

# Church Bylaws

For a good explanation of why a church should constitute and the roll of the church constitution and bylaws, visit the North American Mission Board Church Planting Village site:

[www.churchplantingvillage.net/atf/cf/%7B087EF6B4-D6E5-4BBF-BED1-7983D360F394%7D/SampleConstitutionAndBylaws.pdf](http://www.churchplantingvillage.net/atf/cf/%7B087EF6B4-D6E5-4BBF-BED1-7983D360F394%7D/SampleConstitutionAndBylaws.pdf)

*The following information and bylaws template are found on the above website and are only meant to provide a guideline for establish a church's bylaws.*

Basically, a Church Constitution and Bylaws are made to:

1. Preserve and secure the principles of our faith.
2. Preserve the liberties of each individual member of the church.
3. Ensure freedom of action of independence from any religious body or organization.
4. Provide for orderly conduct of internal affairs, in dealing with others, and of governing church members

## **I. Church Membership**

### **A. Qualifications:**

Membership of \_\_\_\_\_ (name of Church) \_\_\_\_\_ shall consist of people have made a profession of their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and who, having been scripturally baptized by immersion, and are in agreement with the Articles of Faith, and Covenant of the church. (Church Covenant to be written soon).

### **B. Reception:**

Membership in the church may be attained by majority vote of the church in any of its regular business meetings and in one of the following manners:

1. By scriptural baptism by immersion after profession of faith in Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior.
2. By transfer of church letter from another Baptist church.
3. By a statement of faith of their prior experience of conversion and scriptural baptism by immersion in another evangelical church of like faith and practice.
4. By restoration to the church membership after having been dropped.

### **C. Termination:** Membership in this church shall be terminated when a member:

1. Requests a letter of transfer to join another Baptist church.
2. Is dropped from the roll of membership when he or she joins another kind of church. A letter of transfer is not necessary.
3. Dies
4. Is dismissed by a vote of the church due to reasons and circumstances provided in the church discipline. The pastor and deacons will do all they can to counsel the member for restoration prior to action of dismissal or a request of the member to be dismissed from the church membership.

### **D. Orientation of New Members:**

Candidates for membership and new members need to attend the Church Membership Class to learn and understand the privileges and responsibilities of members to God and the church.

1. Members in good standing shall have the right to a voice and vote in all church transactions and shall have the right and privileges to full participation in the life and work of the church.

2. It shall be the duty of church members to uphold the Articles of Faith, Constitution and Bylaws, and Covenant of the Church.

## **II. Church Officers**

All church officers must be members of the church in good standing.

### **A. The Pastor:**

1. The qualifications for pastor shall be consistent with those listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

His training, skills, and experiences are needed in this area of leadership.

2. His responsibilities:

(a) These generally fall into the following areas: Preaching, teaching, pastoral counseling, administration, planning, and guiding the church to grow and fulfill its purposes.

(b) He shall lead the church, the organizations, and all leaders of the church in performing their tasks in worship, proclamation, education, and evangelism.

(c) The pastor shall be an ex officio member of all church standing committees, except the Pastor's Selection Committee.

(d) He shall assist the deacons in securing pulpit supply for times in his absence.

3. Call:

(a) A pastor shall be chosen and called whenever a vacancy occurs.

(b) A Pastor's Selection Committee shall be appointed by the church to seek out a suitable pastor and this committee's recommendation will serve as a nomination.

(c) The Pastor's Selection Committee will recommend only one candidate at a time.

(d) The pastor's election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week notice shall be given to the members.

(e) An affirmative vote of three-fourths (3/4) of those present is necessary for a choice.

4. Terms of Service:

(a) The chosen pastor shall serve until the relationship is terminated by either his request or that of the church. In either case, at least sixty (60) days' notice shall be given unless otherwise mutually agreed.

(b) There shall be a written mutual contract/agreement made between the pastor and the church.

### **B. Church Staff:**

This church shall employ or call staff, as it shall need.

1. Staff members other than that of the pastor shall be recommended for employment by the Church Council or a special committee.

2. A written job description and mutual contract/agreement will be prepared when the need for church staff is determined.

### **C. Deacons:**

1. Number, term of office:

There shall be five (5) deacons for the first 100 resident members and one (1) for each additional fifty (50) of portion thereof. Deacons shall be elected for a term of service of three years or longer term of service as voted upon by the church.

2. Qualifications:

(a) A church deacon must meet the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

(b) A deacon shall demonstrate an exemplary Christian testimony in private, family, and public life; a committed Christian leader and partner of the pastor; supporter and promoter of the church faith, practice, programs, and ministries.

3. Election:

(a) When a deacon vacancy occurs, the chairman of the Deacons Committee shall announce that an election of a deacon will be held during a named church business meeting.

(b) The Deacon Committee will enlist active men to be recommended to the church. The duties, qualifications, and importance of the office of a deacon will be interpreted to the candidates and be reviewed to the church prior to the scheduled election of deacons.

4. Ordination:

(a) Selection, election, and ordination of deacons is a privilege of the local church.

(b) When ordination of deacons is planned by the church, it shall authorize the pastor to assemble a council to examine the candidates concerning their fit to serve as deacons.

(c) The council directed to examine the deacons shall be composed of the pastor, invited ordained pastors, and deacons of neighboring sister Baptist churches.

(d) When the council recommends the ordination of deacons, the ordination service shall be scheduled as led by the pastor.

5. Duties:

(a) Elected deacons shall elect the chairman of their committee.

(b) Deacons serve as a committee of counsel to assist the pastor concerning the progress and welfare of the church.

(c) Assist the pastor in ministering to the members by implementing the Deacon Family Ministry.

(d) Seek to solve any fellowship problem of the church.

(e) Assist the pastor in administering the church ordinances.

(f) Serve as church membership committee.

(g) In the absence of the pastor, the chairman of the Deacons Committee shall serve as an advisory member to all organizations, departments, and committees of the church.

**D. Moderator:**

1. The church moderator may be the pastor or a lay leader elected to this position.

2. The moderator shall preside at all regular and called business meetings of the church.

3. In the absence of the moderator, the chairman of deacons shall preside of the regular and called business meetings of the church.

4. In the absence of the moderator and the chairman of deacons, the church clerk shall call the church to order and an acting moderator will be elected.

**E. Clerk:**

1. The church clerk shall be elected and be responsible for keeping an accurate record of all business meeting transactions of the church and preparing the annual report to the association.

2. He or she shall keep a register of the names and addresses of the church members, with dates of admission, dismissal, dedication of children, and deaths of members of the church family.

3. He or she shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church and write letters of transfer of membership, prepare written reports of the church, and keep an accurate history of the church.

4. An assistant church clerk may be elected or the clerk's responsibilities shall be delegated to a church secretary if and when the church can afford to employ one.

**F. Treasurer:**

1. The church treasurer shall be elected as the custodian of all moneys of the church and shall disburse these moneys by checks as authorized by the church.

2. He or she shall keep, at all times, an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements and shall render a monthly and annually written report of this account to the church.

3. The treasurer's report shall be audited annually by an auditing committee.

**G. Financial Secretary:**

1. The church financial secretary shall be elected and shall be responsible for seeing that the offerings are properly received, counted, and deposited in the church's bank account.

2. He or she shall properly credit each contributor and their offerings.

3. He or she shall be responsible for preparing for mailing a quarterly or annual record of contribution to donors.

**H. Trustees:**

1. At least three (3) trustees shall be elected by the church to hold trust the property of the church.

2. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property of the church without a specific vote of the church authorizing each action.

3. It shall be the function of the trustees to sign any, and all legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or lease of church property or any other legal documents requiring the signature of the trustees for and in behalf of the church.

**I. Church Council:**

1. The Church Council shall have as regular members the pastor, clerk, treasurer, chairman of deacons, Sunday School director, discipleship director, chairperson of each church standing committee, presidents of men's, women's, and youth fellowships.

2. The Church Council shall be to recommend to the church objectives and goals; review the coordinated program plans recommended by the pastor, church officers, organizations, and committees; to recommend to the church the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to program priorities; and to evaluate program achievements in terms of church goals and objectives.

3. All matters agreed on by the Church Council calling for action not already provided for shall be referred to the church to be voted upon.

**J. Vacancies:**

In case of vacancy in any office, except that of the pastor and staff members, the vacancy shall be filled by the church at a regular or special meeting as soon as possible after such vacancy has occurred.

**III. Church Committees**

All church committee members shall be elected by the church from nominations presented by the Nominating Committee, and nominations from the floor with the consent of the nominee. There shall be a minimum of three (3) committee members with a chairperson. Any committee member elected to fill any vacancy shall serve the unexpired term of the position vacated. Each committee chairperson shall submit an annual budget request to the Budget and Finance Committee.

**A. Nominating Committee:**

The Nominating Committee shall be responsible throughout the year for nominating and presenting to the church people to serve in various positions of the church (unless provided for otherwise in these Bylaws) vacated by expiration of term of office, by death, by resignation, or by removal. Each person contacted shall be informed of his or her responsibilities.

**B. Budget and Finance Committee:**

This committee shall have the responsibility of assuring that the adopted budget is adhered to. It shall recommend financial policies to the church and shall foster and promote programs of stewardship. In consultation with the Church Council for the new church year, it shall draw up and submit to the church an annual budget during the month of October for the next calendar year and recommend the chairperson of budget promotion annually. The taking of special offerings shall be approved by this committee. This committee shall be responsible for the annual audit of the treasurer's books.

**C. Properties Committee:**

This committee shall be responsible in matters to properties administration. Throughout the year, this committee shall give attention to and study the condition and state of repair and appearance of the building and grounds of the church and equipment therein, making arrangements for repairs and improvements authorized by the church and included in the church budget. All matters of major repairs, changes, improvements or items of equipment not included in the budget shall be referred to the Stewardship Committee for fiscal review. Purchase of equipment shall be through this committee unless another committee is directed specifically to make studies, report to the church, and make necessary arrangements as the church decides.

**D. Missions Committee**

This committee shall be responsible for discovering possibilities for starting new congregations. If this occurs, this committee will work out a mutual agreement with the church mission congregation(s) as approved by the church. It shall seek also possibilities for local, state, national missions projects, share findings with church program organizations, and serves the church in establishing and conducting such missions projects. This committee shall lead the church in its involvement with the Baptist association, state convention, and

other Southern Baptist Convention mission related ministries or programs that mutually benefit the church.

**E. Music Committee:**

This committee will plan and evaluate the music program of the church, in the formation of choirs in the church and planning special musical programs throughout the year. It is responsible for recommending people for the positions of pianist and organist, song leader, and in assisting the pastor with special music in the regular and other services of the church. In the event that a music director is needed as a staff of the church, this committee will look for a qualified person to be recommended to this compensated position, which requires approval by the church.

**F. Youth Committee:**

This committee is responsible in planning and coordinating youth programs and activities inside and outside of the church. These activities are to be correlated with the activities of the church program organization in attaining objectives set forth by the church. An elected representative of the Youth Committee shall serve as a member of the Church Council.

**G. Social and Recreation Committee:**

This committee shall be responsible for all social and recreation activities of the church, formulating policies and supervising the services rendered to the church through the kitchen and promoting regular church functions to build the fellowship of the church.

**H. Kitchen Committee:**

This committee shall have general supervision of the supplies, equipment, and use of the church kitchen suggesting to the church rules and regulations as they deem wise. It shall enforce policies necessary to properly maintain the kitchen in a clean, orderly, and acceptable condition.

**I. Ordinance Committee:**

This committee shall assist the pastor in preparing for the two ordinances of the church. The members of this committee shall be responsible for preparing the candidates and the baptistery for the ordinance of baptism and will prepare the elements of the Lord's Supper.

**J. Christian Education Committee:**

This committee shall lead the church in developing and implementing an effective education-training program. Foremost of these are:

1. Sunday School:

The Sunday School shall be divided into classes and departments as it grows and conducted under the direction of a director for the study of God's Word. The tasks of the Sunday School shall be to teach the Bible; lead in reaching all prospects; lead all church members to worship, witness, learn, and minister daily; provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

2. Church Training:

The discipleship program shall serve as the training organization and arm of the church. Its tasks shall be to teach Christian doctrine, ethics, church policy and organization; train leaders for the church and denomination; provide for specialized training for special projects of ministry for the church; and to provide organization and leadership for special activities in the church.

3. Missionary Education Ministry:

There shall be a missionary education with such officers and such forms of

organizations to teach missions, lead members to participate in missions, and provide organization and leadership in special missions projects of the church.

**K. Outreach Committee:**

This committee is under the immediate leadership of the pastor. He forms a committee to develop and implement a strategy for effective programs of community evangelism outreach such as visitation; Bible studies in homes, offices, places of works; special evangelistic meetings inside and outside of the church; and other needed programs to reach people with the gospel.

This committee is also responsible for planning training events for soul-winning, as well as the production or securing evangelistic printed materials to be used by the church.

**L. Other committees may be formed as needed by the church.**

**IV. Church Meetings**

**A. Worship Services:**

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning and evening for the worship of God, for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and on Wednesday, or another night, designated for prayer and Bible study. These meetings will be open for the entire membership of the church and for all people and shall be conducted under the direction of the pastor or designated church officer in the absence of the pastor.

**B. Regular Business Meetings:**

Regular business meetings shall be held on every first Wednesday of the month. The agenda shall be circulated or made known to the church one week prior to the business meeting. Should there be any unusual meeting or matter of unusual interest to be brought before such regular meeting, notice shall be given to the membership one week prior to that meeting.

**C. Special Business Meeting:**

A special called business meeting may be called by the pastor, and with other church officers, or by action of the church to consider special matters of significant nature. A one-week written notice or announcement must be given for the especially called business meeting.

**D. Quorum:**

The quorum consists of those who attend the business meeting, provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called. At least one-fourth of the members shall constitute a quorum.

**E. Parliamentary Rules:**

*Robert's Rules of Order* (revised edition) is adopted as the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church and for all other meetings that demand voting of the church members, including committee meetings.

**V. Licensing and Ordaining**

**A. Licensing:**

Any member of the church who has shown by his life and has felt the call to the gospel ministry may by vote of the membership at a regular meeting be licensed by the church to the Christian ministry.

**B. Ordination:**

When a church of life faith and order shall have called as its pastor a member of this church who possesses scriptural qualifications and as demonstrated by his skills and training for

ordination to the work of the gospel ministry, and shall request in writing that he be ordained, or the Church Council recommends him for ordination, a special committee shall be elected to conduct the process of his ordination. Deacons of the church may be ordained as deacons upon the recommendation of the Church Council. The church shall consider such request and by a vote of majority in a regular meeting approve such request. The pastor shall assemble an ordaining council for the ordination of qualified and recommended candidates.

## **VI. Church Discipline**

A. Should any unhappy difference arise among members, the aggrieved member shall follow in a tender spirit, the rules given by our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17.

B. Should any case of gross breach of covenant, or of public scandal occur, the deacons shall endeavor to resolve the conflict; and if this effort fails, shall report the case to the church.

C. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance, but should an adverse decision be reached, the church may proceed to admonish or declare the offender to be no longer in the membership of the church.

D. Any person whose membership has been terminated for any offense may be restored by vote of the church, upon evidence of his repentance and reformation; or if an account of continued absence, upon satisfactory explanation.

**Ratified by action of the church in its business meeting on \_\_\_\_\_(day/date)\_\_\_\_\_**

**Moderator:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Church Clerk:** \_\_\_\_\_