

<u>Characteristics of Elements</u>	<u>Characteristics of Forms/Circumstances</u>
What & Who	How
Biblically mandated	Requires wisdom
Fixed	Flexible
Context independent	Context dependent
Binary decision making	Multiple-choice decision making
<u>Example Elements</u>	<u>Example Forms/Circumstances</u>
(The “what” and “who” of the gospel)	(Basic church administration & oversight)
↓	↓
Preaching	Style of sermons? Length of sermons?
Teaching	Sunday school? Small groups?
Doctrine (e.g., what is the gospel?)	Use a formal statement of faith? Church covenant?
Membership	Process of membership: classes? interviews?
Bible	Which translation of the Bible?
Ordinances	How often? What script in the service?
Weekly gathering	Order of the service? Midweek? Use of space?
Elders/deacons	Meetings? Nomination process? Deacon structures?
Discipleship/evangelism	What ministries to have? What philosophy of ministry?

Forms & circumstances: three broad principles apply and are in some tension with each other!

1. “Across the board, the congregation should generally trust the elders to recommend a course of action, whether that involves the elders making the decision themselves, asking the church as a whole to make the decision, or delegating the decision.”
2. “The more a form or circumstance impinges on the teaching ministry of the church, the more the elders should feel responsible to make decisions; the less a form or circumstance impinges on the teaching ministry of the church, the more elders should desire to delegate decision making to others [...] yet always maintaining enough oversight to facilitate unity.”
3. “The more a form [or circumstance] impacts the unity of church [and/or] the elements in the left column, the more the elders should incline toward involving the entire congregation in the decision.”

<i>Elements</i>	<i>Forms/Circumstances</i>
<u>Congregation: actions or disposition...</u>	
Makes binary decisions	Occasionally makes multi-choice decisions
Active interest	Passive interest
Trusts and submits to elders’ biblically prescribed recommendations	Trusts and submits to elders unless they contradict the Bible
<u>Elders: actions or disposition...</u>	
Equip and recommend	Execute multi-choice decision making, delegating, and/or recommending
Teach and set the example	More protective of decisions involving teaching; more willing to delegate other decisions
	More likely to involve the congregation with decisions affecting unity or elements

First Class (30 June): Member is an Office with Authority and Responsibility

PROPOSITION 1: Within the local church, the right question is not “who has final authority” but rather “who has authority and responsibility to do what?” or “what lanes (*plural*) of authority & responsibility has God established for the local church?”

PROPOSITION 2: To better understand the lanes of authority and responsibility God has given in the local church, we must analyze God’s Word with an eye for patterns of authority, responsibility, and institutions.

PROPOSITION 3: The office of priest-king given to the federal head Adam, which involved working and watching over the place where God dwelled, was further specified in the life of Israel, fulfilled in Christ, and has now been re-conferred on the membership of the church.

Second Class (14 July): Congregations Exercise the Keys of the Kingdom

PROPOSITION 4: The congregation has authority and responsibility to exercise the keys of the kingdom, that is, to make formal priestly judgments and declarations concerning *what* is the true gospel and therefore *who* is a right confessor. The means of exercising the keys are baptism and the Lord’s table, which the congregation must guard. (As a shorthand, the congregation is to judge, declare, and guard the *what* and the *who* of the gospel.)

Third Class (21 July): Elders Lead

PROPOSITION 5a: The Holy Spirit sovereignly appoints elders and gives them the authority and responsibility to teach, shepherd, and lead a local church.

PROPOSITION 5b: A Spirit-filled congregation will exercise its authority and responsibility to judge, declare, and guard the *what* of the gospel by: (1) recognizing those who are marked out by the Spirit as elders who will equip the saints for the work of ministry by teaching and practicing the *what* of the gospel correctly; and (2) removing an elder if he becomes biblically disqualified.

PROPOSITION 6a: Elders have authority and responsibility to teach.

PROPOSITION 6b: Elders have authority and responsibility to rule.

Fourth Class (28 July): Elder Leadership + Congregational Rule = Discipleship

PROPOSITION 7: Elder leadership + congregational rule = discipleship