

*Elk Point*  
Baptist Church  
gateway to life



**ELDER'S**

**PERSPECTIVES**

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As of February 20

## THE ELDERS PERSPECTIVE ON SHEPHERDING CHILDREN & STUDENTS

1. We believe that in accordance with Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 4:9-10, 11:18-19, Psalm 78:1-4, Joel 1:3, Ephesians 6:4, 2Timothy 4:14-15 and many of the Proverbs) the parents, with the emphasis upon Fathers, are to be the primary transmitters of Biblical Truth, Loving Instruction and Disciplinary Care for their children and young adults(students). Within the text of Psalm 78, we find the goal of this ministry to be:

- One, that they put their confidence in God;
- Two, that they do not forget His works; and
- Three, that they keep His commandments (v7).

2. We believe that the household offers a natural outreach into the community in evangelistic and mercy ministries.

3. We believe that within the ministries of Elk Point Baptist Church the Biblical model for corporate worship includes all generations of life; therefore, one would expect to see ministries that are age-integrated with families kept together. There may be some ministries whereby it is prudent to have age or gender appropriate programs. Children and Student ministries within the Church should provide opportunities to serve and mutual re-enforcement of what is taught at home and in the Church. This means practically that parents will be more involved in the leadership of these ministries; and that parents would be functionally leading the mission and service opportunities for their children and students.

4. The role of Church leadership is to consider the health of families; equip and encourage fathers to be prophets and priests in their homes; and provide for parents the resources, advice and encouragement to parent their children to God's glory. The main areas of preparation that the elders desire to see in this ministry are that every child and student has the opportunity to:

- a. Receive Christ as Lord, Savior and Treasure
- b. To Know and be able to Make a defense of the Christian Faith in the Workforce and Post-Secondary Education
- c. To be Ready for Singleness, Courtship, Marriage and Family
- d. To Serve faithfully and Devote themselves to their Local Church
- e. To have a solid Biblical Worldview
- f. And to Glorify and Honor God in all they do

## THE ELDERS PERSPECTIVE ON SHEPHERDING MUSIC MINISTRY

**1.** We shepherd the ministry of music in our church by clearly communicating the Scriptural role and use of music. Succinctly music serves in worship as praise, prayer, and proclamation (Psalm 96; Psalm 51; 1 Chronicles 25:1). Music often encompasses various genres such as psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16–17). The content of musical lyrics must not conflict with the teachings of Scripture, and the Scriptures themselves often form a recommended text or equivalent for the lyrics (e.g., Psalm. 119:54). The extensive use of musical instruments is reflected in the Scriptures (Psalm 98:4-6, 81:1-4, 33:1-3, 147:7, 150). The goal is to focus our minds on God through the music for He is primarily the audience. (Psalm 22:22; Psalm 100). Music should also edify, admonish, and teach the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 14:26, Colossians 3:16).

**2.** The music ministry relates to the congregation by providing opportunities to use one's gifts and talents for the glory of God. Musicians are servants of the congregation; and music for worship is to be for the edification of the Church, not our entertainment (1 Chronicles 16:4-6). Singing praise to God is not optional. It is commanded to all (Psalm 66:1-2, 1Chronicles 16:23-35).

**3.** Along with a firm conviction of the theology of music as noted in #1, Psalm 33:1–3 communicates the standard that we are to compose, sing, and play skilfully to the Lord. This demands that those leading in worship music should be skilful, trained vocalists and instrumentalist. It follows then that the music must be carefully chosen, adequately rehearsed, and presented by musicians who have prepared themselves before God (1 Chronicles 25:6–7). Our purpose is not to imply that music is to be a 'professional' presentation. Our highest objective is to lead the congregation in worship of God, to His glory and with excellence. A good music ministry then is one that is constantly identifying and developing those members who are adequately gifted and skilled so that:

- a) Our church as a whole offers God its best; and
- b) No one with the necessary skills, talents, godliness and desire to serve is left out.

Our praises are sacrifices (Hebrews 13:15) and as such should be likened to the first fruits—the very best we have. Poor musicianship, no matter how pure in motive, is a huge distraction in worship.

Therefore, all musicians who participate in the music ministry should be familiar with and submit to the theology, practice and standards of music as taught by the elders. All musicians should become familiar with the elements of the music ministry and be encouraged to participate publicly if the worship leadership deems they are ready. Musicians need to consider their ministry one of preparation spiritually and technically and attend to these duties with great diligence. Any outside group must be carefully screened (regarding character, conformity to Biblical instruction, appearance, presentation, lyrics, etc.) prior to engaging their services. Musicians should ask themselves the following questions:

- a) Is my heart right with God, making my sacrifice acceptable to Him?
- b) Am I capable as a musician of offering this sacrifice of praise in a skilful way that will honour God and edify the saints?

**4.** The leadership of the music ministry is required to teach or encourage the vocalists and instrumentalists both in doctrine, skill and in the art of leading the congregation to worship. As a part of the ministry of equipping they may bring in resource persons to maximize us where necessary (Ephesians 4:11-12). Through effective discipleship of the musicians and the intentional use of these gifts to build up the Church, musicians play an important role in maturing the congregation in Christ.

## THE ELDERS PERSPECTIVE ON SHEPHERDING THE MISSIONS MINISTRY

1. Two essential church ministries are not considered inherent to this limited discussion, but need to be mentioned. First of all, the church's diaconate is responsible to care for and assistance to the physical needs of people locally and around the world where we have opportunity and resources. This includes such scenarios of disaster relief, etc. The other area of overlap that is not included in this discussion is personal or church-wide evangelistic efforts and strategy that need to occur on an ongoing basis. This places the discussion of 'missions' as used in this document as specifically any evangelistic endeavor outside our local congregation to fulfill the Great Commission by proclaiming the gospel of Christ, making disciples and gathering these disciples into local congregations with qualified leadership; whether this happens at home or overseas.

The specific Mission's Ministry is a group of people that are asked, through the encouragement and support of the Elders, to assist the congregation by providing resources, encouragement and information regarding mission societies and opportunities; and to communicate to missionaries supported by the church. The goal of this ministry is to encourage the congregation to pray, support, send and go themselves. The elders will shepherd this Mission's Ministry by providing guidelines, strategies and priorities for them in conduct their service.

Missions operate because of the clear argument of Romans 10:14. The underlying motivation for our ministry is the threatening reality that all who reject Christ and all who have never even heard of Christ will suffer endless punishment at the hand of Christ. The driving ambition of Elk Point Baptist Church is to provide the support and even the personnel to give every person the opportunity to hear and respond to the Gospel.

2. The Mission's ministry is unique in that every member and Christian adherent is also to be viewed as part of the ministry. Missions is to be understood as direct obedience to Christ's command recorded in Matthew 28:19-20. This plan is fully orbbed, that is, it includes the preaching of the Gospel, the discipleship of converts and the establishment of pastoral leadership. This comprehensive plan is clearly illustrated for us in Acts 14:21-23. The visionary goal of Elk Point Baptist Church is the envisioning of Revelation 5:9 (NASB95), "And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation." This evangelism, edification and church planting is all accomplished while relating to the needs of the total person (spiritual, physical, emotional and social).

3. People who have a sincere interest in missionary endeavors will be asked to serve in this ministry. We would expect to see them encouraging prayer from the congregation for missions in general and for specific missions or missionary needs around the world. They would also assist the elders in providing relevant missions teaching for our entire congregation. The Mission's ministry is to facilitate the provision of practical assistance to missionaries while they are on their field or home. They would prepare a mission's budget and oversee the allocation of the funds throughout the year; and serve as a liaison between the church, our missionaries and mission agencies.

4. The most important missionary in the Bible is Jesus Christ. "Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession" (Hebrews 3:1, NASB95). Jesus is "The Apostle" because He was sent by God the Father to be God's Word and the Revealer of

Who God is (confirm: John 3:17; 5:36; 8:42; 13:3; and 17:4). The words of Jesus to His apostles were "as the Father has sent Me, I also send you"<sup>1</sup>. To be a missionary or send and support a ministry, is uniquely akin the workings of the Holy Trinity. To engage in missions, linking arms with other evangelical ministries in global evangelistic efforts and the establishment of locally governed assemblies is the ultimate progress toward "the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>*New American Standard Bible : 1995 update*. 1995 (Jn 20:21). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

<sup>2</sup>*New American Standard Bible : 1995 update*. 1995 (Eph 4:13). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

## THE ELDERS PERSPECTIVE ON SHEPHERDING LEADERS

1. The Elders are to ensure that appropriate leadership is appointed for every area of need in the church. The examples of Exodus 18; Christ choosing the Twelve and the progression of the Church from Apostolic authority to elders and deacons supports the premise that leadership be the essential ingredient in all ministries and initiatives. This includes deacons, elders, Sunday school administration etc. (Acts 6:1-7, 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5). Leadership is the delegation of responsibility and authority to reliable men and women (Exodus 18; 2 Timothy 2:2) so that the ministry load is shared and the people of God are cared for (Exodus 18:18). The primary work of all leaders and all levels is to willingly (1 Peter 5:2) care for, preside over and superintend the ministry they are responsible for (Romans 12:8, προϊστημι, pronounced: *pro-is'-tay-mee*).<sup>3</sup> Leaders must lead the body in worship, teaching, counselling and encouraging.

Leaders are to be spiritually qualified, accurately taught, and humbly discharging their responsibilities practically in the Church. This does not mean that leaders are not in process or are perfect by any means, but instead there is a flavour about their lives that characterize *growth* in holiness (2 Peter 3:11), a *desire* to rightly handle the Word of Truth (2 Timothy 2:15), and an *acknowledgement* of the need for humility as they seek to practically serve those who are under their authority (2 Corinthians 1:24 & 1 Peter 5:3).

2. Leaders do not serve as an elite group within the Church, but instead as *fellow-servants* and *fellow-workers* with the rest of the Church. All leaders in the church are part of that body of believers and are accountable to God and their church family for the responsibilities that have been given to them. Therefore, leadership is exercised on the basis of brotherly appeal or if warranted and lawful, on the basis of authority, for the purposes of edification and restoration. The purview of authority for leadership resides ultimately in the Scriptures; and secondarily in those areas consented to by the Membership. This means that though we all have different gifts in the body, and some of those gifts even imply levels of authority, leaders should not see themselves as a select group within the group, but instead as fellow brothers and sisters with differing gifts to serve Christ and the Church. (Titus 2:15, Hebrews 13:7,17)

Biblical leadership is not dominance and control (Mark 10:42ff) but service and nurture (1 Thessalonians 2:7-8,11). Thus the development of leaders; the support and building-up of leaders must be on the same basis of relationship, care and nurture. The flavour of our servant leadership and the leadership of all leaders and how we relate to those within the Church ought to be that of genuine love, and care for those who are under our leadership within the Church. (Philippians 1:3-11, 1 Corinthians 16:14, 24, Gal 5:13, Acts 20:28, 2 Thessalonians 2:7)

It is true that those in leadership are to be honoured and respected, but not because they are an elite class of Christians, but instead because those in leadership, primarily elders, have the unique charge of caring for, overseeing, and watching over those who are under their charge.

3. Because the prerequisite of church leadership is in the manner which the home is managed (1 Timothy 3:4,11 and 12), then the shepherding of parents will produce the potentiality of leadership. Leaders are equipped through the Biblical means of "discipleship" (Matthew 28:19-20). Where there

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<sup>3</sup>Ephesians Four Group. (.). *Greek Dictionary* (electronic ed.) (2). :: ,.



are leaders there ought to be a built-in mentoring role, preparing and equipping others to one day assume responsibility for that office or calling. Thirdly, leaders are developed through example. (John 13:15, 1 Corinthians 11:1, 1 Peter 5:1-3). Fourthly, we ought to have in place formal leadership training and development where certain essential levels of instruction are accomplished such as:

- a. Training in Personal Holiness
- b. Training in Relevant Bible Study focused on Leadership

Therefore, there must be a climate for leadership development in the life of the church. This means that:

- a. Family life and parenting is an important emphasis in all that we do;
- b. All leaders, at all levels are encouraged to be consistently mentoring at least one other person to assume responsibility when and if needed;
- c. High standards of leadership are expected at all levels because leadership is example. We need to encourage our leaders to continue in their personal study of the scriptures so that they may lead the church with the wisdom that comes from God's Word;
- d. No program or ministry is conducted unless a leader is first called and appointed; and
- e. Regular, formal teaching of leadership principles and practices is available.

Along with providing opportunity for the development of leaders, we must be careful not to place someone in a position of leadership before they are spiritually and developmentally ready. This can cause great harm to both the person and the congregation. This also implies that although a person may be qualified for leadership based upon spiritual integrity; it is wise to ensure they also have the right complement of skills and experience before appointing them to office. Also, we note that when choosing men to care for the widows in Acts 6, the Apostles sought men that had a good reputation; and were wise, full of the Spirit (Acts 6:3). All of this is to say that potential leaders should start with smaller levels of responsibility (Luke 19:17); and all leaders ought to be tested (e.g., 1 Timothy 3:10) and trained before given full responsibility.

In 1 Corinthians 1:28, one of the leadership offices is called "governments" (KJV) or "administrations" (NASB). This word in the Greek: κυβέρνησις [koo-ber-nay-sis] means "to steer." It is also used in Acts 27:11 of the ship's pilot. The role that is being described here suggests that ultimately the leader is the responsible decision-maker. This role is most critical in matters of setting the course, encountering problems and making changes.

4. As the Church witnesses leaders who are *growing* in holiness, *desiring* to handle the Word of Truth accurately in unity and *acknowledging* the need for humility as they serve this will set an example for those we lead and by the power of the Spirit become contagious (1 Timothy 4:12).

Because one leader can only do so much (e.g. Exodus 18), it must be assumed that more leaders can do more. If the task of leadership is to the "equipping of the saints for the work of service,"<sup>4</sup> the principle must be that more leaders equip more people, therefore, more effective ministry is being conducted to the edification of the Church and the glory of Christ. Where vision, direction and oversight is given to a ministry AND the saints are doing the ministry, the Body is functioning as it should in health and maturity

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<sup>4</sup>New American Standard Bible : 1995 update. 1995 (Eph 4:12). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

## THE ELDERS PERSPECTIVE ON SHEPHERDING SENIORS

1. We are to shepherd and equip the seniors in our church and to show them respect, for this respect honors God. ("You shall stand up before the gray head and honor the face of an old man, and you shall fear your God: I am the Lord" (Leviticus 19:32)). If the seniors come to us as new believers we are to teach and lead and guide them in the Scriptures. Senior people need encouragement and brotherly love as do all our people. Seniors have special needs and we the church should meet their needs if we can.

Elders ought to have the tact of shepherding seniors as they would care for their own fathers and mothers (1 Timothy 5:1-2). Seniors must be taught that aging is normal; and that to live long is a blessing from God (Proverbs 16:31). Seniors ought to be encouraged that this phase of life is yet to be productive and fruit-bearing ("The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green" (Psalm 92:12-14)). Seniors ought to be encouraged to plan for and consider their death; and yet they ought to see their lives as vibrant and in a constant renewal (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

2. Children (even adult children) ought to be encouraged to relate to their older parents with respect seeking council from them ("Listen to your father who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old" (Proverbs 23:22; confirm Deuteronomy 32:7)). One of the fears of those aging is to be forsaken (Psalm 71:9,18), therefore we are called to care for the seniors. The first level of responsibility in care toward seniors ought to come from their respective families, if that is available (1 Timothy 5:8; confirm 5:16).

3. On a practical level we should expect to see seniors teaching, helping, and serving in the local church as part of an integrated congregation. We ought to see our youth and adults giving honor and specific care to seniors in practical ways. The senior people in our church may be the grandparent's and fathers and mothers of our church family. We will have seniors who have taught Sunday School, ministered to children, worked at camps held offices in our church and may presently be ministering to our people. They may be the backbone of our church. They should be encouraged to use their gifts and minister to the church body if they are mature believers. Seniors have specific needs that may be different than some age or gender groups that can be means of ministry to them, such as, transportation needs, hearing and vision needs, etc. If family members are not able or available, the church ought to seek to facilitate care and responsibility to our seniors.

4. The Bible anticipates that seniors continue to learn and exhibit godly characteristics (Philippians 3:12-13; Titus 2:2-3). Age alone does not ignore that seniors need to continue to grow, learn and contribute to the building up of the Body of Christ and seek to become mature in Christ-likeness. Assuming age and Christian maturity are proportionately developing; seniors ought to be gracious and wise disciple-makers within the Body of Christ – encouraging and preparing the subsequent generation.

The following practical areas of ministry to seniors can be:

1. Encourage seniors to remain active in ministry within the church and to individuals.
2. Possibly have someone organize "every day help ministry" geared toward helping those who need help with some everyday tasks from time to time, mainly geared toward those who don't have family to help them.

3. Encourage Seniors to be available to younger members of the Church to fellowship and encourage each other.
4. Remember the Seniors, as we should all members of the Church when ministering in areas of music and worship so as to include styles that they enjoy and moves them to enter into worship.

## THE ELDERS PERSPECTIVE ON SHEPHERDING MEN

1. Unlike the direct instruction in Titus 2 given to women, the discipleship of men, in the Bible, is not treated specifically. We believe that men, like women, are to be granted the same teaching, encouragement and recognition as all adults in the Church; and like women, men ought to worship, interact, teach, and study the Word and fellowship integrated with others.

2. At the same time, we are called to recognize, encourage and equip men in their unique calling as people who are masculine and are most-often called to leadership at various levels. Therefore, we are called to shepherd men to serve as godly men in the church and the workplace; to be leaders in their homes, to love their wives and raise children according to the pattern set forth in the Scriptures. We need to instruct men that they need one another and that our fellowship is important. One key example is the example of Christ and the Twelve disciples. Essentially Christ's methodology of discipleship was leadership by example. He called His men to follow Him. Paul followed the example of Jesus as he instructed believers to follow him; 1 Corinthians 11:1 says, "Imitate *me*, just as I also imitate *Christ*." Christ's discipleship model was based upon relationship and instruction.

3. What does this look like? The primary "look" that we ought to see in Elk Point Baptist Church is *leadership by example* – men, i.e., being at the front of the line to serve. How we seek to accomplish this is through: Small groups; personal and individual mentoring; Men's Retreats; and Eldership and Deaconship training. Also, the Gospel is taught from the pulpit with the view of applying its truths to the marriage, family, workplace and service in the Church.

4. Men are the head of the family and called to be leaders in the church. The family then is not only the core of the Church, but it becomes the training and testing ground for men in leadership. Therefore, a great emphasis is placed upon the development of men in the roles of husbands and fathers.

## THE ELDERS PERSPECTIVE ON SHEPHERDING WOMEN

1. We believe that women are to be granted the same teaching, encouragement and recognition as all adults in the Church; and they are to be recognized for their unique calling and femininity. In general, women ought to worship, interact, teach, and study the Word and fellowship integrated with others.
2. The key text is Titus 2:3-5. This passage teaches that it ought to be the responsibility of the elders to encourage the older or more spiritually mature women of the church to teach and train the younger or less spiritually mature women to be godly wives, mothers and anything else that would lead them to becoming Christ-like women in the church. This is accomplished by recognizing those who truly are spiritually mature and then empowering them and encouraging them to instruct and help the younger care for their homes; serve others; and live godly lives, as examples of Christian wives and mothers.
3. Therefore, shepherding women means that we provide opportunity for ministry, where we can; encourage nurturing strong families, emphasize the women's importance in instructing their children, ensure women have support available between them and try to help those with extra needs and cares such as those without believing husbands.

## THE ELDERS PERSPECTIVE ON SHEPHERDING SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY MINISTRIES

**1.** By God's grace we shepherd the ministry of small groups in our church by clearly communicating the Scriptural purpose of these ministries. As exemplified in the early church (see Acts 2:42-47), whenever believers met, the purpose was to devote themselves to teaching and fellowship. We also note that prayer and care for one another was uppermost. Such meetings did not replace the gathered Church on the Lord's Day but fostered it. The Holy Spirit brought such a spiritual dynamic that it pleased the Lord to bring salvation to many. We also believe that such groups within our Church provide an excellent framework for pastoral care. Hebrews 3:12-13 convey a need for such gatherings to provide exhortation, accountability and growth in holiness (see also Hebrews 10:25).

**2.** We the Elders, consider the expressions of gifts and calling, within the context of the small groups to be essential to our Church. The Small Group Ministry relates to the congregation by providing opportunities to use one's gifts and talents for the glory of God. Group leaders become servants to their participants. For some this will find expression in the gift of teaching and leadership. For others the ability to facilitate the discussion around another's teaching and encourage the practical application. Intercession for the group and for others will make others recipients of the Spirit's work. Life in the Body of Christ can be expressed in the Group looking for ways to both love one another, serve one another, teaching one another etc. and celebrate the marker events of members of the group, such as births, deaths, anniversaries, etc.

**3.** A small group may start from many sources, such as, envisioned and implemented by the Elders or by an individual(s) with a vision and plan that is supported by the Elders.<sup>5</sup> Small groups can serve a purpose for a set period of time, or find longevity within the life of the Church. All small groups that exist under the banner of Elk Point Baptist Church should find their encouragement and support from the Elders (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; Acts 20:28-30; Hebrews 13:17)<sup>1</sup>.

The Elders recommend that a small group Bible Study, study the Bible! Expository, inductive study and application of the Scriptures is God's means of sanctification and equipping. Topical studies can be effective if it is deemed that such a curriculum rightly divides the Word of Truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). The use of any curriculum should find its commendation by the Elders before it is implemented.

**4.** Facilitating or leading a small group ministry requires Christians to hone their gifts in doctrine, administration and in the art of leading participants toward Christlikeness and further ministry. With the view of discipleship and development of leadership gifts, the Elders encourage that there be an intentional and routine rotation of leaders, as selected by the group, and/or Elders. Through effective discipleship within these groups and the intentional use of such gifts to build up the Church, small group leaders and participants play an important role in maturing the congregation in Christ.

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<sup>5</sup> This is in accordance with Elk Point Baptist Church By-Laws, Item I.32.1. "Any ministry that is carried out in conjunction with, or in the name of Elk Point Baptist Church shall be approved by the Elders Council."

## THE ELDERS PERSPECTIVE ON THE BAPTISM OF CHILDREN

**From the Elder's Council of January 15, 2018, the following was affirmed:**

The requirements of Believer's baptism are the same for children as adults. A child should have a rudimentary understanding of the grace of God; and show evidence of repentance.

They should have an awareness of sin and the forgiveness offered by Jesus. We should see a desire to live a life without sin. Much of their Christian character should be affirmed by their parents. There is not a set age, but we noted that they can be too young.

We should discern if their desire to be baptized is to simply please their parents. The parents are key to this and their reaction to the interview is an important facet. One question to consider is, "What do you expect to be accomplished?" Some children might want to be baptized for the wrong reasons.

There should be a basic knowledge of the Gospel in both cases. The pastor should try to determine if the initiative is from child. They should also be challenged in an age appropriate way that there are expectations of a follower of Christ.

They are now linked in Christian responsibility to the Church.

## THE ELDERS PERSPECTIVE ON THE RECREATIONAL AND MEDICINAL USE OF CANNABIS (MARIJUANA)

1. We the elders understand Scripture to be *“the final authority in all matters of faith and practice and the true basis of Christian union.”*<sup>6</sup>
2. We find the following scriptural commands particularly applicable to the question of the believer’s use of marijuana:
  - 2.1. Be self-disciplined and remain free from addictions ([1 Cor. 6:12-13](#), [1 Cor. 9:24-27](#), [Prov. 5:22-23](#), [1 Tim. 6:6-10](#)).
  - 2.2. Remain sober-minded and unintoxicated ([Eph. 5:15-18](#), [Prov. 23:20-21](#), [Rom. 13:12-14](#), [1 Pet. 4:7](#), [Titus 2:1-3](#), [1 Tim. 3:8](#)).
  - 2.3. Be good stewards of the gifts that God has given us, including our bodies. ([1 Cor. 6:19-20](#), [Rom. 12:1](#), [1 Tim. 4:8](#), [1 Pet. 4:10](#))
  - 2.4. Follow the laws of the land insofar as they do not contravene or subvert the laws of God. ([Rom. 13:1-5](#), [Titus 3:1](#), [1 Pet. 2:13-17](#))
3. We also understand that there are examples in Scripture where the sensible use of a potentially intoxicating substance (wine) is permissible for health purposes ([1 Tim. 5:23](#)).
4. For the purpose of this document intoxication will be defined as “a state whereby the believer is unable to see and experience reality as it is and as God has designed it.”
5. These things being stated, this is the understanding of the elders regarding Scripture’s guidance on the use of marijuana among those God has called as a part of his Church.
  - 5.1. Medicinal Use
    - 5.1.1. The medicinal use of cannabis in the context of an established physician-patient relationship has proven effective in the case of many different medical conditions.
    - 5.1.2. As long as the use of cannabis is physician-prescribed, doesn’t result in addiction, and it positively contributes to the believer’s ability to intentionally serve God to the best of their abilities the elders would see no reason to reject its proper medical use.<sup>7</sup>
  - 5.2. Recreational Use
    - 5.2.1. Cannabis (when consumed recreationally) is intended to achieve a “high.”

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<sup>6</sup> Elk Point Baptist Church Constitution, Pg. 1

<sup>7</sup> We would however recommend caution and regular re-evaluation to establish the necessity of its use.



5.2.2. This high is a form of intoxication, associated with diminished accuracy of observation and memory, as well as reduced ability to reason, and impeded motivation.

5.2.3. We understand that many scriptures applying to drunkenness could be equally applied to marijuana use.

5.2.4. It is the understanding of the elders, based on the guidance of Scripture, that if marijuana is used as a means of intoxication, distorting reality as God intended it, then it is being used sinfully.

Based on prayerful consideration and study of God's Word, it is the perspective of the elders that medicinal use of marijuana can be permissible if used cautiously and under the care of a licensed physician, however recreational marijuana use contravenes our understanding of God's intentions for the Christian and as such should be treated as sin in the life of a believer.

## THE ELDERS PERSPECTIVE ON ENTERTAINMENT



### I - Background

- i. We live in a day when sports, leisure, entertainment and recreation comprise a great deal of a person's time and commitment. This includes those of us who are Christians. Is there a Christian viewpoint on this matter? Does the Bible address the question of entertainment? This paper addresses the topic by using the word entertainment. The word recreation offers a different perspective. Entertainment is that which holds the interest and attention. The English word "recreation" is also from the Latin: re (again) and creare (make or beget). Recreation is that which renews and revitalizes us. There should be little doubt within biblical Christianity of what renews, revitalizes, inspires and brings liveliness to life. This paper is focusing merely on entertainment. There is a danger to defining the word entertainment, so we cautiously offer the following:
- ii. Entertainment involves those activities that captivate our time and interest apart from the responsibilities of life and those that bring invigoration to life. When we think of entertainment we think normally of television, watching sport, movies, etc. The English word "entertainment" comes from the Latin *inter* (among or across) and *tenere* (hold or keep). Entertainment is that which holds the interest and attention. Entertainment is that which attracts your time and energy.
- iii. We suggest that the key difference between the necessities of life (including genuine recreation) and entertainment can be realized in this statement: The former enables us to live; the latter becomes what we live for.

We offer 4 criteria for believers to make wise and godly choices.

### II - Criteria #1. The Goal.

- i. The Bible have an all-encompassing guide in life. It appears to be comprehensive and inclusive. We note in Colossians 3:17 (ESV),  
*<sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him;*
- ii. And again in 1 Corinthians 10:31 (ESV),  
*<sup>31</sup> So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*
- iii. In summary, Richard Baxter says it well, "The end which you really intend in using it, must be to fit you for your service to God; that is, either for your callings, or for his worship, or some work of obedience in which you may please and glorify him."

### III - Criteria #2. The content.

- i. Many forms of entertainment have included content that we believe contradicts the Bible. At the very outset, Christians should take seriously the 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment: *“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.”* (Exodus 20:7, ESV). The Apostle Paul, in his correspondence to the Ephesian believers writes, *“But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.”* (Ephesians 5:3–4, ESV). Prior to that, in chapter 4, he writes:  
  
*<sup>29</sup> Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.*
- ii. And again, to the Colossians we read: *“But now you must put them all away: . . . and obscene talk from your mouth.”* (Colossians 3:8b, ESV)
- iii. The content of the entertainment then becomes a criterion. Many Christians work in environments where filthy, coarse language is the norm. Perhaps some must endure swearing and taking God’s name in vain. Dirty jokes can be prevalent in our culture. But when Christians engage themselves in entertainment, attracted and enjoying the medium they are engaged in, then content is key. John Piper describes much of the so-called entertainment that the world offers as *“God-ignoring, man-exalting, sin-condoning, sex-distorting, marriage-weakening, maleness-mocking, femaleness-trivializing, righteousness-ridiculing, arrogance-admiring worldview.”*<sup>8</sup>

### IV - Criteria #3. Redeem the time.

- i. The New Testament calls believers to be *“making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.”* (Ephesians 5:16, ESV). The ground of the imperative is *“because the days are evil.”* We believe that the Apostle uses that rationale as he does in the next chapter: *“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.”* (Ephesians 6:13, ESV). We believe that when we fail to use our time to God’s glory and in the pursuit of holiness, it will weaken our resolve in evil things. We remember the occasion of David who chose sunbathing over being with his soldiers in battle and the tragic result of his indiscretion (2 Samuel 11).
- ii. Paul’s letter to Colossae enables a good interpretation of Ephesians 5:16 where he writes, *“Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.”* (Colossians 4:5, ESV) *““Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.”* (Colossians 4:5, ESV). Herein the Christian is called to make best use of the time; use it wisely seizing the opportunity to do what is profitable (see also 1 Corinthians 10:23-24<sup>9</sup>).
- iii. It was known of Susanna Wesley that *“she spent 2 hours a day in prayer, herself. Early in her life, she vowed that she would never spend more time in leisure entertainment than she did in*

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/is-it-sinful-to-watch-sin-on-a-screen>

<sup>9</sup> *“All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor.”* (1 Corinthians 10:23–24, ESV)

prayer and Bible study. Even as a busy wife, mother and teacher, she still scheduled two hours each day for Bible reading and prayer. In addition, she spent one hour of face-to-face time with each of her 10 children.”<sup>10</sup> In a day when many Christians bemoan the difficulty of incorporating prayer and Bible reading into their daily routine and in a day when the average television consumption equates to 5 hours a day; 35 hours per week, we would challenge the notion that this is the best use of time.

#### V- Criteria #4.

- i. In 1 Corinthians 6:12, Paul reminds us not only to pursue those things that are profitable, but he adds also avoid those things that are dominating (“*All things are lawful for me,*” but not all things are helpful. “*All things are lawful for me,*” but I will not be dominated by anything.” (1 Corinthians 6:12, ESV). The definition we use for entertainment is something that captures our attention and our fondness. One might argue that there are good forms of entertainment that fulfill the first three criterion yet become captivating, controlling and perhaps addicting.
- ii. When a form of entertainment cannot be forsaken for doing what is a priority or profitable and becomes all-consuming, we cannot but think it to be lawful. When the ingestion of entertainment stifles and dampens one’s pursuit of good, this is problematic.

#### VI - Conclusion.

The preacher in Ecclesiastes reminds us “*I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God’s gift to man.*” (Ecclesiastes 3:12–13, ESV). And Paul reminds us to set our hope on God “who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.”<sup>11</sup> We believe that greater enjoyment of this life and the eternal pleasures that are to come, will find themselves in the believer who does all things to the glory of God; who uses his or her time for profit and the good of others (including themselves); who does not feast on immoral and ungodly forms of entertainment; and who seeks to be controlled by the Holy Spirit and not the life-threatening claws of worldly entertainment.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.elkpointbaptistchurch.com/podcasts/media/2019-05-12-biography-susanna-wesley>

<sup>11</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (1 Ti 6:17). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.