

Eldership Training: Process

The Presbyterian form of government values corporate discernment and decision making.

How then does this work in practice and as a process?

Below are some (all too) common scenarios to consider and work through as a Session or Church Council.

What is important is not so much a conclusion but the discussion, wisdom and experience to can be brought to these situations.

- A couple who have been long term members of the church are separating.
- A family (dad, mum and three children) have announced they are leaving the church.
- While the minister is on leave a visiting speaker has upset several members of the congregation through statements he has made and his theological stance. They have come to you to “sort it out!”

What to consider in the process of working through scenarios such as this:

- What are my first reactions / response? How do I feel?
- What clarifying questions need to be asked?
- If an approach is made to person or persons, who is best to make it?
It is often assumed that this is always the minister’s role. However a elder may have a better relationship and be more appropriate.
- What will pastoral care look like? Is there a place for referral?
- What considerations do we need to make around confidentiality?
Is the issue at hand a private or public one?
- Is there some learning that can be taken into the future?