

Area Bible Fellowship Church

CONSTITUTION

I. Members Qualifications

- A. Persons desiring to become members of this church must be born-again believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- B. They will attend our membership class to receive instruction on the Statement of Faith, the Constitution of the Church and other related topics.
- C. Persons will be in agreement with the positions of the church. After the instruction period and unanimous approval by the elders, the person will then be recommended to the members for membership approval.
- D. Prospective members will give assurance of having been baptized or a willingness to receive baptism. Baptism shall be by immersion.
- E. No person can be a member of this church who is a member of any secret society or lodge (II Cor. 6:14-18).
- F. Members must be 18 years old to participate in any votes brought before the membership.

II. Discipline Of Members

- A. The matter of discipline of the membership shall be the responsibility of the elders. All discipline will be handled according to scriptural guidelines (Matt. 18:15-17, I Cor. 5:11-13, Gal. 1:8-9, I Thess. 3:6).
- B. Termination of membership will not be used until every effort has been made by the elders to restore the person's relationship with Christ and the Church.
- C. For us, the goal of church discipline is the restoration of the individual to full fellowship with both God and other believers.

III. Meetings Of Members

- A. Annual Meeting - The annual meeting of the members will be held within six weeks of each Jan. 1st, the exact date set by the elders, for the transaction of business as it comes before the meeting. Any business to come before the membership meeting must be presented to the elders at their regular meeting prior to the membership meeting. At least 2 weeks of notice for the annual meeting date will be given to members.
- B. Special Meetings - Special meetings of the members may be called by the elders when they deem it necessary after consulting the members.

IV. Board Of Directors

A. Management - The Board of Directors will be made up of the elders of the Church. The affairs of the Church shall be managed by the elders.

B. Elders

1. *Description* - An elder is called to lead, feed, and protect the church through and with the word of God in prayer. They are to be the spiritual leaders of the church. They are responsible for equipping the congregation for the work of ministry. Synonyms describing the same role in the scriptures are:
 - a. Overseer/Bishop (Acts 20:28; I Tim 3:1-7)
 - b. Elder (Acts 20:17; Titus 1:5)
 - c. Leader (Heb 13:17)
 - d. Pastor/Shepherd (Acts 20:28; Eph 4:11)
2. *Vocational & Non-Vocational Elders* - I Tim 5:17 Shows us it's normal to have both paid and unpaid elders. There are Elders who labor in preaching and teaching as a living. The church is therefore encouraged to meet the needs of these vocational Elders to the degree that they are free to concentrate on the preaching/teaching and equipping ministry. The fact that the scriptures specify that some Elders may make their living through the gospel implies that there are also Elders who lead on a volunteer basis.
3. *Benefits of a plurality of elders* -Elders are directly accountable to God for your spiritual edification (Heb 13:7; I Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:3-9, I Pet 5:1-5). The selection of a plurality of Elders protects the church from a singular leader who is misled intentionally or unintentionally. A plurality of Elders will normally have different spiritual gifts in which they can minister more effectively to the unique spiritual needs of each member in the body. This plurality also reflects the plurality within the body of Christ and how each spiritual gift is necessary for the proper functioning of the church.
4. *The Authority of the Elders* - The leaders of a church are under the authority of Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd (I Pet 5:1-4). Every decision made by the elders is to be made with God's word in the forefront of their minds (II Tim 3:16-17). They are to commit certain decisions to the authority of the church as a whole (Matt 18:15-20; Acts 6:1-6). Finally, they will give an account to God for how they cared for their congregation (Heb 13:17; Acts 20:26-28).

C. Number and Tenure

The number of elders shall be no less than three and as many as the elders shall determine from time to time. The duration of service of the elders shall be for life.

While there are no term limits for an elder, an elder can resign at any time, but must go through the selection process in order to become an active elder again. Recognition of elders will be every year at the Annual meeting of the members.

D. Appointment and Qualification

Selection of a new elder shall be unanimous by the existing elders. The prospective elder will then be recommended to the members at least one month before a vote is to be held. Members are responsible for communicating with the elder board or the prospective elder (as biblically discerned by the member) if they have any reservations as to the prospective elder's qualification. A vote will then be held in a member meeting in which 90% approval is required. Qualifications for appointment as an elder will be according to scriptural guidelines in I Tim. 3 and Titus 1.

E. Removal

The removal of an elder may be done by the witness of two or three members who bring a just accusation against the elder (I Tim. 5:19) and the best interest of the Church would be served thereby. Just accusations will be thoroughly reviewed by the remaining elders on a scriptural basis.

F. Manner Of Acting

The elders shall decide all issues presented at a regular or special meeting by unanimous decision. The elders at their discretion shall take necessary measures to consult the members on any issue they deem necessary. Any decision made will be communicated to the members. Final decisions on any issue shall be made by the elders by unanimous approval, except where this constitution gives final authority to the members.

G. Meetings

Regular meetings will be held on the first Tuesday of each month, or at a time set by the elders every month. Special meetings may be called by an elder, at which time, the place and time will be specified.

H. Elders will be spiritually responsible for the Church. They will have the final say on all decisions, except those that are listed as the responsibility of the members. Communication and consultation with the members will be utilized in decisions made by the elders.

V. Deacons

A. Number and Tenure

The number of deacons shall be determined by the elders. A deacon will serve as long as the identified need exists, and the deacon remains biblically qualified and

consents to serve. Recognition will be every year at the Annual Meeting of the members.

B. Appointment and Qualifications

Selection of a new deacon shall be unanimous by the existing elders. The prospective deacon will then be recommended to the members at least one month before a vote is to be held. Members are responsible for communicating with the elder board or the prospective deacon (as biblically discerned by the member) if they have any reservations as to the prospective deacon's qualification. A vote will then be held in a member meeting in which 90% approval is required. Qualifications for appointment as a deacon will be according to scriptural guidelines in I Tim. 3:8-13.

C. Removal

The removal of a deacon may be done by the elders when the best interest of the church would be served thereby.

D. Will be responsible for any of the physical needs of the Church and assist the elders in the leadership of the Church.

VI. Amendment Of Constitution

A. Manner Done

This Constitution may be altered, amended, or repealed and a new constitution may be adopted by a unanimous decision of the elders.

VII. Amendment Of Articles of Incorporation

A. Manner Done

The Articles of Incorporation of the Church may be altered, amended, or repealed and new articles may be adopted by 90% approval in a member meeting.

VIII. Membership

A. Persons whose names are on the membership roll of the Church will approve the leadership of the Church, be responsible for the removal of elders, approve new members, termination of members, and changing the Articles of Incorporation for the Church. To be an elder or deacon, you must be a member of the Church.

B. In addition to believing in Christ for salvation, the normal expectations of a member include regular attendance; dealing biblically with conflict; praying for God's church; warmly welcoming visitors; committing myself to read, understand, and apply the Bible; availing myself to the resources of the church for growth; serving God and others in ministry with my time, gifting, talent, and treasure; living evangelistically.

IX. Non-Members

A. If for any reason a person chooses not to place his name on the membership roll, he/she is still considered a part of the Church and will be allowed to use his/her gifts and talents to build up the Church. There will be no distinctions or limitations between members and non-members except those listed in the membership section above.

Updated on April 30, 2024