial need. Establish a clear and well-communicated way to access the fund. Be clear upfront whether or not funds must be repaid, what the funds may be used for and other applicable guidelines.
 - Ministry support: Create an elders' discretionary fund that assists individuals with training needs, resources for spiritual growth or funds for active ministry. Again, make sure there is a clear and well-communicated way to apply for support.
 - Establish a follow-up plan for people who are considering leaving the church or who are no longer actively involved in the church or attending worship.
 - Maintain active attendance records. If a person/family misses three consecutive worship gatherings, make sure a member of the pastoral team or elders makes personal contact with them.
 - Should a person/family be preparing to leave the fellowship, consider a list of questions to raise with them:
 - If members of the church, would they consider coming and talking with the elders about their concerns and discerning together if God is releasing them from the Meeting? Membership is a covenant which we make after seeking God's leading. Ending our membership should be handled the same way. The questions listed below are also appropriate to ask.
 - If they are non-members, discuss some of the following:
 - Are there concerns or issues they would like to discuss with the elders?

- Do they have any feedback for how the church could be more helpful in encouraging spiritual growth and ministry?
 - If they have decided to leave, are there relationships that need mending before doing so?
 - Do they need help in finding a new spiritual home?
- At different times, individuals/couples/groups will be interested in discerning specific direction from the Lord. In our history, Friends have utilized “Meetings for Clearness” to help people consider a wide range of issues/decisions. These include whether to marry, take a new job, begin a new ministry or explore a call to service. Elders ought to encourage this useful exercise. (See the online resources for further assistance.)
 - Establish and practice a strict code of confidentiality. What is shared in the elders’ meeting about other people stays within the group! When necessary, create a confidential set of elders’ minutes separate from the public minutes that are available to others in the church. People in the church feel cared for when they know they are being treated with compassion and integrity. Creating an environment of trust, where individuals and families in the Body know they can safely and freely share intimate, painful and shameful details is a great gift that the pastoral and elder leadership can offer. It can only be nurtured and maintained, however, by the discipline of confidentiality.

Oversight and Support of Pastor(s)

As noted above, elders have the responsibility and privilege of working closely with the pastoral staff. The quality of the relationship between the pastor(s) and elders is a significant factor in the length and fruitfulness of a pastor’s ministry.

Pastoral ministry can be complex and stress-filled. Pastors may be on call every day and at all hours. The expectations placed on them by people in the congregation can often be overwhelming and unre-

alistic. These external stressors are often exacerbated by the fact that many pastors have trouble setting appropriate boundaries between ministry responsibilities and personal responsibilities, such as family life. Pastors occasionally battle low self-esteem. Pastoral ministry tends to be very lonely. It is not surprising to find that many pastors do not have close friends in their local Meeting, simply because of the complicated nature of relationships between someone identified as a spiritual leader and members of the congregation. In order to overcome some of these concerns, consider implementing some or all of the following:

- Commit to praying with and for your pastor(s) on a regular basis.
- Be sure your pastor has a clear job description. This helps the whole church have a shared understanding of how the person will be spending his/her time. It also sets manageable parameters and helps to focus the person's ministry.
- In the case of a multiple-member pastoral staff:
 - Clarify which members of the staff are expected/invited to attend elders meetings
 - If your Meeting has identified a senior pastor:
 - Clarify whether the elders or senior pastor is responsible for hiring/firing, overseeing and evaluating other pastoral staff members.
 - Ensure that there is clear communication, either through the senior pastor or through the clerk of the elders, with the rest of the pastoral team if they do not regularly attend elders' meetings. Make sure the whole team receives clear and adequate communication about what the elders are doing/discussing.
 - Consider linking one elder to each pastoral staff person for the purpose of prayer, support, and counsel throughout the year.
- Encourage the pastor(s) in the area of continuing education. While Friends recognize that education/training does not make someone a pastor, it can certainly increase his/her effectiveness. On an annual basis, have your pastor(s) focus on an area of continued growth/study. If he/she has not finished seminary, encourage your pastor to consider taking a course (George Fox Evangelical Seminary offers many

- courses, including online options).
- Create an education/training line item to be used for books/workshops/classes.
 - Budget funds for the pastor(s) to attend both the NWYM Focus Conference and Pastors' Conference. Similarly, funds should be set aside to send youth pastors/workers to the annual NWYM Youthworkers' conference.
 - Provide your pastor(s) with a formal, annual evaluation.
 - Make the basis of this evaluation the stated job description and annual goals/priorities that were agreed upon at the start of the year. (See the website for evaluation resources.)
 - Include in the evaluation a review of how the elders are functioning alongside the pastor:
 - Are the elders fulfilling their responsibilities?
 - Are they providing the support, resources, and appropriate accountability for the pastor(s)?
 - Consider asking the pastor the following question: If there was one thing the elders could do to better support you and your ministry, what would it be? Follow up on this at the next appropriate meeting.
 - Time the evaluation so that it does not coincide with decisions about salary adjustments or an extension of a call. The evaluation should serve to help the person adjust their ministry focus and look ahead to future service.
 - Along with the formal, annual review, be sure to provide ongoing feedback (both positive and corrective) throughout the year. Keep the lines of communication consistent and clear so that the annual review does not lead to any big surprises.
 - Do an annual review of the pastor's salary and benefit package.
 - Use the NWYM "pastoral salary guidelines" (on the website) as a starting place for determining an appropriate salary and benefits.
 - Have a conversation with the pastor regarding the

- adequacy of the salary. Does the salary fully release the pastor to serve the church or does she/he need additional income? Consider naming a subgroup of elders to have this conversation with both the pastor and the pastor's spouse.
- If the pastor is bi-vocational, adjust the job description/expectations to ensure he/she has adequate time to pursue other employment.
 - Make sure the pastor is receiving adequate time off.
 - Hold the pastor accountable for taking off *at least* one full day a week. You may be surprised how few pastors actually do this. Please remember that Sunday is often their busiest work day of the week. Finding and maintaining another Sabbath day is not only a good idea and a useful spiritual discipline, it is a clear biblical teaching.
 - Include in their annual pastoral contract the amount of vacation they will receive for the coming year.
 - For pastors with 0-4 years of experience, provide *at least* two weeks of vacation
 - For pastors with 5-9 years, provide *at least* three weeks of vacation
 - For pastors with over 10 years, provide four weeks of vacation
 - If there are expectations about either the number of Sundays a pastor must preach or be present for worship, make sure this is also clearly stated in the annual contract.
 - Remember that many pastors volunteer their time and energy to other organizations and ministries (just like members of the Body do with the church). Take this into account in discussions of how many hours the pastor(s) "ought" to work.
 - A pastor's work schedule may vary radically from week to week. Along with sometimes unrealistic expectations about their availability, pastors may also be unfairly criticized for what appears to be limitless flexibility of schedule and concerns about no accountability for how they spend their time. It becomes tempting for elders to focus on identifying a certain number of hours that must be worked in

different areas whether or not this is useful. For instance, “15 hours spent in the office each week” may be quite unproductive and a misuse of time compared to greater needs. While it is appropriate to expect full-time work from those who are released full-time, a better focus is developing an open and trusting relationship in which the pastor and elders discuss the ministry priorities of the church. Flexibility and grace with the pastor’s schedule, coupled with a shared commitment to ministry priorities and outcomes, can be a way of relieving tension around “how much time” is being spent in ministry.

- Build a sabbatical plan into both your pastoral contract and budget.
 - Provide a sabbatical for your pastor(s) after seven years of service. (See the sabbatical resources on the web for examples of what this can look like.)
 - Include an annual contribution to a “sabbatical reserve account” in order to cover any additional ministry costs during the sabbatical.
- If your pastor is not a recorded minister in NWYM:
 - Request an annual minister’s license from the NWYM Board of Elders each year prior to Yearly Meeting sessions. (See the web resource list for the annual license form.)
 - Consider contacting the NWYM Committee on Recording to see about recommending your pastor for the recording process (See web resources for instructions and contact information.)

Promoting Membership

Being a member of a Friends church does not make one a more faithful Christian. What it can provide, however, is a greater sense of belonging to a local church. When well organized, a membership process can also serve as an avenue for evangelism, discipleship and equipping for ministry.

- Whether taught by the pastor(s) or another member of the church, hold at least one annual membership class covering the basics of Christianity, an overview of Friends history

and faith, and what it means to belong to your specific fellowship.

- Include opportunities to discuss individual class members' personal relationship with Christ, their own questions on faith, needs in their family, their sense of giftedness and their call to service. (See resources on the web for information about gifts discernment.)
- Encourage membership as a mutual covenant between the person and the Body. Discuss the two-way nature of accountability, fellowship, service, and stewardship.
- New members should demonstrate a clear commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, evidence an active and growing life of discipleship, sense a call to belong to the Body, and affirm the teachings of Friends as described in the NWYM *Faith and Practice*.
- Create a public way for new members to be recognized and welcomed into membership.

Overseeing Worship

Gathering for worship is part of the natural rhythm of life in the local church. We gather together for praise and worship. We gather to be edified, healed and renewed so that we might then scatter back out into the world to serve as salt and light. Regardless of the time or day we meet, something important happens when the fellowship is *re-membered* in the Presence of Christ. Elders share in the responsibility of overseeing meetings for worship, making sure they are regularly held in a way that honors Christ and builds up the Body:

- Make the regular meeting(s) for worship a matter of intentional prayer by all of the elders.
- Hold a regular evaluation of worship. Consider questions like the following:
 - Do people come to worship ready to participate? If not, how might they be encouraged?
 - Are there ways for people to actively join in worship or are we encouraging mere spectators?
 - How is Christ at work in our worship? Where do we see signs of God actually leading and teaching us?
 - Are there hindrances/barriers in our corporate worship?

- Do we have a shared understanding about the purpose of worship? How well this purpose is understood and shared will likely diminish frustration over worship.
 - Do we gather primarily for worship and praise?
 - Do we gather primarily for the equipping of the saints?
 - Do we gather primarily to attract and evangelize new people?
 - Do you intend for all to be true? If so, how do you do each well?
- Create a regular forum for feedback. Invite suggestions and recommendations from others in the church as part of the elders' ongoing oversight of worship.
- Be sure that time is given to open worship.
 - Is the silence and the opportunity to speak out of the silence adequately understood by all? (See online resources that are available.)
 - Are there individuals who seem to speak with authority who ought to be encouraged in their public ministry? If so, be sure to meet with these people, inviting them to prayerfully discern how God is using them through their spoken ministry. Consider identifying a mentor for them as they continue to learn how and when to minister.
 - Similarly, are there people who regularly abuse the silence? Every Meeting can expect to have some occasions when people speak out of turn or offer ministry that is not Spirit-led. Sometimes a church will have a member or attendee who regularly speaks inappropriately, dominates the time, or pushes a personal agenda. In this case, the elders may need to intervene.
 - Begin with an initial visit by one or two elders/pastor, offering encouragement and clear instruction on the purpose of open worship and how Friends discern whether to speak. Many times, a loving and honest first visit and time of prayer can redirect a person.

- Should the problem persist, invite the person to a regular meeting of the elders to discuss the matter all together. If possible, work together to discern a plan for addressing the issue.
- Schedule a pair of elders to serve at each meeting for worship. Have them pray for those who gather and for the ministry that is shared. Let them be available to pray with interested people at the rise of the meeting.

Church Discipline/Restoration

A difficult but necessary responsibility of the pastors and elders is the loving discipline of members who may be in sin or in broken relationships within the fellowship. This is a restorative ministry with the intent always focused on leading people to a deeper relationship with Christ and to complete reconciliation within the Body. “Discipline” is not punishment. It is the church at work helping one another live with integrity as committed followers of Jesus Christ.

In a healthy local church, all of the members share in the work, providing mutual support and accountability. Most of this happens through informal relationships, small study and ministry groups and in gatherings for worship. Occasionally, however, a person’s behavior may no longer exhibit an earnest commitment to Christian faith and Friends testimonies. They may seem to be moving away from an active faith in Christ. In such instances, it is right for the elders to meet with the individual and discuss their concern.

The difficulty facing elders and pastors is how to have the wisdom to know when and how to do this kind of ministry. How do we avoid legalism and oppressive religion? How do we go to speak to a person in a right spirit rather than in self-righteousness? And how do we approach them in a way that is restorative rather than repelling?

At the point that a concern is significant enough to come to the meeting of elders and pastors, a few queries may help:

- Is the concern we are discussing a matter of clear, biblical truth and a core testimony of Friends or is it really a matter of personal discernment or preference?

- Who is being hurt by this person's attitude/behavior? This question may help the group better discern the scope/breadth of the issue and how it might be approached.
- Has anyone addressed this concern with the person already—family, friends, others? If so, what was the result?

If a decision is made to approach the person, consider the following suggestions:

- Only do so when the elders agree this is the appropriate response and can be done out of a desire to love and edify. If the group is responding out of anger, fear or frustration, it is likely not the right time to intervene.
- Consider the guidelines offered in Matthew 18:
 - Who among the group should first go and speak to the brother/sister? Take into account matters like spiritual maturity, depth of relationship, ability to listen and communicate, gentleness, and call to do so. In addition, consider who might have the best chance of being heard. Maybe most important, see this visit as an opportunity to listen to the person in order to understand their situation, to clarify the elders' information, and to find out how the group can best encourage the person in the present.
 - If the initial visit is not helpful, a follow-up visit involving others may be required. Express in clear terms the elders' concern for the person. Identify the particular issue and call them to repentance. Be prepared to offer the kind of support and resources that may be required to help this person alter their behavior.
 - If the person persists in the problem behavior, it may be wise to relieve them of any leadership/ministry duties he/she may have at that time. Let the person know this is to free him/her to focus on their own relationship with Christ.
 - Finally, if the person continues to resist the counsel of the elders and the person is a member of the local church, the elders may consider, as a last resort, bringing the matter to the Monthly Meeting. (See Restoration Guidelines available on the website.)

- Please note that the public and formal discipline of a *non-member* exposes the church to significant liability.
- The local church membership process ought to include information about restoration guidelines. Most people, when they are passionate in their commitment to Christ and interested enough in a church to join it, will usually welcome this kind of accountability. When a person is not in the midst of trouble, it is easy to see this as a help should trouble arise and as an incentive to avoid it.

Historically, Friends have only used “disownment” as a method of last resort. Even then, however, the focus was on naming the particular concern or sin in the person’s life, rather than targeting the person. Repentance, Friends believe, is always possible and a person will be happily welcomed back into full participation in the life of the Meeting when they are back in harmony with the Truth.

Inevitably, people will ask: “What ‘right’ do you have to intervene in someone else’s life?” It is true that we are not and cannot be responsible *for one another*. That is, none of us can ultimately make sure others are holy, faithful or in relationship with Jesus. As brothers and sisters in Christ, however, we are responsible *to one another*. This means we are responsible to speak the truth to each other, to encourage our highest virtues and deepest commitments, and to go to the cross for each other when needed. Such responsibility includes a willingness to speak plainly and honestly when a person’s soul is in danger and/or they are doing harm to others. And though we should rightly tremble at the thought of intervening in someone else’s life, even more we should tremble at the thought of having not intervened when we could have.

As with general pastoral care, confidentiality in these types of situations is critical. As the elders remind one another of the need for confidentiality in difficult situations that require restoration and reconciliation, it may also be helpful to encourage this among the whole congregation. Unfortunately, during the times one of us stumbles, it becomes easy for other members of the Body to discuss this among themselves in ways that are not healing or helpful. Again,

encouraging appropriate and edifying conversations is a good ministry for elders to undertake. As with other areas, please feel free to contact the NWYM elders or NWYM staff for counsel and support, if needed.

A Few Additional Thoughts

Obviously not all of the responsibilities faced by elders are covered in this *Handbook*. Neither is this a complete list of guidelines or best practices. Far more than a lengthy guidebook, elders need a deep sensitivity to the Holy Spirit coupled with a great love for and faith in the church they are serving.

It is important to remember that among Friends, elders and pastors are not responsible for everything that happens in the life of the church. Final responsibility rests with the gathered Meeting seeking to discern the leading of Christ.

Therefore, elders are advised to limit the scope of their responsibilities and duties. This is important since others in the church are often tempted to rely on the elders to take on many other tasks. In some of our churches you will find elders combining their specific duties with administrative oversight of the whole church. Sometimes this includes decisions about buildings and grounds, taking responsibility for vision and long-range planning, and overseeing the work normally carried out by other committees.

The local church will be best served when the elders keep focused on their specific calling. Elders may initiate and will certainly be involved in visioning and long-range planning, but it need not rest on their shoulders. The Meeting can create a task force to oversee this important work. Depending on the size of the church, it may put together an Administrative Committee (made up of the clerks of committees, including the elders) to diversify the leadership duties and perspective within the Meeting. Even in a smaller church, an Administrative Committee named by the Meeting could do a great deal to free the elders' time. As with all committees and work groups, however, it is helpful to clearly identify the purpose, particular duties and responsibility/authority of a newly created Administrative Committee.

Sample Calendar of Events

To aid in planning and to ensure that routine responsibilities are consistently carried out, elders will be well served to create a calendar to guide them. A starter, sample calendar highlighting a few key duties appears below:

- **January**
 - Enter into discernment with pastoral staff whose calls may be concluding in the summer
- **February**
 - Encourage the nominating committee to be working on upcoming appointments
- **March**
 - Begin discussing which youth ought to attend Samuel School II and selecting Eli mentors
- **April**
 - Send members of your pastoral staff to the NWYM Pastors Conference
- **May**
 - Complete NWYM Elders' report
 - Begin discussing if the current elders' clerk or a new clerk should be prepared to serve into that role beginning July 1. (Consider inviting the Clerk of the Meeting to help facilitate this conversation if needed)
 - Recommend the names of any new members to the Monthly Meeting (this can be done any time throughout the year)
 - Plan travel and financial arrangements for Samuel School II. Send names of Samuel School students and Elis to the NWYM Youth Superintendent
- **June**
 - Request annual licenses for any unrecorded ministers on staff
 - Follow-up with youth who attended Samuel School II
 - Complete and submit annual report as requested by the NWYM office
 - If a new elders' clerk will take over in July, make sure there is adequate orientation

- **July**
 - Welcome and orient new members of your committee—including schedule of regular meetings, job descriptions, a copy of the *Elders' Handbook*
 - Encourage members to attend NWYM sessions
- **August**
 - Consider a planning/prayer retreat for the Fall and to welcome/integrate/train new elders
 - Begin discussing which youth ought to attend Samuel School I and selecting Eli mentors
- **September**
 - Send members of your pastoral staff to the NWYM Focus Conference
 - Begin working on the upcoming year's ministry plan and budget, including staff salaries
 - Plan travel and financial arrangements for Samuel School I. Send in names of the Samuel School students and Elis to the NWYM Youth Superintendent
- **October**
 - Consider some ways to recognize your pastor(s) during "Pastor Appreciation Month"
- **November**
 - Follow-up with youth who attended Samuel School I (in October)
 - Send Youthworkers to Youthworkers Training Conference
- **December**
 - Spend time reviewing the year's ministry plan

Appendix

Resources are available either online at www.nwfriends.org/resources or by contacting the NWYM office. New resources and updated versions will continue to be added over time. Please continue to check the website. If you have other resources to suggest, please contact the NWYM superintendent or communication coordinator.

- Elders' job description
- Guidelines for calling a pastor
- Salary guidelines
- Sample pastoral job descriptions and guidelines for writing one
- Evaluation resources
- Natural Church Development information
- Resources for being “Under the Care of the NWYM Board of Elders”
- Vision and long-range planning resources
- Mediation and conflict resolution services/resources
- Sabbatical guidelines and resources
- Guidelines for Recording
- Discernment resources—how do we do it?
- Clerking resources
- NWYM *Faith and Practice*
- Nominating Committee resources
 - o For the local church
 - o The NWYM Nominating Committee process
- Gifts discernment resources
- Resource list of individuals/consultants available through NWYM
- NWYM Pastoral Restoration Guidelines
- Legal issues—reporting requirements for each state
- Setting up a Care Committee
- Open worship teaching and training
- Annual Minister's License request
- Annual Pastor's Agreement/Contract
- Sample Elders' Covenant

- Child Abuse Protection Policy
- Background check resources
- Case studies for Elders

Suggestions for further reading (contact the NWYM office for information about where to obtain these resources)

- *The Paradox of the Quaker Ministry* by Elton Trueblood (an insightful article on the uniqueness of a Friendly approach to pastoral ministry)
- *The Early Quaker Vision of the Church: A Study in Christian Renewal* by Lewis Benson (a historical look at a Friends model of church)
- *Essays on the Quaker Vision of Gospel Order* by Lloyd Lee Wilson (see the chapter entitled “Community Stewardship of our Spiritual Gifts” in particular for help with developing an effective nominating committee and process)
- *Size Transitions in Congregations*, edited by Beth Ann Gaede (an excellent resource to help leaders recognize some of the unique issues that come with being a particular size of church)
- *Encounter with Silence* by John Punshon (a useful book describing the practice and benefit of silence in worship)
- NWYM Elders’ Handbook I (An earlier NWYM Elders’ Handbook from the 1990’s.)
- *Why Friends are Friends* by Jack Willcuts (A quick overview of Friends by a former NWYM superintendent)
- *Meet the Friends* by Paul Anderson (A very helpful pamphlet highlighting some of the main Friends testimonies)
- *Upside Down: The Paradox of Servant Leadership* by Stacey Rinehart (Looks at a non-hierarchical model of leadership based on Jesus’ life)
- *Evaluating Ministry: Principles and Processes for Clergy and Congregations* (Booklet offering practical ways for evaluating pastoral service)
- *Transforming Church Boards into Communities of Spiritual Leaders* by Charles Olsen (helpful guidance for making committee work a matter of worship)
- *Practicing Discernment Together: Finding God’s Way Forward in Decision Making* by Lon Fendall, Jan Wood and Bruce Bishop (a practical resource aimed at helping us be discerning communities of

faith)

- *Systems-Sensitive Leadership* by Michael Armour and Don Browning (a creative approach to looking at how diverse groups can function effectively)
- *Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for the Transformational Journey* by Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem and James Furr (a comprehensive look at long-term and deep changes within the church organization)
- *Discerning Your Congregation's Future: A Strategic and Spiritual Approach* by Roy Oswald and Robert Friedrich (a practical approach to congregational change)
- *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue* by Edwin Friedman (a classic text on a family/system's theory approach to congregational life)
- *Pastoral Search* by Jon Vonhoff (a short overview on developing a pastoral search process)
- *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* (a wonderful perspective on the role of the church in the world and the implications for pastoral/elder leadership)

Index

Introduction.....	3
Why an Elders' Handbook?	4
The Biblical Basis for Elders	5
A Bit of History—The Rise of Elders Among Friends.....	6
Friends and Leadership.....	8
Elders and Pastors: Learning to Work Together.....	10
Responsibilities for Pastors.....	11
Responsibilities for Elders	13
Reality Check:	
But how do we <i>actually</i> work well together?	16
Practical Suggestions:	
Ideas for carrying out the work of elders	20
Pastoral Care	20
Oversight and Support of Pastor(s).....	23
Promoting Membership	27
Overseeing Worship	28
Church Discipline/Restoration.....	30
A Few Additional Thoughts.....	33
Sample Calendar of Events.....	34
Appendix.....	36
Suggestions for Further Reading	37

