

CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS

Fellowship Life Bible Church / Gilberts, IL

PREAMBLE

We declare and establish this Constitution and Bylaws to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, and to oversee the body in an orderly manner through the oversight of men who lead God fearing lives & teach biblical living (Titus 1:5-12). This Constitution and Bylaws preserves the liberties of each individual partner of **Fellowship Life Bible Church** and the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches.

Article I: Name

The name of this body shall be **Fellowship Life Bible Church**. The significance of the name is connected to the fellowship we have in Christ, that we seek to **live** out together and in serving others, allowing God's Gospel truth from His Bible to guide us, as a local **church** gathering under the watchful care of servant hearted Godly elders, as God's men to lead us.

Article II: Purpose

The purpose of **Fellowship Life Bible Church** shall be to glorify God through making disciples that are transformed in Christ (Romans 12:2), Engaged in Serving (Matthew 20:28), & Compelled in Evangelism (1 Thessalonians 2:8). This includes proclaiming the Good News of the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ for our sins, baptizing those who repent and believe the Gospel, and teaching believers to live under the Lordship of Christ by obeying the Word of God (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8). This Church shall actively seek to plant & strengthen other churches as God provides opportunities. The oversight of this Church is expressed through the leadership of Elders that are assessed, trained, and mutually affirmed from within the congregation. It is an autonomous church and, therefore, is not subject to the control of any other ecclesiastical body. However, it may seek formal relationships with associations and churches of like-minded faith and conviction.

Article III: Statement of Faith

God in the Trinity

We believe in the one true God (John 17:3), the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19-20). He created all things (Revelation 4:11) and upholds all things by the Word of His power (Hebrews 1:3). In Him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). He is a God of truth and without iniquity, He is just and right (Deuteronomy 32:4) and He shall judge the world (Psalm 9:8). He is holy, good, compassionate, graceful, loving and merciful (Exodus 33:19-20; Psalm 36:5-10; Isaiah 6:1-7; Isaiah 54:10; Revelation 1:12-18.)

We believe that God's characteristics and His attributes can be seen and understood. His attributes fall into two categories: communicable and incommunicable. God's communicable attributes are those characteristics that humans can share. This is possible by a person being made in the image of God and through the process of sanctification in a person's life. Some of these attributes are love, holiness, faithfulness, truthfulness, goodness, grace, mercy.

Those attributes that are incommunicable—those not shared with humanity—include God's self-sufficiency, immutability, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, eternity, infinity and sovereignty.

God's characteristics and the outflow of His nature can be clearly seen in God's creation (Psalm 104:14-35; Acts 14:17; Romans 1:20-22) so that a person has no excuse for denying the existence of God.

We believe that the Godhead eternally exists in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These three are one God, having precisely the same nature, attributes and perfections, and are worthy of precisely the same homage, confidence and obedience (Mark 12:29; John 1:1-4). Everything of eternal importance depends upon what a person believes about God, and what a person believes about the Trinity deeply affects that person's spiritual life and eternal destiny.

We believe that the doctrine of the Trinity is core to the Christian faith because:

it makes clear the reality of the triune God as taught in the Old and New Testaments; it differentiates Christianity from all other forms of theism by preserving the unity of God while recognizing the diversity of God; the Christian faith disintegrates at the denial of the deity of Jesus Christ and at the denial of the Father and Holy Spirit within Trinity; it has significant implications for life of the individual Christian and life in the local church, i.e. the submission of the Son to the will of the Father, the Spirit's work in calling attention to the Son rather than to Himself.

Jesus Christ

We believe in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe He is the manifestation of God in the flesh and is, therefore, sovereign creator and king (John 1:1-3, Revelation 19:11-16). He is completely righteous, holy, good and true. (Colossians 1:15-16). We believe He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He is true God and true man (John 1:1; John 1:14; John 1:18; John 14:8-9; 1 Timothy 3:16).

Resurrection of Jesus Christ

We believe in the resurrection of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, His ascension into heaven and His present life for us as High Priest and Advocate (Acts 1:3; Acts 1:9; Hebrews 7:25-26).

Holy Spirit

We believe in the deity of the Holy Spirit and that His primary ministry is to glorify Jesus Christ (John 16:14).

The Holy Spirit regenerates the sinner upon belief in Christ, baptizing the believer into one body of which Christ is the head. The Holy Spirit indwells, guides, instructs, fills, comforts and empowers the believer for godly living (Mark 13:11; John 14:26; John 16:8; John 16:14-15; Romans 5:5; 1 Corinthians 3:16). The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, of God's righteousness and of coming judgment (John 16:8-11). We do not encourage the use of sign gifts. We believe that God gives spiritual gifts to individual people not for the display of self, but for the benefit and the building up of the church. (Ephesians 4:11-12). We affirm that the spiritual gifts must be exercised in accordance with biblical guidelines.

We seek to emphasize the excellent way of love, and the use of spiritual gifts to build up the local church (John 13:15; Titus 3:5; Ephesians 4:11-12; Romans 8:9-17; Romans 12:4-8; Romans 12:11-13, 12:19; 1 Corinthians 12:12; Galatians 5:25; Hebrews 4:1-4).

Scriptures

We believe the Scriptures of the Old Testament and New Testament are verbally inspired by God and inerrant in their original writings. We believe the 66 books of the Old Testament and the New Testament are God's complete and sufficient revelation and therefore carry God's authority for the well-being of mankind. There is no additional written revelation from God. (Psalm 119:97-104; Psalm 119:160; Matthew 5:18; John 5:46-47; John 10:35; 2 Timothy 3:15-16; Revelation 22:18-19).

Man

We believe man was created in innocence under the law of God but, by voluntarily transgressing, fell from his sinless state. Consequently, all mankind is sinful (Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:23-24; Romans 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3). All people are spiritually dead sinners not only by inheritance, but by their own choice and therefore are under just condemnation without defense or excuse. We believe that without exception every man and every woman is totally depraved and needs a Savior (Genesis 3:1-6; Romans 3:10-19; Romans 1:18, Romans 1:32; Romans 5:1-2).

Salvation

We believe that a person is spared punishment for his sin by grace alone through faith alone (Ephesians 2:8-9). The Scriptures teach that the Lord Jesus Christ died for sins as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice. We believe that a person receives salvation through God's unmerited gift of grace and by faith receives Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord. That person is justified on the basis of Jesus Christ's shed blood on Calvary and Christ's righteousness immediately is credited to that person. Each person who receives Christ as personal Savior is born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby becomes a child of God and is eternally secure in that relationship. We believe the Holy Spirit baptizes each believing person into the body of Christ at the moment of salvation and that there is no second baptism of the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:6-11; Romans 8:37-39; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 2 Corinthians 5:21).

Heaven, Hell, and the Return of Christ

We believe in the blessed hope: the personal, bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ at the end of the age. He will eradicate evil and establish righteousness. His people will worship and serve Him forever. The return of Christ has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the saved and the lost. The saved are raised to eternal, conscious delight in heaven (Matthew 25:34; John 14:2; 2 Corinthians 5:1; Revelation 2:7) the lost are raised to eternal torment in hell in conscious separation from God. (Matthew 8:11; Matthew 10:28; Matthew 13:49-50; Mark 9:47-48; Luke 12:5; Revelation 21:8).

These convictions regarding the blessed hope and its consequences are settled orthodoxy in the universal Christian church. No millennial position holds the status of settled orthodoxy. We do not believe that one millennial view should be made a test of fellowship or unity.

The Church

Upon accepting Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, a believer becomes part of His body, which is the church. There is one church universal, composed of all those throughout the world who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The Scriptures command believers to gather regularly and frequently in order to devote themselves to worship, prayer, teaching of the Scriptures, observance of the ordinances of baptism (immersion) and communion (symbolic), fellowship, service to the body through the development and use of talents and gifts, and outreach to the world in fulfillment of the command of Christ to make disciples of all believers (Ephesians 5:23; Romans 12:1; Acts 2:42-46; 1 Corinthians 14:26; Matthew 28:18-20).

Wherever God's people meet regularly in obedience to this command, there is the local expression of the church – under the oversight of elders and other supportive leadership. The church's members are to work together in love and unity, intent on the ultimate purpose of glorifying Christ (Ephesians 4:15-16).

Church Oversight

Pastor, Elder, Overseer, Shepherd and Deacon –

The Bible's teaching on the subject of church offices is found primarily in 1 Timothy 3:1-16 and Titus 1:5-9. Although there are several terms used for the offices of the church, i.e. Pastor, Elder, Overseer, Shepherd and Deacon, analysis of these terms indicates that Pastor, Elder, Overseer and Shepherd are used interchangeably. Deacon has a meaning distinct from the others.

Elder Qualifications

(1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9) format changed to paragraph vs bullet point

Above reproach, Husband of one wife, Sober-minded, Self-controlled, Respectable, Dignified, Able to Teach, Believing children who are not morally corrupt or insubordinate, manages his household well, Not a drunkard or addicted to much wine, Not violent, but gentle, Not quarrelsome, Not antagonistic, Uncontentious, Prudent, Not a lover of money, Not a new convert, Not arrogant, Not quick-tempered. Not violent, Not greedy for gain, Temperate, Hospitable, Lover of good, Well thought of by outsiders, Self-controlled, Upright, Holy, Disciplined, Holding firm to the Word so he may instruct in sound doctrine, Able to rebuke those who contradict sound doctrine

Deacons Qualifications

The Bible teaches that Deacons are proven as servants (Acts 6:3). The qualifications for Elders and Deacons are the same regarding the individual's character, but different in aptitude. The elders are to be able to teach while the deacons are to be able and proved as servants. (1 Timothy 3:8-12)

Dignified, Not double-tongued, Not addicted to wine, Not greedy for dishonest gain, Possessing a clear conscience, Tested as servants and found blameless, Spouse must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded and faithful, Holding to the mystery of faith with a clear conscience, Husband of one wife, Manages household well

Missions

Realizing that the cause of Christ extends beyond any one local fellowship, we commit ourselves to an ongoing ministry of extending the call of Christ to make disciples around the world through proclaiming the Gospel, sharing our lives, and seeking to meet needs inside and outside of the church (Matthew 28:19-20, 1 Thessalonians 2:8, Galatians 6:9-10).

Giftedness and Success

The LORD gives spiritual gifts to equip His people and build His church. Spiritual gifts are not given for the glory of the one demonstrating the gift. The LORD is to receive complete thanks and total honor for giving the gifts and He is to receive all praise for the fruit that results from the exercise of the gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Ephesians 4:11-16).

A gifted individual is a vessel used by the LORD as a simple conduit to carry His gift for the blessing of others. The gifted individual is a servant who is obligated to reject glory from men and live in a way that points to the LORD alone as the source of all gifts. (Micah 6:8; Romans 12:3-21; 1 Corinthians 3:3-9; 1 Corinthians 4:7-13; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Galatians 5:22-26; Colossians 3:23; 1 Peter 5:1-3).

The Scriptures picture the church as a human body, with each part fulfilling a specific and important role (1 Corinthians 12:12-31). The body cares for itself in love to build itself in strength and usefulness to the LORD.

The LORD's church is to be led in strength, but it is not to be led as a competitive corporation or as a military force (Micah 6:8; Matthew 20:20-28; Luke 9:46-48; John 13:5-17; Romans 12:3-21; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; 1 Peter 5:1-3).

The church is the bride of Christ and as such is to be led by godly individuals who are worthy to be followed as they themselves follow Christ and demonstrate His character (Romans 12:3-21; 1 Corinthians 11:1; Ephesians 5:25-32; 1 Peter 5:2-4). Churches are to be shepherded by those who are marked by Integrity, Authenticity, Trust, Leadership and Service (John 10:1-18).

We are committed to the servant leader example Jesus described as the Good Shepherd. (John 10:1-18)

We rejoice in the numeric growth of each Gospel - Centered church , but we do not emphasize numeric growth of the local church as the key measure of success nor as clear evidence of the LORD's favor upon a local church. Rather, we emphasize God dependent hard work, courage, devotion, faithfulness and steadfastness in shepherding the local church (1 Peter 2:4-12; Revelation 2:3). We adhere to the admonition, If your church is small in number, don't let it be small because you're spiritually lazy, mentally lazy or physically lazy.

The two ordinances (clarity regarding ordinance vs sacrament to clarify no salvation vs salvation) of the local church are Believer's Baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper (Matthew 28:19; Acts 8:36-38; Romans 6:4; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26). These ordinances are not required for salvation but rather are primary necessary steps of obedience for followers of Christ.

The local church is to be financially supported by the free will offerings of its partners (1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7).

We affirm that the entirety of the Scriptures teaches and requires that marriage be reserved for and restricted to a union between one biological man and one biological woman, (Genesis 1:27, Matthew 19:4-6, Romans 1:26-27). God designed marriage between one man and one woman for 5 primary purposes: portrayal of Christ and His Church, complementary partnership, relational intimacy, sexual fulfillment, and procreation (Genesis 1:27-28; Genesis 2:18; Genesis 2:23-25, 1 Corinthians 6:18, 1 Corinthians 7:9, Ephesians 5:31). The Scriptures encourage and honor sexual intimacy only within the covenant of marriage between one man and one woman (Matthew 19:4-6, Hebrews 13:4).

Recognized representatives, elders, and pastors of Fellowship Life Bible Church are limited to conducting Christian wedding services on behalf of a biological man and a biological woman. Any facilities owned or leased by Fellowship Life Bible Church shall be used accordingly under our oversight.

Article IV: Partnership

Covenant of Partnership

Partners of this Church are committed to pursuing Biblical Fellowship 1 John 1:3 (joining in church events, services, prayer, serving, relationship building)

Partnership Details: The partnership of this Church shall consist of those persons who have publicly confessed Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, have declared His Lordship over their lives through baptism by immersion, and have committed to participate in the Church as described in the above listed Covenant points. Partners shall be classified as either active or inactive as defined by this document.

Section 1: Qualifications for Partnership

2 Requirements through a Confession of Faith in Christ:

1. Gospel Confession

GOD Initiates Relationship-Gen. 1:26-28

MAN Sinfully Breaks relationship with God-Rom. 3:23, Rom. 6:23,

CHRIST Lovingly Offers Salvation-1 Cor. 15:3-4, 2 Cor. 5:21

RESPONSE of Man = Confess & Repent-Rom. 10:9-10, Acts 20:21, Acts 5:30-31

2. Baptism Obedience (through believers baptism of immersion) Mt. 28:19-20

3 Commitments:

1. Transformed in Christ --- Romans 12:2

...through drawing near to **God**:

- individually in personal times of bible study & worship (Rom 12:2)
- biblical fellowship (ie. life groups and doing life together Acts 2:42)
- corporate worship (Heb. 10:25, giving Matt. 6:20-21, 2 Cor. 9:)

2. Engaged in Serving --- Matthew 20:28

...through humbly **servicing the Lord** in:

- family, roommates, friends, co-workers (Eph. 6:1-4, 1 Tim. 5:8, Eph 5:22-33)
- church (1 Peter 4:10, 1 Cor. 12:12-26)
- community periodically (Gal. 6:10)

3. Compelled in Evangelism --- 1 Thess. 2:8-12

...through **evangelism**:

- prayer for boldness & wisdom as God to draw people to himself (Eph. 6:18-20, Jn 6:44)
- inviting relationships that may lead to dialogue about Christ (Rom. 10:14)
- living in a way that spreads the love of Christ (1 Thess. 2, 2 Cor. 2:15)

4 Reasons why Partnership matters:

- 1- The leaders are accountable to **Partners** for their own spiritual maturity (Heb. 13:7, 1 Tim. 3:1-7, Tit. 1:5-11)
- 2- The local church leaders are accountable to God to care for the **Partners** "amongst" them (Annual Check-Ups) (spiritual growth, benevolence, discipline, unity Acts. 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1-5, Acts 6, Heb. 13:17, Matt. 18:15-20)
- 3- The **Partners** are accountable to leaders for making their lives available to be shepherded for maturity in spiritual growth and support (Heb. 13:17, 1 Tim. 5:17-18, Col. 1:28-29)
- 4- The local body of Christ serves the Lord together; both the leaders & **Partners**, so the leaders know who is partnering with them for the work of the Gospel (1 Cor. 12:12-26, Eph 4:11-12)

Transfer: Partners of other churches of like faith and practice may be received as partners upon testimony of their faith and their current good standing as partners of their previous church. **Fellowship Life Bible Church** shall send for a letter of partnership from the previous church. All transfer partners shall have been baptized by immersion following conversion.

Statement: Any person not a partner of another church or a partner of a church not of like faith and practice may request partnership by statement by testifying to their personal conversion, baptism by immersion and acceptance of **Fellowship Life Bible Church** partnership process and doctrinal statement.

Section 2: Procedure of Partnership

All prospective partners shall meet with the Pastor, Elders or their representatives to assure alignment with the above qualifications. Prospective partners must subscribe to the partnership covenant, doctrinal statement and constitution of **Fellowship Life Bible Church**, including the provisions for church restoration and discipline.

Section 3: Transition or Removal

Any partner in good standing who desires a letter of recommendation to another church of like faith is entitled to have this letter granted. Upon notification of a partner's death, their name shall automatically be removed from the Church partnership roll.

A partner who becomes an offense or harmful spiritually or otherwise to the Church and the cause of Christ by unrepentant immoral or un-Christian conduct may have their partnership removed. This action shall be taken by the elders after they have followed the guidelines set forth by Jesus Christ in Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 5 and Galatians 6:1-5, Titus 3:9-11.

Section 4: Church Reconciliation & Discipline

Purpose of Church Reconciliation & Discipline: The Church is commanded to reconcile its partners or adherents when they continue in open, habitual sin. Church reconciliation & discipline has multiple purposes including:

- Encouraging the sinning partner to repent, thus restoring him/her to fellowship with Christ and the Church (Galatians 6:1).
- Upholding and maintaining the moral purity and blameless testimony of the Church (Matthew 18:15-18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Corinthians 2:6-11 & 7:8-10; 1 Timothy 5:19,20; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14, 15).
- Cleansing sin in the Church (1 Corinthians 5);
- Rebuking sinning elders (1 Timothy 5:20);
- Leading the Church to a healthy fear of sinning (1 Timothy 5:20).

Process of Church Reconciliation & Discipline: If a partner or an adherent, i.e. a person who the elders discern has made **Fellowship Life Bible Church** his or her church home, departs from the standard of Scripture and engage in conduct which conflicts with biblical principles, then the steps of reconciliation & discipline outlined in Matthew 18:15-17 is one approach that the elders may follow to restore the person to fellowship:

1. Private reproof of the sinning partner
2. Reproof before two or three witnesses.
3. Public reproof before the Church including removal of partnership, which can be restored per elder confirmation of repentance (Matt 18:15-20).

One of the goals of church reconciliation & discipline is the restoration of a sinning partner to a right relationship with Christ and to full fellowship with this congregation. The entire process of church discipline outlined above shall be carried out in a spirit of Christian love, care, and sensitivity (Galatians 6:1-5).

The elders of the Church are responsible to discern whether other Scriptures may be rightly applied in a process of church discipline. These passages include but are not limited to Romans 16:17-19, 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, 2 Corinthians 2:5-11, 2 Corinthians 13:10-11, 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15, 1 Timothy 1:3-7, 1 Timothy 5:3-8, 1 Timothy 5:17-25, Titus 1:9-14, Titus 3:10-11, James 5:19-20, Revelation 3:19.

Section 5: Restoration

Any person whose partnership has been removed may be restored by the elders upon evidence of repentance **2 Cor. 7:10-11**.

Article V: Church Officers

All officers must be partners of the Church. The officers of this Church shall be as follows:

Section 1: Elders.

The spiritual, business and legal matters of the Church will be managed by its Board of Elders. The elders are the spiritual leaders of the Church (1 Peter 5:1-4). All decisions affecting the overall doctrine, direction, discipleship, and discipline of the Church will be the responsibility of the Board of Elders. "Elders" in these bylaws are synonymous with "directors." The functions and responsibilities of the Board of Elders will consist of, but not be limited to, the following.

The Scriptures are clear that the elder's responsibility is the spiritual oversight of the congregation. The elder's responsibility can be broken down into four main areas:

1. Ensuring that the **doctrine** of the Church remains purely biblical; all doctrinal issues in the Church will be settled by the Board of Elders.
2. Ensuring that the **direction** of the Church remains consistent with the statement of purpose as outlined in the Constitution and Bylaws.
3. Administering in love and humility the biblical process of Church **reconciliation & discipline** as outlined in Matthew 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 5, Galatians 6:1-4, Titus 3:10 and other Scriptures.
4. **Discipleship** and the Shepherding of the Flock of God that is amongst us 1 Peter 5:1-5 as defined through Partnership. (1 Thessalonians 5:14, Colossians 2:6-7, Acts 2:42)

Section A. Structure

The Scriptures teach that a plurality of elders governed individual New Testament churches (Acts 14:23; Acts 20:28; Titus 1:5; Philippians 1:1). A plurality of godly elders, exercising their individual giftedness, squares with the Scripture's teaching that wisdom is found in a multitude of godly counselors (Proverbs 11:4; Proverbs 12:15; Proverbs 15:22; Proverbs 19:20; Proverbs 24:6.). **This concept of a Plurality of Leadership does not eliminate the likelihood that one or more elders will be more public in their ministries or more influential in their work on the Elder Board due to responsibilities entrusted by the elders in the day to day operations of the church. All elders will have equal authority, but not necessarily equal influence. The elders co-labor with a strong dependence on Christ like character & the fruit of the Spirit as they are guided by God's word.**

The Elder Board will assist the Senior Pastor to ensure healthy ministry development and strong accountability among the elders. Agenda items for the elder meetings should be submitted to the Elder Board prior to an elders' meeting. An elders' meeting may not be held without a majority of the elders present and the entirety of the elders informed. The selection of the Elder Board will be influenced primarily by the Senior Pastor, with consensus agreement of the entire Board of Elders. The Board shall have no fixed term. The Elder Board will consist of the Senior Pastor, and additional elders, who will assume authority and responsibility as agreeable and necessary.

The Senior Pastor, under the authority of the Elder Board, will manage the meetings of the elders unless otherwise agreed upon by elders consensus to entrust such responsibilities to allow a chairman, that will have the availability, experience, and relationship to work closely with the Senior Pastor.

Section B. Number, Selection, and Tenure

The number of Elders serving on the Board of Elders is to be a minimum of three (3) and may vary from time to time by resolution of the Board of Elders without amendment of these Bylaws. In no case will the number of Elders serving on the Board of Elders be less than three. There is to be a healthy inclusion of staff and non-staff elders.

When the need arises for additional elders, a candidate will be recommended from within the body by the existing Board of Elders. In keeping with the biblical injunctions regarding authority structures within the Church, only men will be considered for the office of elder. The Board of Elders will conduct an in-depth interview with the candidate (and spouse) after necessary training & observation has been conducted to discern the nominee's biblical qualifications, ministry chemistry and competency as described in Acts 20:28-35 and 1 Timothy 3. It will also be required that satisfaction of the elder candidate's Christ centered character qualities and home life are in line with Titus 1:5-12 in regards to qualifications for eldership as witnessed in specific by the Elders. As part of this process, the candidate may serve a season as a Support Elder, in which he will participate in elder meetings until it is clear whether he should become an Elder. A Trial eldership commonly lasts between three and six months.

After these steps are successfully concluded, the congregation will be reminded of the biblical requirement for elders and given 30 days to speak personally with the nominee if they are aware of any disqualifying characteristics. If any matters remain unresolved, the nominee or Church partner should approach one of the Elders and request that the candidate's name be withdrawn from consideration. The existing Elders will discern and determine whether the candidate is to be withdrawn from consideration for the office of Elder.

The Senior Pastor automatically serves as an Elder for as long as he serves in that role in the Church and, because of his public teaching, ministry presence, training, and hours of responsibility before the congregation, may be considered a "primary servant or under shepherd" as a member of the Elder Board.

Although Scripture indicates no mandated limitations regarding fixed terms for Elders, Elders serve on the Board for a minimum two-year commitment. At the end of two years the commitment will be reviewed, along with a possible recommitment and reaffirmation by fellow Elders. During the review, both the individual and the other Elders will evaluate his continued service on the Board of Elders, again considering the biblical qualifications, as well as any personal factors that might affect his service. An individual's service on the Board of Elders may be discontinued by his own decision or by a consensus decision of the other elders. A person leaving the Board of Elders would not preclude his service as a future Elder, subject to the ordinary selection process.

Shorter commitments may be requested of some Board partners in order that approximately one-half of the Board's commitments expire each year to help preserve community among those actively serving on the Board. Notwithstanding the length of commitment, each actively serving Elder will continue serving until his successor has been appointed and is actively serving.

Section C. Qualifications

Qualifications for the office of Elder (1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-11 ESV):

(1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9) same content but paragraph format

Above reproach, Husband of one wife, Sober-minded, Self-controlled, Respectable, Dignified, Able to Teach, Believing children who are not morally corrupt or insubordinate, manages his household well, Not a drunkard or addicted to much wine, Not violent, but gentle, Not quarrelsome, Not antagonistic, Uncontentious, Prudent, Not a lover of money, Not a new convert, Not arrogant, Not quick-tempered. Not violent, Not greedy for gain, Temperate, Hospitable, Lover of good, Well thought of by outsiders, Self-controlled, Upright, Holy, Disciplined, Holding firm to the Word so he may instruct in sound doctrine, Able to rebuke those who contradict sound doctrine

Section D. Resignation and Removal

Any partner of the Board of Elders may only resign prior to the expiration of their term if they move away from the area, are disqualified or are incapacitated. Such resignation, which may or may not be made contingent on formal acceptance, is to take effect on the date of receipt or at any later time specified therein.

In order to remove a partner serving as an Elder, the Board of Elders will first conduct a reasonable inquiry and hearing concerning the cause of removal. Persons under consideration for removal may not be counted for the purpose of establishing a quorum nor have any influence in such proceedings. A consensus of the Board of Elders, not including the Elder under consideration for removal, will constitute removal of that Elder, after the elder has had adequate opportunity to explain his position on the cause presented.

Section E. Vacancies

Any vacancy occurring in the Board of Elders by reason of any increase in the number of Board of Elders partners or resignation or termination of a Board of Elders partner is to be filled by the Board of Elders as soon as is practical.

Section F. Compensation

Elders will not receive any stated compensation for their services on the Board of Elders, but by resolution of the Board of Elders expenses of attendance, if any, may be allowed for each regular or special meeting of the Board of Elders. Nothing herein contained will be construed to preclude any Elder serving the Church in any other capacity and receiving reasonable compensation for that service. This Section will not preclude the Pastors receiving compensation as pastors.

Section G. Manner of Acting

The Book of Acts reveals that the authority for the direction of the affairs of the church was vested in the elders. The elders are responsible to be sensitive to the leadings of the Holy Spirit and to discern on behalf of the congregation the Holy Spirit's direction. It is the intent of the Board of Elders to employ the method of Consensus as the most appropriate decision-making model. Consensus means either unanimity among the elders or a general—although not necessarily uniform—agreement after all present

elders have had a fair and reasonable opportunity to be heard. Consensus will have been achieved if most elders are in agreement and the elders in the minority are willing to support the view of the majority. Consensus requires that each and all elders publicly support the decision of the entire Elder Board.

When the Elders believe an issue is sufficiently significant to require congregational input, the elders will present the pertinent information to the congregation. The congregation will have opportunity to give input to the elders. It is the responsibility of the elders to discern the direction of the Holy Spirit through the truth of the Scriptures, prayer, an understanding of the pertinent issues at hand and input from the congregation.

Section 2: Pastor(s)

The Scriptures use the term *Pastor* and *Elder* and *Shepherd* interchangeably. The term *Pastor* is a reference commonly referring to those who serve in full-time, vocational, shepherding ministry in a local church.

The Senior Pastor has as his first responsibility a personal relationship to God as outlined in Romans 12:1-2. As a man of God, his second responsibility is to his family. He also will devote himself to leading the church and preaching the Scriptures. He will, with great patience, reprove, rebuke, exhort, encourage, admonish, console, implore and remind in order to maintain spiritual unity and rightly divide the Word of Truth (1 Timothy 3:1-7; 4:12-15; 2 Timothy 2:15; Titus 1:7-9, 1 Thessalonians 2:11, 5:14).

The Senior Pastor shall, with the elders, provide spiritual leadership to the church. The Senior Pastor will preach and teach the Word of God in order to “equip the saints for the work of the ministry” (Ephesians 4:11). He will publicly proclaim the gospel which is the “power of God to salvation to all who believe” (Romans 1:16). He will oversee all worship services. The Senior Pastor will work with the elders to shepherd the congregation. The Senior Pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the Church staff to perform their tasks.

All individuals in the Church are responsible to use their spiritual gifts in working to bless the Church, equip the saints for the work of ministry in the Church and build up the Church. The Church will support the Senior Pastor and elders with their prayers to allow them the greatest opportunity for effective ministry. The Senior Pastor is an *ex officio* member of all boards and committees.

The Senior Pastor supervises the staff. In the event of a vacancy in the Senior Pastor role, the elders will select a new Senior Pastor.

The Pastor, with the support of elders, oversees the hiring of staff and selection of volunteers that are committed to the Gospel mission that the church is focused on. Staff and Volunteers are expected to be in full acceptance, belief, and affirmation in word and deed of the church statement of faith and bylaws. Rejection or non-acceptance of the church statement of faith and/or bylaws in word, belief, or actions would likely disqualify a person from roles of service due to the potential for grumbling, complaining, or causing divisions amongst the body.

Section A. Selection

All members of the pastoral staff will be selected by the Senior Pastor and reviewed for affirmation by the Board of Elders. The Senior Pastor will automatically be a member of the Board of Elders. The elders may nominate additional partner(s) of the pastoral staff to serve on the Board of Elders, but the number of staff elders will not exceed the number of non-staff elders.

Section B. Term

All pastoral staff members will serve at will for an indefinite period of time. The Senior Pastor is responsible and accountable in the performance of his duties to the Board of Elders. It is understood that each and all elders are accountable in the performance of their duties to the entire elder board. Elders share mutual accountability with one another. All other pastoral staff partners are directly responsible to the Senior Pastor and indirectly to the Board of Elders. A pastoral staff member may only be dismissed with clear reasoning by the Senior Pastor with review by the Board of Elders.

Section C. Duties

The responsibility of the Senior Pastor will be to faithfully preach God’s Word and model the priority of discipleship within the Church. He and/or commissioned representatives of the elders will preach God’s word in conducting both funerals and weddings based on biblical consistency of marriage between a man and a woman (Eph 5:22-33, Gen. 2:23-25). He will give oversight and direction to all ministry staff and work with the Board of Elders in carrying out the overall vision of **Fellowship Life Bible Church**.

Section D. Qualifications

The qualifications are equivalent to the biblical qualifications of an Elder, with obvious gifting in accordance with the pastoral role to be filled.

Section 3: Deacons

The Deacons serve under the authority of the Board of Elders in various capacities within the Church. Among their responsibilities are Facilities, Finances and Benevolence. The elders will define additional ministries that are to be represented on the Deacon Board.

Deacons are to fulfill the logistical ministry needs of the Church, thereby freeing the Senior Pastor and elders to concentrate on the ministry of the Word and prayer as described in Acts 6:4. As the Scriptures indicate, Deacons are servants who strengthen the Church and honor God through their ministry. (Acts 6 and 7; Acts 6:3; Philippians 1:1, 1 Timothy 3:13). Under the oversight of the Senior Pastor and Elders, Deacons are primarily responsible to ensure that the details of various ministries of the Church function with focused efficiency and proper order. The Elders are to determine which ministry leaders are to serve as Deacons. The Elders will follow the process of deacon selection outlined in Section A below.

The role of deacon at **Fellowship Life Bible Church** does not include public teaching of scripture, nor governing the Church (those are senior pastor and elder responsibilities). Rather, it is designed to serve the details of the congregation's practical ministry needs.

Section A. Selection

The Elders will seek recommendations from within the congregation to fill the role of Deacon. The Elders will consider each candidate and will interview a selected candidate (and his spouse) after necessary training and observation to discern the candidate's biblical qualifications, ministry chemistry and competency. The Elders may give the Deacon Board opportunity to interview a deacon candidate and offer its input to the Elders regarding selection. An Elder will be present at the interview with the Deacon Board. It will also be required that satisfaction of the deacon candidate's Christ centered character qualities and home life are in line with 1 Timothy 3:8-13, in regards to qualifications for deacons as witnessed in specific by the Elders

As part of this process, the candidate may serve a season as a Trial Deacon, in which he will participate in deacon meetings until it is clear whether he should become a deacon. A Trial Deaconship may last up to three months.

After the Elders have selected a deacon candidate, the congregation will be reminded of the biblical requirement for a deacon and will be given 30 days to speak personally with the candidate regarding biblical qualifications. If any matters remain unresolved, the candidate or Church partner should approach one of the Elders and request that the nominee's name be withdrawn from consideration. The Elders will discern and determine whether the candidate is to be withdrawn from consideration for the office of deacon.

Section B. Term

Since Scripture indicates no fixed term for deacons, no specific term of office is recommended. Instead, each Deacon, upon appointment, will be asked for a two-year commitment of active service. At the end of two years the commitment will be reviewed, along with a possible recommendation to recommitment and reaffirmation. The Board of Elders has the final responsibility and final authority to appoint, re-appoint or remove a Deacon.

During the process of term renewal, both the candidate and the Board of Elders will evaluate his continued service as a Deacon, considering the biblical qualifications as well as any personal factors that might affect his service. An individual's service as a Deacon may be discontinued by his own decision or by the consensus decision of the Board of Elders. The Elders will participate in the review process.

A person leaving the Deacon Board would not preclude his service as a future Deacon, subject to the regular selection process.

Section C. Duties

The Deacon Board, working under the authority of the Elders, will be responsible for the oversight of all financial, facilities and benevolence operations of the Church.

Section D. Structure

The Deacon Board will consist of an Elder Overseer, who will be appointed by the Board of Elders. The Elder overseer of the Deacon Board will be a member of the Elder Board. The Treasurer will be the deacon in charge of finances or an elder charged with overseeing the Deacon role of finances if a Deacon is not available for such a role. The other Deacons will assume responsibilities as agreeable and as needed.

Section E. Meetings Of Deacons

All meetings of the Deacons will be convened by their designated Elder Overseer. Minutes of each meeting will be maintained by a Recording Secretary who is to be appointed by the Elder Overseer. Meetings will be conducted under the same rules of notice, quorum and action as prescribed for by the Elder Board.

Section F. Qualifications for Deacons

Deacons are to fulfill the requirements of 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Deacons are to be dignified, tested in their serving, blameless, husband of one wife, and faithful managers of household and children. Deacons are to hold to the faith with a clear conscience. Deacons are not to be double tongued, not addicted to wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. Besides holding the ability to teach and rebuke those who contradict sound doctrine, Deacons are expected to meet the same character qualifications as elders.

In addition, all Deacons must be active partners of the Church. Change of partnership status for any Deacon partner will automatically remove such person from participation as a Deacon.

Section F. Resignation and Removal

A Deacon may resign during his two-year commitment of active service only if he moves out of the area, is disqualified (but must be given adequate opportunity to explain the situation) or becomes incapacitated and unable to perform his duties. Written notice of a move out of the area should specify the effective date of the resignation. This notice may be given to the Elder Overseer of the Deacon Board or to the Secretary of the Church. A Deacon may be removed at any time by consensus of the Board of Elders.

Section 4: Other Officers.

The officers of the Church are Senior Pastor, Secretary and Treasurer. The Elder Board Secretary and Treasurer will be appointed by the Board of Elders. Such other officers (such as a Chairman) and assistant officers, agents and assistant agents as may be deemed necessary may be elected or appointed by the Board of Elders. Any two (2) or more offices may be held by the same person, except that the offices of Senior Pastor or Secretary may not be held by the same person concurrently.

Section A. Secretary

The Secretary will have the following responsibilities: (a) be responsible for the keeping of the minutes of the Elder Board and Committee meetings in one or more books provided for that purpose; (b) ensure that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws or as required by law; (c) be custodian of the corporate records; and (d) in general, discharge all duties incident to the office of Secretary and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the Senior Pastor or by the Elder Board.

Section B. Treasurer

The Treasurer will have the following responsibilities: (a) monitor the financial books of the Church; (b) keep regular books of account; (c) render to the Board of Elders from time to time as may be required (at least monthly), an account of the financial condition of the Church; and (d) in general, discharge all duties incident to the office of Treasurer, and such other duties as may be assigned by the Senior Pastor or by the Board. The Treasurer may sign, along with any other officer of the Church authorized by the Board, such documents and deeds of the church as necessary or appropriate including but not limited to mortgages, bonds, contracts or other instruments which the Board of Elders has authorized to be executed except in cases where the signing or execution thereof will be expressly delegated by the Elder Board or by this Constitution and By-Laws to some other officer or agent of the Church or will be required by law to be otherwise signed or executed and, in general, will discharge all duties incident to the office of Senior Pastor and such other duties as may be assigned by the Elder Board.

Section C. Compensation

Officers will not receive any stated compensation for their services as Elder Board officers but, by resolution of the Elder Board, expenses of attendance, if any, may be allowed for each regular or special meeting of the Elder Board, provided that nothing herein contained is to be construed to preclude any Officers serving the organization in any other capacity and receiving compensation for that service. **This Section will not preclude the Pastors receiving compensation as pastors.**

Section D. Vacancies

Any vacancies due to resignation or termination are to be filled by the Elder Board as soon as practical. Any partner so selected to fill a vacancy will serve for the unexpired commitment of their predecessor, unless otherwise directed.

Section E. Delegation of Authority

In case of the absence of any officer of the Church, or for any other reason that it may deem sufficient, the Board of Elders may, by consensus, either delegate the powers or duties of such officer to any Elder or employee of the Church, for the time being, or may eliminate some or all of such powers or duties of such officer.

Section F. Removal

Any officer or agent may be removed by the Elder Board whenever, in its judgment, the best interest of the Church is to be served thereby.

Section G. Qualifications

The Senior Pastor and Secretary must be Elders. The Treasurer must be either an Elder or a Deacon of the Church and meet the qualifications specified in this Constitution for the position of Elder or Deacon.

Article VI: Church-Wide Meetings

Section A. Church Council

At the discretion of the Elder Board, a Church Council meeting may be called to provide input to the Elder Board. A Church Council consists of the three divisions of church leadership: the pastoral staff, which is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Church; the Deacons, who direct the finances, benevolence and facility operations of the Church; and the Elders, who oversee the entire Church. The Elders may also include, when desired, other ministry leaders in a Church Council meeting. All are to be under the authority of, and in submission to, the Board of Elders.

Section B. Annual Meeting

The Church will hold an annual or more frequent meeting as needed under the authority of the elders for the purpose of a informing and updating partners. Other church visitors or attendees interested in partnership may observe this meeting, at the discretion of the elders.

Article VII. Amendments and Dissolution

Section A. Amendments

The Constitution and Bylaws may be altered, amended or repealed and a new Constitution and Bylaws may be adopted by a consensus of the Elders present at any regular meeting or any special meeting of the Elders called for that purpose. Notice of the proposed amendment (including the suggested text of the change) shall be given to each Elder at least 20 days before the meeting at which the change is to be decided.

The Elders will notify the Deacons in advance of a proposed amendment to the Constitution and By-Laws and receive Deacon comments on the proposed amendment. The Elders retain full authority in deciding whether to adopt any amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws. The Elders will notify the congregation after an amendment to the Constitution and Bylaws has been adopted, but prior to final approval.

Section B. Dissolution

Upon dissolution of the organization, the Elder Board shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the Organization, distribute all assets, both real and personal, to an organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for Christian religious purposes and shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under non-profit and/or Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code, and shall use said assets exclusively for the purposes of the organization in such manner, or as the Elder Board shall determine. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the appropriate court of law located in the county in which the principal office of the organization is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for Christian and/or exempt purposes.

Article VIII: Miscellaneous

Section B. Indemnity

The Directors and Officers of Church shall be indemnified by **Fellowship Life Bible Church** to the fullest extent permissible under all the laws applicable to it, including the laws of the State of Illinois. Except as may be otherwise provided under the laws of the State of Illinois, the Directors of **Fellowship Life Bible Church** may adopt a resolution authorizing the purchase and maintenance of insurance on behalf of any agent of **Fellowship Life Bible Church**, including any director, officer, employee or agent, against liabilities asserted or incurred by the agent in such capacity, or arising out of the agent's status as such, whether or not **Fellowship Life Bible Church** would have the power to indemnify the agent against such liability under the its Articles of Incorporation, this Constitution and By Laws, or the laws of the State of Illinois.