

**The church is a community of people sharing a common purpose and fellowship. We are continually growing in faith and in the knowledge of Jesus, the Son of God.**

We are called to serve and witness in our local churches and to the communities we live in.

When we do this we are sharing Christ's love and the good news of salvation.

God calls every church member into ministry, to be servants of God sharing in and supporting the activities of the church. God promises to supply resources for ministry. These resources include scripture, spiritual power and gifts from the Holy Spirit. An elder has an opportunity to grow God's church and strengthen the church community.

## Visitation and Worship

### Visitation

1. Ask another person to accompany you to visit members of the church on a regular basis.
2. Call ahead to arrange a time to meet.
3. Ask them to tell you about themselves and share their testimony, read from the Bible and pray with them.

Consider the role of following up inactive members. Many people stop coming to church because they have been hurt. Anger and resentment may be expressed. The best thing to do is listen, show sincerity and ask for forgiveness on behalf of the whole church. Through encouragement, friendship and genuine interest a hurt member can strengthen their relationship with Jesus and return to church.

Visiting those who are not members can provide opportunity for Bible study if the elder has the gift of teaching.

### Worship

1. Read books and source information.
2. Share ideas about what you have learned and suggest other creative ways to praise God.
3. Encourage members who are not involved in the program.

For resources and information on training, log into the members site at [sspm.adventistconnect.org](https://sspm.adventistconnect.org) or contact your local conference personal ministries director.



## THE MINISTRY OF THE Elder

Have you been asked to serve your local church as an elder? Or perhaps you serve on a church nominating committee and wonder what an elder is expected to do. This guide has been designed to help you understand the role of the elder within your local church.

[sspm.adventistconnect.org](https://sspm.adventistconnect.org)

## The Role of the Elder

In many ways the Elder is an extension of the Pastor, supporting the vision for the church and ready to communicate it.

The elder is responsible for:

- maintaining a strong working relationship with the Pastor and open to his/her council
- nurturing assigned groups in the church community such as an evangelism council, worship committee, Sabbath School Council or Youth Ministry committee
- encouraging and nurturing members through relationship building, prayer, listening and sharing
- assisting with communion and baptismal services, business meetings and transferring members
- planning and coordinating for events or services
- visiting members at home and making contact with others seeking a relationship with Jesus
- overseeing all areas of the church particularly in the absence of the Pastor

The Elder must ensure enough time is allocated to personal spiritual growth, family and personal recreation in order to maintain a balanced lifestyle. It is important that the Elder does not become so busy that their own spiritual life suffers.

## Becoming an Elder

An Elder is elected by the church nominating committee on a yearly basis.

### Responsible to

Cooperate with the pastor and the Church Board.

### Time Commitment

- A meeting with the Pastor once per month or weekly (depending on the church) to focus on the spiritual and personal growth of the congregation.
- 2-4 hours of involvement in outreach ministries, visitation and administration of the church each week.



### Term of Office

One year, and depending upon the church's structure, possibly longer. It is helpful if some Elders are reappointed to ensure that long term goals are reached.



## Skills and Spiritual Gifts

God has gifted each of us in different ways. The following gifts are valuable when considering the choice of members for the role of elder.

- **Exhortation:** The special ability to encourage and comfort others. It involves helping and healing, particularly for those who are bereaved, lonely or discouraged.
- **Pastor/shepherd:** To be able to carry a personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers, overseeing, protecting and guiding. (This gift is not limited to church pastors)
- **Administration:** The service of directing or guiding the church (and its activities) toward a destination. Progress is best achieved with love and selflessness.
- **Leadership:** The ability to set goals in accordance with God's purpose for the church. This involves communicating goals in a way that encourages and motivates others to work together to achieve them. Leadership requires diligence and faith.
- **Extraordinary faith:** This gift provides the confidence to discern God's will in particular situations on behalf of the church.

It is helpful to consult with your pastor to identify which gifts you can use to assist the church.