

CONSTITUTION OF LIVING WORD BIBLE FELLOWSHIP OF DALLAS

PREAMBLE

We, members of Living Word Bible Fellowship of Dallas, Texas, accepting Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, and the Holy Bible as the full and sufficient rule of our faith and practice, do bind ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ. We hereby declare and establish the following constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith.

ARTICLE 1: NAME

This body shall be known as Living Word Bible Fellowship of Dallas.

ARTICLE 2: OBJECTIVES

This church, with Jesus Christ as its head, shall follow biblical principles to establish the New Testament Church, to lead people to Christ, to build up believers to be His disciples, and to unite and mobilize members in order to fulfill His Great Commission.

ARTICLE 3: STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Doctrinal Statement of Living Word Bible Fellowship of Dallas shall be as follows:

- 1) We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the inspired Word of God. We believe it to be without error and the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Jude 3)
- 2) We believe that there is one God, eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; Luke 3:21-22).
- 3) We believe that the eternal Son of God became incarnate in the Lord Jesus Christ, being born of the virgin Mary, and is true God and true man. (Jn. 1:1, 14, 18; 5:18; Phil. 2:6-11; Col. 1:19; 2:9; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 1:1-9; 1 Jn. 5:20)
- 4) We believe that salvation is received by faith alone in Christ, who died for our sins and bodily rose again. (Acts 4:12; 16:31; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Eph. 2:8-9)
- 5) We believe that the risen Christ lives today, and will bodily return to the earth again at a time unknown to us, but for which we eagerly await (Acts 1:11; 2 Peter 3:1-13; Rev. 19:11-16).
- 6) We believe that the believer and the unbeliever will be resurrected bodily in their own order: the saved unto everlasting blessing, the lost unto everlasting punishment (1 Cor. 15:1-50; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 20:11-15; 21:22)
- 7) We believe that all believers are members of the universal Church, the body of Christ. We believe this universal church is to gather together as a local church to follow the pattern of New Testament doctrine and practice, including the ordinances of water baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe the local church should join together voluntarily to worship God and to glorify Jesus Christ by proclaiming the Gospel and, through the exercise of their personal spiritual gifts, leading others to follow Him. (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 12:4, 27; Eph. 1:22-23; Eph. 5:24-30)

ARTICLE 4: ORDINANCES

This church shall observe the only two ordinances taught in the New Testament:

- 1) Baptism: This is the immersion in water to identify with Christ's death, burial and resurrection. Only those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior can be baptized as an outward, public testimony of the inward change.
- 2) The Lord's Supper : The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate His Second Coming.

ARTICLE 5: CHURCH COVENANT

The members of Living Word Bible Fellowship of Dallas, agreeing together regarding the testimony and responsibility of the true child of God, do enter into the following Covenant of Membership:

[FAITH]

Realizing my guilt before God, I have confessed my sin to Him, and received the Lord Jesus Christ, who bore my sins on the Cross, as my personal Savior .

I acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord of all my life, and seek to confess Him as such before others as it may please God to empower me.

I trust in the power of the Holy Spirit, who lives in my heart, to keep me, guide me, and lead me in the ways of holy living.

[DOCTRINE]

I accept the Bible as the inspired Word of God, and my final authority in all matters of faith and practice.

I have read the Doctrinal Statement of Faith for Living Word Bible Fellowship and am in complete agreement with all statements contained therein.

[PRAYER]

I recognize my responsibility to pray regularly for the work of this church, for its Pastor, officers, and members, that the witness of all concerned may be to the glory of God and to the salvation of souls.

[SUPPORT]

I recognize my responsibility to make attendance at all church meetings a priority. I realize attendance is not a requirement, but I purpose to make my regular presence a sign of commitment to our church family and to Christ.

I recognize my responsibility to extend the Kingdom of the God through regular financial support of the work of my church. I understand that the amount and frequency of my giving should be governed by my conscience before God, and not under any external compulsion.

[SERVICE]

I recognize my responsibility to be a blessing to others by using the spiritual gifts God has given me. I purpose to take an active role in the program of the church, and to serve joyfully as I am directed by the Lord.

[UNITY]

I recognize my responsibility to guard my tongue from destructive criticism and gossip, submit to the discipline of this church, and work for the good of all members, thus pleasing the Head of the church, our blessed Lord Jesus Christ.

STATEMENT OF MEMBERSHIP

I do this day affirm my desire to join myself to the members of Living Word Bible Fellowship. I recognize this covenant is an expression of the members' shared commitment to follow Jesus Christ and to faithfully proclaim Him to the world. In joining them, I purpose to uphold the principles and responsibilities of this agreement in my daily life and practice.

BYLAWS OF LIVING WORD BIBLE FELLOWSHIP OF DALLAS

1.0 CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This is a sovereign and democratic Bible church under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership of Living Word Bible Fellowship shall be composed of persons who are saved by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and are listed on the church rolls. The membership shall be referred to as the church. The church also reserves the right to terminate the membership of those who deviate from the beliefs and covenant of this church body as set forth in this Constitution and Bylaws.

1.2 ADMISSION OF NEW MEMBERS

- 1) Any person attaining the age of twelve (12) will be eligible for admission into the church.
- 2) Anyone who expresses faith in Jesus Christ as his/her Savior, and who accepts the doctrines and purpose as stated in the constitution of the church, may be received as a candidate for membership.

1.3 PROCEDURES FOR ADMISSION

- 1) Any candidate for membership must first meet with the pastor of the church to express his/her testimony of Christian faith and to receive instruction regarding the doctrines and covenant of Living Word Bible Fellowship. The pastor holds the right to refuse membership to any person who in his opinion does not satisfactorily meet the standards and practices as set down in the Constitution and Bylaws of this church.
- 2) Upon recommendation by the pastor and the deacons, the applicant will then be accepted into the church by a majority vote of the members present and voting at any congregational meeting.

1.4 TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP

- 1) Adult member: Any person who is eighteen (18) or over will be classified as an adult member.
- 2) Junior member: Any person who is under eighteen (18) will be classified as a junior member. A junior member will automatically become an adult member when he/she attains the age of eighteen. A junior member has no right to vote.

1.5 DUTIES AND RIGHTS OF MEMBERS

- 1) All members are expected to be faithful to Christ and the church in worship, witness, fellowship, ministry, financial support, and participation in membership meetings.
- 2) All adult members are entitled to vote in all elections and on all agenda items presented for approval in all membership meetings in person.
- 3) All adult members of at least one year of membership are eligible for consideration as candidates for elective offices.
- 4) All adult members who have been absent from corporate worship for 12 consecutive months will be precluded from voting in any membership meeting.

1.6 DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

- 1) It shall be the practice of Living Word Bible Fellowship to encourage its members to take every reasonable measure to assist any troubled member. The pastor, other ministerial staff, and deacons are available for counsel and guidance. Redemption rather than punishment should be the guideline which governs the attitude of one member toward another.
- 2) Should some serious conditions exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, every reasonable measure will be taken by the pastor and by the deacons to resolve the problem. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance. But, finding that the welfare of the church will best be served by the exclusion of the member, the church may take this action by a three-fourth vote of the members present at a meeting called for this purpose; and the church may proceed to declare the offender to be no longer in the membership of the church.
- 3) Any person whose membership has been terminated for any condition which has made it necessary for the church to exclude him/her may upon his/her request be restored to membership by a vote of the church upon evidence of his/her repentance and reformation.

1.7 TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership may be terminated by any one of the following ways:

- 1) By death.
- 2) By letter of recommendation to transfer membership to another church upon request of the member.
- 3) By letter of request from the individual to terminate membership.
- 4) By a three-fourth vote of the members present at any membership meeting upon recommendation by the board of deacons.

2.0 THE BOARD OF DEACONS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The church will have two or more deacons. Deacons are to be recognized as the servants of the church and associates of the pastor. The number of deacons elected will be determined by the need of the church.

2.2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF DEACONS

- 1) Assist the pastor and the ministerial staff in performing pastoral ministries.
- 2) Proclaim the Gospel to unbelievers.
- 3) Engage the church in a fellowship of worship, witness, education, and ministry.
- 4) Care for the church members and other persons in the community.
- 5) Guard the unity and harmony of church members.
- 6) Assure the faith and spiritual welfare of church members.
- 7) The Board of Deacons will serve as the membership committee.

2.3 QUALIFICATIONS OF DEACONS

- 1) Must meet the requirements of Biblical teaching (I Timothy 3:8-13).
- 2) Must be a member of this church for at least two years.

2.4 PROCEDURES FOR ELECTION OF DEACONS

- 1) Nomination of a candidate shall be made in writing, signed by five members to the Board of Deacons. All nominations shall be submitted to the Board of Deacons at least one month prior to the annual membership meeting.
- 2) The pastor and the deacons will interview the candidates. Upon unanimous recommendation by the Board of Deacons, the candidates shall be presented to the congregation at a regular worship service two weeks prior to the annual membership meeting.
- 3) The deacons shall be elected by a three-fourth majority of the members present at the annual membership meeting.
- 4) The elected deacons will be installed by the pastor.

2.5 TERMS OF OFFICE

- 1) Each deacon shall serve a three-year term.
- 2) In case of death or removal or incapacity to serve, the church may elect a deacon to fill the unexpired term if it is longer than one year.
- 3) At the end of each three-year term, the deacon must begin the nomination process as if he had never served.

2.6 MEETING

The Board of Deacons shall hold meeting on a regular basis or as often as necessary.

3.0 CHURCH STAFF

3.1 INTRODUCTION

All church staff must be members of the church.

3.2 PASTOR

The pastor is responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament church. The pastor will lead the congregation, the Board of Deacons, and the church staff to perform their tasks.

The pastor is the leader of pastoral ministries in the church. As such he works with the deacons and church staff to: (1) lead the church in the achievement of its mission, (2) proclaim the gospel to believers and non-believers, and (3) care for the church members and other persons in the community.

His responsibilities include the following:

- 1) Provide leadership for congregational services, and lead in conducting the church ordinances (Baptism and the Lord's Supper).
- 2) Officiate wedding ceremonies and funeral services.
- 3) Work closely with the deacons in their training and performance in their work of proclamation, caring and building up of the church fellowship.
- 4) Serve as chairman of the Board of Deacons and provide administrative leadership for the total church program. Be an ex-officio member of all organizations, departments and committees.
- 5) Supervise church staff according to the plan of staff organization, and provide for staff training and development.
- 6) Make himself available for counsel to church members in private and scheduled visitation.

3.3 CALLING OF PASTOR

The pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever the vacancy occurs. A pastor selection committee shall be appointed by the church to seek out the pastor, and its recommendations will constitute a nomination. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one name at a time. Election shall be by ballot in a meeting called specifically for that purpose, of which at least one week's advanced notice should be given. Affirmative vote of three-fourth of those present is required for approval. The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request. The pastor shall give an advance notice of at least three months at the time of resignation before terminating his responsibilities as pastor.

3.4 OTHER MINISTERIAL STAFF

- 1) The church shall call or employ such staff members as the church shall need. A job description shall be written when the need for staff members is determined. Such staff members shall be recommended to the church by the Board of Deacons and approved by the church. At least four weeks advance notice at the time of resignation should be given.
- 2) Associate Pastors, in addition to other rights, privileges, and responsibilities afforded by their position, shall sit as voting members of the Board of Deacons.

3) Assistant Pastors shall not hold any voting rights above those afforded by membership in the Church.

3.5 OTHER VOCATIONAL STAFF

The secretaries and custodians shall be employed as needed and likewise be recommended to the church by the Board of Deacons and approved by the church. At least two weeks advance notice at the time of resignation/termination should be given.

3.6 TERMINATION OF PASTOR AND MINISTERIAL STAFF

The pastor and other ministerial staff can only be terminated upon the following grounds:

- 1) [a] breach of faith - no longer observes the Constitution, the Statement of faith and the Covenant of this church, or [b] break-down of personal integrity; and
- 2) three-fourth approval vote of those present in a membership meeting called specifically for that purpose.

AMENDMENTS OF CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

Changes in this constitution and bylaws may be made at the annual membership meeting, provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous meeting, and copies of the proposed amendment be furnished to each member present. Amendments to the constitution shall be by two thirds vote of all members of the church present entitled to vote; amendments to the bylaws shall have a concurrence of a majority of the members present and voting.