


# Seven Shalls of the Book of Order

A SHALL A DAY KEEPS THE PRESBYTERY AWAY

# Shall #1: The Session provides that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard

- ▶ “This responsibility shall include providing a place where the congregation may regularly gather for worship, education, and spiritual nurture; providing for regular preaching of the Word by a minister of the Word and Sacrament or other person prepared and approved for the work; planning and leading regular efforts to reach into the community and the world with the message of salvation and the invitation to enter into committed discipleship; planning and leading ministries of social healing and reconciliation in the community in accordance with the prophetic witness of Jesus Christ; and initiating and responding to ecumenical efforts that bear witness to the love and grace of God.” G-3.0201(a)



Shall #2: The Session has responsibility to provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received.

- ▶ “This responsibility shall include authorizing the celebration of the Lord’s Supper at least quarterly and the administration of Baptism as appropriate, in accordance with the principles of the Directory for Worship; and exercising pastoral care among the congregation in order that the Sacraments may be received as a means of grace, and the congregation may live in the unity represented in the Sacraments.” G-3.0201 (b)

# Shall #3: The Session has responsibility to nurture the covenant community of disciples of Christ.

- ▶ “This responsibility shall include receiving and dismissing members; reviewing the roll of active members at least annually and counseling with those who have neglected the responsibilities of membership; providing programs of nurture, education, and fellowship; training, examining, ordaining, and installing those elected by the congregation as ruling elders and deacons; encouraging the graces of generosity and faithful stewardship of personal and financial resources; managing the physical property of the congregation for the furtherance of its mission; directing the ministry of deacons, trustees, and all organizations of the congregation; employing the administrative staff of the congregation; leading the congregation in participating in the mission of the whole church; warning and bearing witness against error in doctrine and immorality in practice within the congregation and community; and serving in judicial matters in accordance with the Rules of Discipline.” G-3.0201 (c)

# Shall #4: Business to be transacted at meetings of the congregation shall be limited to matters related to... G-1.0503

- ▶ Business to be transacted at meetings of the congregation shall be limited to matters related to the following:
- ▶ a. electing ruling elders, deacons, and trustees;
- ▶ b. calling a pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor;
- ▶ c. changing existing pastoral relationships, by such means as reviewing the adequacy of and approving changes to the terms of call of the pastor or pastors, or requesting, consenting to, or declining to consent to dissolution;
- ▶ d. buying, mortgaging, or selling real property;
- ▶ e. requesting the presbytery to grant an exemption as permitted in this Constitution (G-2.0404).
- ▶ f. approving a plan for the creation of a joint congregational witness, or amending or dissolving the joint congregational witness (G-5.05).
- ▶ Whenever permitted by civil law, both ecclesiastical and corporate business may be conducted at the same congregational meeting.

# Shall #5: There shall be rolls... (not to eat!)

- ▶ a. Membership Roll
- ▶ “There shall be rolls of baptized, active, and affiliate members in accordance with G-1.0401, G-1.0402 and G-1.0403. The session shall delete names from the roll of the congregation upon the member’s death, admission to membership in another congregation or presbytery, or renunciation of jurisdiction. The session may delete names from the roll of the congregation when a member so requests, or has moved or otherwise ceased to participate actively in the work and worship of the congregation for a period of two years. The session shall seek to restore members to active participation and shall provide written notice before deleting names due to member inactivity.” G-3.0204(a)

# Shall #6: The Session shall prepare and adopt a budget and elect a Treasurer

- ▶ In addition to those responsibilities described in G-3.0113, the session shall prepare and adopt a budget and determine the distribution of the congregation's benevolences. It shall authorize offerings for Christian purposes and shall account for the proceeds of such offerings and their disbursement. It shall provide full information to the congregation concerning its decisions in such matters.
- ▶ The session shall elect a treasurer for such term as the session shall decide and shall supervise his or her work or delegate that supervision to a board of deacons or trustees...Sessions may provide by rule for standard financial practices of the congregation, but shall in no case fail to observe the following procedures:
  - ▶ a. All offerings shall be counted and recorded by at least two duly appointed persons, or by one fidelity bonded person;
  - ▶ b. Financial books and records adequate to reflect all financial transactions shall be kept and shall be open to inspection by authorized church officers at reasonable times;
  - ▶ c. Periodic, and in no case less than annual, reports of all financial activities shall be made to the session or entity vested with financial oversight.

# Shall #7: The Presbytery shall...

- ▶ In light of this charge, the presbytery has responsibility and power to:
- ▶ a. provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard. This responsibility shall include organizing, receiving, merging, dismissing, and dissolving congregations....guiding the preparation of those preparing to become ministers of the Word and Sacrament; establishing and maintaining those ecumenical relationships that will enlarge the life and mission of the church in its district; providing encouragement, guidance, and resources to congregations...
- ▶ b. provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received. This responsibility shall include authorizing the celebration of the Lord's Supper at its meetings...authorizing and training specific ruling elders to administer or preside at the Lord's Supper when it deems it necessary...and exercising pastoral care for the congregations and members of presbytery ...
- ▶ c. nurture the covenant community of disciples of Christ. This responsibility shall include ordaining, receiving, dismissing, installing, removing, and disciplining its members who are ministers of the Word and Sacrament ; commissioning ruling elders to limited pastoral service; promoting the peace and harmony of congregations and inquiring into the sources of congregational discord; supporting congregations...taking jurisdiction over the members of dissolved congregations and granting transfers of their membership to other congregations...



# Questions?

“The mutual interconnection of the church through its councils is a sign of the unity of the church. Congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), while possessing all the gifts necessary to be the church, are nonetheless not sufficient in themselves to be the church. Rather, they are called to share with others both within and beyond the congregation the task of bearing witness to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the world. This call to bear witness is the work of all believers. The particular responsibility of the councils of the church is to nurture, guide, and govern those who witness as part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), to the end that such witness strengthens the whole church and gives glory to God.” G-3.0101