



BY-LAWS

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Article I. PARTNERSHIP

Section 1.01 Partnership Qualifications

A partner of Doxa Church is a person who walks with Christ and intentionally pledges to join the Doxa Church community; embracing its mission, vision, and values, agreeing with its doctrines, serving in its ministries, contributing to its finances, submitting to its authority, and participating in its governmental processes as outlined in the Constitution and By-Laws. A person must be 18 years old to become a partner of Doxa Church.

Section 1.02 Partnership Process

Persons desiring to become partners of Doxa Church must complete the partnership process. Each partner candidate shall first complete the partnership class. Following completion of the class, the candidate shall write a testimony of personal conversion to be reviewed by the Elders or their representative(s). The candidate will then meet with the Elders to discuss the testimony and to review and sign the partnership covenant. Names of the candidates who have signed the covenant will be published for review by the congregation for at least two consecutive weeks prior to a public reception of the new partners during a public worship service. Any person with a biblical reason why a candidate should not be received into partnership must communicate that reason to an Elder. Ministry staff members and spouses shall be accepted into partnership concurrent with installation into the local church ministry, though they will be expected to complete the partnership class as a matter of course. Partnership records shall be maintained by the Elder Board.

Section 1.03 Partner Duties and Responsibilities

The privilege of partnership has certain duties and responsibilities. By God’s grace and in accordance with the partnership covenant, partners agree to be faithful in carrying out the following:

- I will love, honor, and obey Jesus Christ above all else in my life in response to his life-giving grace.
- I will make every effort to regularly participate in public worship services with the corporate body of believers at Doxa Church.
- I will give generously from my income to support the Lord's work at Doxa Church.

- I will be actively engaged in a Grow n' Go Group for my spiritual growth and to contribute to the spiritual growth of others.
- I will become fluent in the gospel and learn to speak it to myself and to others.
- I will work very hard to contribute to a spirit of love, generosity, peace, and unity in the Doxa Church community.
- I will approach any problem I have with someone within the church with the loving, corrective, restorative church discipline.
- I will be accountable to my church, allowing Doxa Church elders to speak into my life with loving correction and church discipline when it is necessary for my own spiritual growth and the benefit of my church.
- I will use my talents and spiritual gifts in at least one ministry at Doxa Church.
- I will do my best to teach and lead my family in the gospel.
- I will treat my occupation as my unique call to worship and witness, doing my work with excellence and sharing Christ as the Lord gives me opportunity.
- I understand that Doxa Church is part of the Evangelical Free Church of America and embraces its doctrinal and distinctive characteristic statements. I support the teaching of these doctrines and will not undermine them in any respect.
- I understand that Doxa Church is part of the Acts 29 network and embraces its distinct doctrinal positions. I support the teaching of these doctrines and will not undermine them in any respect.
- I understand that Doxa Church values the planting of new churches in our community, region, and world, and I will do my best to contribute to the multiplication of healthy churches.

Section 1.04 Partner Rights and Eligibilities

All partners in good standing have the right to vote at business meetings. Partners are eligible to teach children and adults, lead Grow n' Go Groups, and serve as elders and deacons if appropriate.

Section 1.05 Partner Discipline

Partners are expected to conduct their lives according to the standards set forth in the Scriptures. Those found living or teaching contrary to the Word of God and the doctrinal statement of Doxa Church shall be counseled in love by the Elders in accordance with biblical principles with the goal of repentance and restoration. If efforts to bring repentance and restoration fail, then the Elders will follow biblical principles for removal outlined in Scripture, including: Matthew 18:15-18, I Corinthians 5, II Corinthians 2:5-11 and Gal. 6:1-2.

Section 1.06 Partnership Terminations

Any partner who holds false doctrines contrary to the Word of God, or who is living a life in violation of the Scriptures, may be subject to removal from partnership. The Elders will place the partner under discipline and work to bring about restoration. If repentance and restoration are not achieved, the Elders shall bring a recommendation for removal to the partners at a congregational meeting. The recommendation for removal will be approved by a simple majority vote of the partnership present at the meeting. A partner under discipline who withdraws partnership before the completion of the discipline process will still be announced at the next business meeting. Those who are not under discipline and withdraw in good standing may request a letter of recommendation. A partner who dies,

becomes a member of another church, or does not have correspondence with the church for six months, is automatically removed from partnership.

Article II. ELDER GOVERNANCE

Section 2.01 Board of Elders Membership

There shall not be less than two lay Elders and the Lead Pastor. The Elders, with welcomed insight from other partners, will identify men to begin Elder candidacy. The Elders shall then train and assess these candidates. Those who emerge from this assessment as both called and equipped to serve as Elders are then recommended to the partners at a congregational meeting to serve a three-year active term. A two-thirds majority of the partners present and voting at a business meeting shall be necessary for approval. Following the three-year active term, an Elder is allowed to serve another three-year active term consecutively under three conditions: (1) He is willing. (2) He is recommended by the other active Elders. (3) He is approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the partners. After two consecutive terms, an Elder must take a year off before he can be elected to another active term. Qualifications for Elders include the following:

- Men who demonstrate the qualities set forth in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1:5-9
- Partners of Doxa Church, active in fellowship and in the ministry of the church
- Proven leaders who have demonstrated both their skill and willingness to shepherd others
- Mature, godly men, who support the Doxa Church Constitution, By-Laws, mission, vision, and values

Section 2.02 Board of Elders Responsibilities to the Partnership

The Board of Elders shall be directly accountable to the partners of Doxa Church. The Board of Elders shall recommend to the partnership the following matters for action: election of church Elders and Deacons, calling or dismissal of the Lead Pastor, matters of partnership, major new ministry proposals, approval of the annual budget, purchase or disposition of property in excess of 10% of the annual budget, principal building construction in excess of 10% of the annual budget, and amending the Constitution or the By-Laws.

The Board of Elders is allowed to increase the annual budget a total of 10% of the approved annual budget without congregational approval. Congregational approval is necessary once increases have exceeded 10% of the annual budget. The Board of Elders may approve unplanned spending to address bona fide emergencies such as damage to church property caused by a tornado, flood, or fire.

Section 2.03 Elder Responsibilities

Every Elder of Doxa Church is a shepherd with responsibilities to know, feed, lead, and protect the partners of Doxa Church both at macro and micro levels, macro referring to those duties which impact the entire church, and micro referring to those duties carried out personally among individual church partners. For a fuller explanation, see *The Shepherd Leader* by Timothy Z. Witmer. This is required reading for all Doxa Church Elders.

- **Know (Macro):** The Elders will superintend and participate in the partnership process and will work to ensure the partnership of the church reflects the regenerate community within Doxa Church.

- **Know (Micro):** Each Elder will either lead a G2 group and build shepherding relationships with the individuals and families within his group, or he will shepherd a set of G2 leaders, guiding them and their families in healthy spiritual growth. In either case, Elders will maintain regular, dedicated contact with partners of Doxa Church.
- **Feed (Macro):** The Elders will ensure faithful ministry of the Word of God in every public venue, including preaching, G2 teaching (curriculum), children's ministry, youth ministry, men's and women's ministries, and any teaching that takes place within the context of Doxa Church. In accordance with 1Tim.3, Elders must be willing and have demonstrated ability to teach or preach the Bible faithfully either in a large or small group setting.
- **Feed (Micro):** The Elders will teach and counsel the G2 leaders (or the members of their G2) with biblical wisdom. They will proactively guide their people, not merely waiting until they are asked for help, but actively equipping their people for the work of the ministry. Elders will also participate in the study of the Scriptures together and in a shepherding relationship together to sharpen and deepen their own discipleship.
- **Lead (Macro):** The Elders will work with the Lead Pastor to craft and cast Spirit-led vision for the church. They will help set yearly goals for the church in alignment with Doxa Church's mission, vision, and values, and will work with the Lead Pastor to establish strategy and benchmarks for success. They will superintend all public worship, ensuring quality and biblical fidelity, participating in various aspects of ministry when scheduled.
- **Lead (Micro):** The Elders will lead the partners by example to become more like Christ. They will shepherd their wives and children well. They will confess their sins and their reliance on Jesus' righteousness, helping to guide others to rely on Christ for salvation. They will put priority on building evangelistic relationships, sharing the gospel with non-believers, and maintaining a good reputation in the community. When called upon, Elders will gather to pray for individuals in the congregation and will help to provide biblical counsel to those who are in need, either one-on-one or in a group setting.
- **Protect (Macro):** Elders will remain vigilant in their understanding of the cultural influences that may creep into Doxa Church and lead the people astray. This vigilance includes identifying false teaching both in public services and in the G2 groups. When necessary, Elders will address issues of false teaching or poor leadership directly, helping to make corrections for the benefit of the church.
- **Protect (Micro):** The Elders will superintend the process of church discipline in cases when a partner is unrepentant. Elders will meet with the partner and attempt to bring about repentance and reconciliation. If these efforts prove unfruitful, the Elders are responsible for bringing a recommendation for removal to the partnership during a congregational meeting.

Section 2.04 Elder Organization

The Board of Elders shall organize itself annually by the internal election of a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary. The Chairman shall preside over Elder and business meetings. The Vice-Chairman shall fill the role of Chairman in his absence. The Secretary shall record the minutes of both the Elder and business meetings

- The Elder Board shall have at least one meeting each month at a time and place set by the chairman.

- A majority of the members of the Board of Elders constitutes a quorum for transaction of business.
- A quorum being present, a majority of the votes cast shall be necessary to pass business items.
- The Elder Board has authority to empower the Deacons to carry out various tasks, such as the creation of the budget or the administration of a ministry.
- Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall be the parliamentary guide, except wherein they may be contrary to Scripture, the Constitution, or By-Laws.
- Minutes of all Elder Meetings shall be recorded by the Elder Secretary or designee and be made available on a timely basis to the church partnership, if requested. Decisions made in executive session will not be made available to the partnership.
- Elders not employed by Doxa Church will not receive compensation for their work, but will be eligible for expense reimbursement.

Section 2.05 Elder Discipline

If an Elder is found to be living in sin or is willfully neglecting his responsibility as an Elder, another Elder and the Lead Pastor will initiate biblical principles for discipline: Matthew 18, I Corinthians 5, II Corinthians 2:5-11, Galatians 6:1-2 and I Timothy 5:19-20. Discipline may involve a recommendation to the partnership for removal from office. A two-thirds majority of the votes cast by the partnership at a business meeting will be required for removal.

Section 2.06 Deacons and G2 Leaders

Deacons serve as leaders for specific ministries as needs arise and to carry out the mission of the church. This team of Deacons will meet at least quarterly with the Elders. The meeting of the Deacons will include Ministry Staff and Support Staff, who serve as ex officio Deacons.

Deacons must meet the qualifications listed in 1Tim.3. A Deacon who is not a part of Ministry or Support Staff must be elected by a simple majority of the voting partners present at a business meeting. Elders are responsible for bringing the need of a Deacon before the partners at the meeting. The Elders also may bring a proposed candidate to fill the role, or the role may be left open so a candidate may be put forward by the partners after prayer and discussion. Deacons agree to serve in the leadership of their particular ministry for two years. Following the two-year active term, a Deacon is allowed to serve another two-year active term consecutively if he/she meets three conditions: (1) He/she is willing. (2) He/she is recommended by the active Elders. (3) He/she is approved by a simple majority vote of the partners. After two consecutive terms, a Deacon must take a year off before he/she can be elected to another active term.

Grow n' Go Group leaders are appointed by the Elders and serve under their shepherding oversight. G2 Leaders are appointed as necessary. They are responsible for making disciples within their group and for leading their group to engage in missions ministry. All new G2 groups and leaders must be approved by the Elders and the groups must be led in accordance with the mission, vision, values, and strategy of Doxa Church. While the G2 leaders do not serve on the Deacon team, they must meet the qualifications of a Deacon in 1Tim.3. Groups comprised of adult men and women must be led either by men or by men and women together.

Section 2.07 Quarterly Meetings, Budget, and Voting

Each quarter the Elders will hold a joint meeting with the Deacons to discuss church business, receive ministry updates, share vision and strategic decisions, and pray for the church. These meetings are primarily for the purpose of maintaining fidelity to the vision, mission, and strategy of Doxa Church in every ministry.

The church budget for the following year will be discussed at the fourth quarterly meeting and must be finalized at least one week prior to the annual partnership meeting in December so the partners can vote on it. A majority vote of the Elders and Deacons present is sufficient to pass all items.

Any transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of one of the Elders or Deacons, or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction must be disclosed to the Elder Board. The Elder board will then review the matter, and if a conflict of interest is possible, the individual partner will be asked to recuse himself or herself from voting on the matter.

Article III. LEAD PASTOR AND STAFF

Section 3.01 Lead Pastor

The Lead Pastor shall meet the qualifications for an Elder stated in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. He shall preach the gospel, administer the ordinances, coordinate public services, watch over the partners, promote the spiritual interests of the church, and supervise staff members. The Lead Pastor shall be a man who is cooperative with The Evangelical Free Church of America. He shall also be in accord with and uphold the Constitution and By-Laws of Doxa Church. He shall be an ex-officio member of the Elders.

When a vacancy occurs, the Board of Elders shall make temporary provisions for the duties of the Lead Pastor. The Board of Elders will take the lead in forming a pastoral search committee. Upon their approval of the committee's candidate, the Board of Elders shall then recommend the candidate to the partnership. A call shall consist of a favorable vote by at least three-fourths of the votes cast at a business meeting held two weeks after public notice has been given. The vote shall be by secret ballot.

The Lead Pastor shall be elected by the partnership for an indefinite period of time.

If the Lead Pastor desires to resign, or if three-fourths of the votes cast at a business meeting call for the termination of his ministry, a notice must be given in writing by either party sixty days in advance of the terminating date, unless waived by mutual consent of the Lead Pastor and the Board of Elders. The vote shall be by secret ballot. If the partnership approves the termination of the Lead Pastor, the Board of Elders, at its discretion, may remove some or all of the responsibilities of the Lead Pastor. This action will not affect pay or benefits. If the Lead Pastor is found to be living in sin or is willfully neglecting his responsibility, he shall be relieved of his preaching responsibility by the Board of Elders.

Section 3.02 Ministry Staff

The Ministry Staff shall consist of people who are employees of Doxa Church who report to the Lead Pastor. The hiring process for Ministry Staff shall be approved by the Board of Elders. There is no vote of the partnership necessary for the hiring of ministry staff other than approving the budget.

Section 3.03 Support Staff

The Support Staff shall consist of all other employees of the church that are not Ministry Staff. This staff will report to a manager who is responsible for their hiring, work delegation, and performance. There is no vote of the partnership necessary for the hiring of support staff other than approving the budget.

Section 3.04 Misconduct of Other Church Staff

If a member of Doxa Church Ministry or Support staff, except the Lead Pastor, commits a grievous act of misconduct, he/she may be terminated immediately by a vote of the Elders.

Section 3.05 Pastoral Search Committee

- Shall be elected for the calling of the Lead Pastor.
- Shall consist of seven members, four of these shall be elected by the partnership at a called business meeting by a two-thirds majority of those partners present and voting.
- In addition, the Board of Elders shall select three of its members to serve on this committee.

Article IV. MEETINGS

Section 4.01 Annual Business Meeting

The annual business meeting shall be held in the quarter prior to the beginning of the church fiscal year, upon the time and date set by the Board of Elders. The purpose of the meeting shall be for the election of church officers, approval of the church budget, reception of annual reports, and transaction of other business as may be necessary. The fiscal year of the church shall be set by the Board of Elders. A simple majority of the partners present and voting shall be necessary to pass all items of business unless stated otherwise in the Constitution or the By-Laws. No absentee or proxy voting will be allowed. The chairman of the Board of Elders will preside at business meetings, the vice-chairman in his absence.

Section 4.02 Section 4.2 Special Business Meetings

Special business meetings may be called by the Board of Elders as deemed necessary. A special business meeting may be called by the partnership if a petition is presented to the Board of Elders signed by ten percent of the voting partners.

Section 4.03 Section 4.3 Notice of a Special Business Meeting

Notice of a special business meeting shall be announced at least eight days prior to the business meeting and at two public worship services. Twenty-five percent of all partners present and voting at any business meeting shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of transacting business.

Article V. PROPERTY

Section 5.01 Authority

The Board of Elders shall have the authority to determine the use of church property. No individual shall have rights of ownership to the church property, real or personal, since all contributions to this non-profit organization are freely given for the work of gospel ministry.

Section 5.02 Conveyance or Encumbrance of Property

Conveyance or encumbrance of real or personal property in excess of 10% of the annual budget must be made at a business meeting. Any action involving property in excess of 10% of the annual budget must

receive at least two-thirds of the votes cast by the partnership at a business meeting. Instruments of conveyance or encumbrance shall be executed in the name of the church by the officers of the church. The Board of Elders shall have the authority to acquire and dispose of other property not in excess of 10% of the annual budget.

Article VI. CONFERENCE DELEGATES

Doxa Church will endeavor to send delegates each year to the EFCA National Conference and the Great Lakes District Conference.

Article VII. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to these By-Laws may be recommended to the partnership by the Board of Elders at a business meeting, and shall require a two-thirds majority of the votes cast to pass. It shall become effective immediately. Such a motion shall be introduced in writing to the partnership by the Board of Elders at least thirty days prior to the business meeting.

Article VIII. OPERATIONS MANUAL

A supplement to these By-Laws, known as an operations manual, may be created and shall contain job descriptions, financial policies, employment policies, other general policies, and other matters not outlined herein.