

**CONSTITUTION  
OF  
FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH  
WINCHESTER, VIRGINIA**

**ARTICLE I - Name**

Fellowship Bible Church

**ARTICLE II - Purpose**

Out of a desire to glorify God as a spiritual community, the mission of Fellowship Bible Church is to prepare and deploy dependent disciples of Jesus Christ, who change their world for Him as they are being changed by Him.

**ARTICLE III - Doctrinal Statement of Faith**

Attached

**ARTICLE IV - Government of the Church**

The church shall be governed by a Board of Elders. These men are pastors to the congregation and shall have ultimate authority in determining Christ's will for the church. The elders shall have the authority to appoint new elders and deacons.

**ARTICLE V - Membership**

Members shall be admitted into the church by:

1. Profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and a verbal testimony before at least two elders of the church.
2. Having been baptized after receiving Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
3. Attendance at New Members Orientation classes covering policy guidelines and the Philosophy of Ministry of Fellowship Bible Church.

**ARTICLE VI - Officers**

The officers of the church shall consist of the elders and deacons. The elders are charged with the spiritual matters and the spiritual welfare of the church. The deacons are charged with the temporal needs of the church and administrative duties.

# **DOCTRINAL STATEMENT OF FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH**

## **THE BIBLE**

We believe that the words of the Old and New Testaments are the complete and final word of God verbally inspired by God and without error in the original manuscripts in any category of knowledge, including science and history, and is of supreme and final authority in all matters about which it speaks. We believe the Bible is to be interpreted in a normal and literal way. (John 10:35; Matthew 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; I Corinthians 2:13; I Timothy 5:18; I Corinthians 2:14-16; John 16:12-15)

## **GOD**

1. We believe in one God who is eternal and immutable, who exists in three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (John 6:27; Hebrews 1:8; Acts 5:3,4; Deuteronomy 6:4; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Matthew 28:19; Isaiah 48:16)
2. We believe that Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the promised Messiah, God the Son in human flesh. That he is totally without sin; was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary; and is both fully God and fully man. (John 1:14; Matthew 1:18-25; John 11:33; John 8:40; Hebrews 1:8; 2:14)
3. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Person, possessing all the distinctively divine attributes. He is God. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He regenerates, seals, and sets apart the believer to a holy life. At regeneration He baptizes the believer into the body of Christ and comes to indwell him permanently, bestows spiritual gifts on each one for the common good of the church and fills each one yielded to Him. (I Corinthians 2:10, 11; 12:11, 13; Isaiah 40:13, 14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 5:18)

## **THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE WORK OF CHRIST**

1. We believe that Jesus Christ died for the sins of all humanity as a substitutionary sacrifice and that all who believe in Him are declared righteous on the basis of His shed blood. (2 Corinthians 5:14; Mark 10:45; Romans 3:24-26; I Peter 3:18; Romans 5:8,9)
2. We believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ, in His ascension into heaven, and in His present life there for us. Jesus now serves as High Priest, Intercessor, and Advocate in our behalf with the Father. (Romans 1:4; John 20:25-27; I John 2:1; Hebrews 7:25; Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9-11)
3. We believe in the personal, bodily return of Jesus Christ in the glory of His Father to set up on earth a kingdom in which He shall reign in righteousness and peace. (Acts 1:11; Matthew 24:30; Revelation 20:4-6; Isaiah 9:6,7; Isaiah 11:2-5)

## MAN

1. We believe that the first man and woman were created in the image of God and thus man has great value in God's sight. But man sinned and consequently experienced not only physical death but also spiritual death (which is separation from God). The consequences of this sin affect the entire human race. All human beings are born lost and separated from God and with a sinful nature. (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:17; 3:6; Romans 5:12-19; Ephesians 2:1-3; Mark 7:20-23; John 2:24, 25)
2. We believe that all believers still possess a sinful nature in this life, but that God has made full provision for believers to resist this sinful nature and to live for God through identification with Christ, a knowledge of the Bible, and by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. (Romans 5:12-19; 6-8; Ephesians 2:1-3, 10; 2 Peter 1:3; Philippians 2:12-13)
3. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men. Believers are resurrected to enjoy eternal life with God. Unbelievers are resurrected to experience judgment and eternal suffering, and separation from God. (I Corinthians 15:52; I Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 20:4-6, 12-15; John 5:28-29; Daniel 12:2; Revelations 21:1-8)

## SATAN

We believe that Satan is a personal being, the author of sin who provoked the fall of man. We believe that he is the great adversary of God's person, program and people, but is a defeated foe who is destined to eternal punishment in the lake of fire. (Isaiah 14:12-15; Matthew 4:1-11; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; I Peter 5:8; Revelation 20:10)

## SALVATION

1. We believe that man's redemption and reconciliation with God occurs as an act of God's grace, not of works, that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice and that all who believe in His death and resurrection are justified on the grounds of His shed blood. (Romans 3:21-24; I Corinthians 15:1-4; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 1:12-13; Titus 3:5-7; I Peter 1:18-21)
2. We believe that all believers are kept eternally secure by the power of God through the new birth, the indwelling and sealing of the Holy Spirit, and the intercession of Christ. (John 10:28-30; John 14:16, 17; I Peter 1:23; Ephesians 4:30; I John 2:1; Romans 8:38, 39; I Corinthians 5:5; Colossians 3:3)

## **THE CHURCH, THE BODY OF CHRIST**

1. We believe that the Church in its invisible form is universal, the true body and bride of Christ. All believers from the day of Pentecost until the Church is caught up to heaven are members of the universal Church regardless of organization affiliation.
2. We believe that as the individual Christian has a responsibility to make Christ known, so does every local church have a corporate responsibility for making Christ known.
3. We believe in the imminent return of Christ for the Church. All members of the body of Christ, living or dead, will at that time be caught up to be with the Lord forever. (I Thessalonians 4:13-18; I Corinthians 15:51-53; Titus 2:13)
4. We believe that the spiritual oversight of the local church is given to a multiplicity of leaders known as elders who share equal authority. The elders are assisted by deacons when necessary to carry out the ministry. Elders and deacons are selected according to standards expressed by the New Testament. (Acts 14:23, 20:28; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-4)
5. We believe that Christ ordained the observance of water baptism and the Lord's Supper until He returns. We believe that baptism is an outward testimony of a person's belief in Christ and should be administered upon confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that the Lord's Supper is a memorial of Christ's death, the elements being symbols of His body and blood. We believe that every Christian in good standing has a right to partake of the elements of the Lord's Supper but that participation should always be preceded by solemn self-examination. (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 4:4-6; Acts 1:5; 11:15-16; I Corinthians 11:24-26, 28)

# FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH

## ~ CHURCH BYLAWS ~

As you read these bylaws, we encourage you to look up and study the Bible passages that are cited next to particular provisions. If such study does not answer all of your questions and concerns, please do not hesitate to approach our pastor or one of our elders, who will be happy to talk with you about these bylaws.

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# FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH

## BYLAWS

### 1. **Name:**

The name by which this organization shall be known in law shall be Fellowship Bible Church herein referred to as "the church".

### 2. **Constitution:** (see attached: pg. 2)

The Constitution of the church, which is subordinate to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, consists of the Doctrinal Statement and the articles of the church government. Whenever possible, these bylaws shall be interpreted so as to be consistent with the Constitution; should any bylaw be found to contradict a provision of the Constitution, the Constitution shall control.

### 3. **Organization:**

Fellowship Bible Church shall be recognized as a nonprofit religious organization under the laws of the State of Virginia.

### 4. **Purpose and Limitations**

The purposes of the church are:

- a. To bring glory and honor to the triune God by promoting true worship, mutual edification, holy and upright living and gospel witness;
- b. To operate exclusively for religious, charitable, and educational purposes within the classification of legal charities; and no part of the net earnings of the organization shall inure to the benefit of any private stockholder or individual; and no substantial part of the activities of the organization, or any receipt of its funds, shall be utilized for any other purpose except those purposes mentioned above;
- c. To handle affairs pertaining to property and other temporal matters as required by the civil authorities.
- d. The church shall not have or issue shares of stock, and no dividends shall be paid. No part of the income or assets of the church shall be distributed to any member or officer without full consideration. The church is prohibited from lending money to guarantee the obligation of a member or officer of the church. No member or officer of the church has any vested right, interest or privilege in or to the assets, property, functions, or activities of the church. The church may contract in due course, for reasonable consideration, with its members or officers without violating this provision.

- e. The mission arm of Fellowship Bible Church is called “Chain of Grace Ministries.” The missionaries that function under the direct authority of the Elders of Fellowship Bible Church are considered representatives of Chain of Grace Ministries. As such, they function as independent entities in terms of the financial and ministry matters.

## **5. Membership**

- a. The membership shall consist of all communicant and non-communicant members, all of who have the privilege of pastoral oversight, instruction, and government by the church. Communicant members are those who have made a credible profession of faith in Christ, have been baptized, and have been received into membership as provided in section 5b. Non-communicant members are to be dedicated children of communicant members.
- b. A person may be received into communicant membership by confession of faith before two elders of the church and having given evidence of post profession baptism. In order to be received into membership, a person must complete the membership classes.
- c. All communicant members who are at least eighteen years old and in good standing in the church shall be voting members. ("Good standing" means that a member is not presently under the censure of suspension or deposition). Any voting member in attendance at a duly called meeting shall be entitled to one vote on matters brought before the congregation. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted.
- d. Members may be removed from membership at their own request by informing the Board of Elders of their intention to withdraw and the reasons therefore. If a member requests to withdraw because of specific problems or disappointments with the church, the Board of Elders shall attempt to resolve those matters so that the member may remain in the church and enjoy greater fruitfulness and personal spiritual growth. If the Board of Elders is unable to resolve those matters, it shall offer to assist the member in locating a church of like faith and practice that can respond more effectively to his gifts and needs (see Matt. 18:12-20; bylaw 14; Guidelines on Church Discipline).
- e. Members may also be removed from membership by order of the Board of Elders when they: persistently, over an extended period of time, and without adequate reason absent themselves from the stated services of the church; unite with another church; cannot be found for a period greater than two years; or are removed by excommunication for persistent impenitence (see bylaw 14; Guidelines on Church Discipline). Non-communicant members may be removed from membership with their parents or when they reject the covenantal responsibility of submission to home or church and neglect the ongoing exhortation of the Board of Elders to profess faith in Christ.

## 6. Elders and Deacons

- a. Elders and deacons must be male voting members. In order to be eligible, a man shall have been a member in good standing in the church for at least one year, shall have received appropriate training under the direction or with the approval of the Board of Elders, and shall have served the church in functions requiring responsible leadership.
- b. Elders, individually and jointly with the vocational pastors, are to lead the church in the service of Christ. They are to watch diligently over the people committed to their charge to prevent corruption of doctrine or morals. Persistent evils that cannot be corrected by private admonition should be brought to the notice of the Board of Elders. They should visit the people, especially the sick, instruct the uninformed, comfort the mourning, and nourish and guard the people of the church. They should pray with and for the people. They should have particular concern for the doctrine and conduct of the pastors and should help and encourage them in their labors.
- c. Deacons shall show forth the compassion of Christ in a manifold ministry of mercy toward the saints and strangers on behalf of the church. As delegated and directed by the Board of Elders, they shall minister to the temporal needs of members and friends, and see to the care and maintenance of church property.
- d. The Board of Elders shall appoint members of the Board of Deacons who meet biblical qualifications as stated in Acts 6:1-7 and I Timothy 3:8-13. The Board of Deacons shall select from within its group a chairman and secretary. The chairman shall preside over the meetings and have general oversight of their work. The Board of Deacons shall have no less than two (2) members, and additional members may be added as needed. Members of the Board of Deacons shall serve for a three-year term. After two successive terms, that member must be off the board for one year after which time he may be re-appointed. An elder or deacon who had been previously appointed and who has been divested of the office must be re-appointed for service by the Board of Elders.
- e. The Board of Elders shall appoint the Elders of Fellowship Bible Church from the membership of the congregation who meet the Biblical qualifications as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. The number of actively serving elders shall not be less than three (3) and not more than ten (10). The Board of Elders will include the senior vocational pastor.
- f. Actively serving members of the Board of Elders shall serve for a six (6) year term. At the end of the six year term, each member is encouraged to serve a one year sabbatical from active service; but upon agreement of all members of the Board of Elders, that requirement may be waived. Tenure of office shall not be applicable to the senior vocational pastor. The Board of Elders may grant leave of absence as it deems necessary. No member of the church staff, except the senior vocational pastor, may be an actively serving member of the Board of Elders.

- g. An elder or deacon may be divested of his office by church discipline for an offense in doctrine or life.

## **7. Vocational Pastors**

- a. Vocational pastor(s) shall meet the Biblical qualifications as stated in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
- b. Each vocational pastor shall have a job description, prepared by the Board of Elders, describing the duties of his ministry and is charged with fulfilling that ministry for the good of the body.
- c. Vocational pastor(s) shall receive stated salaries for their services.
- d. It is the charge of the senior vocational pastor to oversee the rest of the pastoral and ministry staff and serve as the liaison of the staff with the elder board. All the vocational pastoral staff is accountable to the elder board.
- e. A pastor may resign his position upon thirty days written notice. The ministerial relationship may be dissolved by the act of the elder board. If the ministerial relationship is dissolved, the church may provide the pastor with at least one month's severance pay, and may consider providing such other assistance as is necessary for his needs and the needs of his family while he seeks other employment.

## **8. Board of Elders (Board of Directors)**

- a. The Board of Elders is the governing body (Board of Directors) of the church. The Board of Elders shall have the power and authority to make rules and regulations not inconsistent with the laws of the State of Virginia, the constitution, and these bylaws. The Board of Elders shall manage the business affairs of the church, oversee all matters concerning the conduct of public worship, and it shall concert the best measures for promoting the spiritual growth and evangelistic witness of the congregation. It shall receive, dismiss, and exercise discipline over the members of the church, supervise the activities of the Board of Deacons and all other organizations of the congregation, and have final authority over the use of church property.
- b. The Board of Elders shall have a chairman who shall preside over the board meeting, a vice-chairman, and a secretary. The chairman shall not be the vocational pastor. Each officer shall be elected by the board members for a period of one year. They may be elected for a second and third year.
- c. The Board of Elders shall have final authority for affairs pertaining to property and other temporal matters as required by civil law for nonprofit corporations. In particular, the Board of Elders shall be responsible for the acquisition and disposition of church property, which includes the management of its financial resources. Neither the Board of Elders nor its delegates shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, pledge or in any manner encumber any church real estate

without first notifying the membership at a congregational meeting. The Board of Elders may delegate to the Board of Deacons or to other communicant members such of these responsibilities as it deems appropriate.

- d. A regular meeting of the Board of Elders shall be held at least once per month. Special meetings may be called at the request of the chairman of the Board of Elders.
- e. A majority of the Board of Elders shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the board. When the church is without a vocational pastor, the Board of Elders shall provide for the filling of the pulpit.
- f. The act of three-fourths of the elders present at a Board of Elders meeting at which a quorum is present (when the vote is taken) shall be the act of the Board of Elders. An elder shall be deemed to have approved of an action taken if he is present at a meeting of the Board of Elders unless: (1) he objects at the beginning of the meeting (or promptly upon arrival) to holding the meeting or transacting business at the meeting; or (2) his dissent or abstention from the action taken is entered in the minutes of the meeting; or (3) he did not approve the action and he delivers written notice of dissent or abstention to the presiding officer of the meeting before its adjournment or immediately after adjournment of the meeting.
- g. If at any time there are less than three persons on the Board of Elders, the elder board may elect from the Board of Deacons and, if necessary, from among the voting members, individuals who will temporarily serve as directors of the church for the purpose of carrying out any required corporate business. The terms of such temporary directors shall expire when sufficient elders have been elected and ordained to bring the number of the Board of Elders to three or more. If the Board of Elders shall cease to exist or become so small as to prevent it from working effectively, the deacon board shall provide for the selection and ordination of elders from within the congregation, or, with the consent of the congregation, may appoint elders or ministers, or both, normally from within the same congregation, to be an acting Board of Elders or to augment the existing Board of Elders temporarily.
- h. The Board of Elders may meet by means of a conference telephone call or similar communications equipment, provided all persons entitled to participate in the meeting received proper notice of the telephone meeting, and provided all persons

participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time. A member participating in a conference telephone meeting is deemed present in person at the meeting. The moderator of the meeting may establish reasonable rules as to conducting business at any meeting by phone.

- i. If the Board of Elders appoints a vice-chairman, he shall perform, in good faith, the moderator's duties if the moderator is absent, dies, is unable or refuses to act. If the vice-chairman acts in the absence of the moderator, the vice-chairman shall have all of the powers of and be subject to all the restrictions upon the moderator. If there is no vice-chairman or the vice-chairman is unable or refuses to act, then the secretary shall perform the moderatorial duties.
- j. The secretary of the church shall in good faith (1) create and maintain one or more books for the minutes of the proceedings of the members; (2) provide that all notices are served in accordance with these bylaws or as required by law; (3) be custodian of the church and corporate records; (4) subscribe the minutes of all meetings of the members; (5) when requested or required, authenticate any records of the church; (6) keep a current register of the post office address of each member; and (7) in general perform all duties incident to the office of secretary and any other duties that the moderator or the Board of Elders may assign to the secretary.
- k. The treasurer shall: (1) have charge and custody of and be responsible for all funds and securities of the church; (2) receive and give receipts for moneys due and payable to the church from any source, and deposit all moneys in the church's name in banks, trust companies, or other depositories that the Board of Elders shall select; (3) submit the books and records to a Certified Public Accountant or other accountant as directed by the Board of Elders; and (4) in general perform all the duties incident to the office of treasurer and any other duties that the moderator or Board of Elders may assign to the treasurer; (5) the treasurer shall report to the Board of Elders through the chairman. The treasurer shall make a written report of the church finances to the elder board once a month. The accounts shall be audited biannually, and (6) if required by the Board of Elders, the treasurer shall give a bond for the faithful performance of the treasurer's duties and as insurance against the misappropriation of funds. If a bond is required, it shall be in a sum and with the surety or sureties that the Board of Elders shall determine.
- l. The Board of Elders may establish such committees as it deems necessary for the work of the church.
- m. These by-laws may be amended, altered, or repealed by the act of the Board of Elders and presented to the congregation for review.

- n. The trustees will sign corporation deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, or other Board of Elders authorized instruments.

## **9. Board of Deacons**

- a. The Board of Deacons shall oversee the ministry of mercy in the church and shall collect and disperse funds for the relief of the needy. Other forms of service for the church may also be committed to the deacons. The Board of Deacons shall choose its own officers from its membership.
- b. The Board of Elders shall elect members of the Board of Deacons who meet Biblical qualifications as stated in Acts 6:1-7 and I Timothy 3:8-13. The Board of Deacons shall select from its group a chairman and a secretary. The chairman shall preside over the meetings and have general oversight of their work. The Board of Deacons shall have no less than two (2) members, and additional members may be added as needed. Members of the Board of Deacons shall serve for a three-year term. After two successive terms, that member must be off the board for one year after which time he may be elected again.

## **10. Congregational Meetings**

- a. Bi-annual meetings of the church shall be held in February & June of each year at a date, time, and place to be determined by the Board of Elders. At the annual meeting, the business and state of the church will be presented along with various committee reports, and the transaction of other business as may come before the meeting.
  - 1. Polling the membership: At least once per year, the membership will be asked to list men they view as examples of meeting the biblical qualification of elders and deacons. The results, known only to the Board of Elders, should be considered as a strong indication of God's will.
  - 2. Membership verification to elder and deacon boards: After thorough examination and reaching satisfaction, the Board of Elders shall present the potential elder or deacon's name before the membership for response and opportunity to confirm publicly the biblical qualifications of the man. Those members holding charges against them will be asked to privately communicate such to the Board of Elders. Any charges will be verified and dealt with according to the Scriptures.
- b. The Church budget shall be brought to the church for annual review.

- c. The calling of full-time pastoral staff, the purchase of real estate, or the embarking on a building program shall require a membership vote.
- d. The moderator of such meetings shall be the Chairman of the Board of Elders or his designee.
- e. Special meetings of the church shall be called at a date and location to be determined by the Board of Elders whenever the Board of Elders deems it to be in the best interests of the church.
- f. The date, time, and location of all congregational meetings must be announced orally or in the church bulletin at least two (2) Sundays prior to the time set for the meeting, or by letter mailed at least ten days prior to the meeting. If the congregational meeting is adjourned to a different date, time, or place, notice of a new date, time, and place need not be given if the new date, time, and place are announced before adjournment. A member entitled to a notice may waive notice of the meeting (or any notice required by laws of the State of Virginia or these bylaws) by a written notice signed by the member. The member must send the notice of waiver to the church (either before or after the date and time stated in the notice) for inclusion in the minutes or filing with the church records.
- g. A member's attendance at a meeting waives the member's right to object to lack of notice or defective notice of the meeting, unless the member at the beginning of the meeting objects to holding the meeting or transacting business at the meeting and waives the member's right to object to consideration of a particular matter at the meeting that is not within the purpose or purposes described in the meeting notice, unless the member objects to considering the matter when it is presented.
- h. The affirmative vote of two thirds of those members present shall be required to carry a decision.
- i. The Chairman of the Board of Elders and the secretary of the church shall serve as moderator and clerk in congregational meetings.

## **11. Church Records**

- a. The Board of Elders shall keep the following records: (1) minutes of its meetings, including a record of the administration of the sacraments and changes in the membership of the congregation; (2) minutes of the meetings of the congregation; (3) rolls of the members in the congregation (communicant, non-communicant, and voting), with the dates of their reception; (4) resolution adopted by the Board of Elders; (5) appropriate accounting records; (6) its articles or restated articles of incorporation and all amendments to them currently in effect; and (7) its bylaws or restated bylaws and all amendments to them currently in effect.

- b. A member shall be entitled to inspect and copy, at a reasonable time and location specified by the Board of Elders, any of the church records described above, provided the Board of Elders finds that the member has a proper purpose and is acting in good faith. The Board of Elders may limit access to any records that contain confidential information about a particular person or persons.

## **12. Biblical Counseling**

- a. All Christians struggle with sin and the effect it has on our lives and our relationships (see Rom. 3:23; 7:7-25). Whenever a Christian is unable to overcome sinful attitudes or behaviors through private efforts, God commands that he should seek assistance from the pastors and Elders, who have the responsibility of providing pastoral counseling and oversight (see Rom. 15:14; Gal. 6:1-2; Col. 3:16; 2 Tim. 3:16-4:2; Heb. 10:24-25; 13:17; James 5:16). Therefore, this church encourages and enjoins its members to make confession to and seek counsel from each other and especially from the elders and pastoral staff.
- b. We believe that the Bible provides thorough guidance and instruction for faith and life. Therefore, our counseling shall be based on scriptural principles rather than those of secular psychology or psychiatry. Neither the pastoral nor the lay counselors of this church are trained or licensed as psychotherapists or mental health professionals, nor should they be expected to follow the methods of such specialists.
- c. Although some members of the church work in professional fields outside the church, when serving as pastoral or lay counselors within the church they do not provide the same kind of professional advice and services that they do when they are hired in their professional capacities. Therefore, members who have significant legal, financial, medical or other technical questions should seek advice from independent professionals. Our pastoral and lay counselors shall be available to cooperate with such advisors and help members to consider their advice in the light of relevant scriptural principles.

## **13. Confidentiality**

- a. The Bible teaches that Christians should carefully guard any personal and private information that others reveal to them. Protecting confidences is a sign of Christian love and respect (see Matt. 7:12). It also discourages harmful gossip (Prov. 16:28; 26:20), invites confession (see Prov. 11:13; 28:13; James 5:16), and encourages people to seek needed counseling (see Prov. 20:19; Rom. 15:14).
- b. Since these goals are essential to the ministry of the gospel and the work of this church, all members are expected to refrain from gossip and to respect the confidences of others. In particular, our pastors and elders shall carefully protect all

information that they receive through pastoral counseling, subject to the following guidelines.

- c. Although confidentiality is to be respected as much as possible, there are times when it is appropriate to reveal certain information to others. In particular, when the pastors and elders of this church believe it is Biblically necessary, they may disclose confidential information to appropriate people in the following circumstances:
  - 1. When a pastor or elder is uncertain of how to counsel a person about a particular problem and needs to seek advice from other pastors or elders in this church or, if the person attends another church, from the pastors or elders of that church (see Prov. 11:14; 13:10; 15:22; 19:20; 20:18; Matt. 18:15-17).
  - 2. When the person who disclosed the information or any other person is in imminent danger of serious harm unless others intervene (see Prov. 24:11-12).
  - 3. When a person refuses to repent of sin and it becomes necessary to institute disciplinary proceedings (see Matt. 18:15-20 and bylaw #14) or seek the assistance of individuals or agencies outside this church (see, e.g., Rom 13:1-5).
  - 4. When required by law to report suspected child abuse.
- d. Scripture commands that confidential information is to be shared with others only when a problem cannot be resolved through the efforts of a small group of people within the church (Matt. 18:15-17). Therefore, except as provided in 13.b., a pastor or elder may not disclose confidential information to anyone outside this church without the approval of the Board of Elders or the consent of the person who originally disclosed the information. The Board of Elders may approve such disclosure only when it finds that all internal efforts to resolve a problem have been exhausted (see e.g., I Cor. 6:1-8) and the problem cannot be satisfactorily resolved without the assistance of individuals or agencies outside this church (see e.g., Rom. 13:1-5). This limitation shall apply to but is not limited to the giving of testimony in a court of law and the reporting of abuse.
- e. The pastors and elders may, but need not, provide counselees with written notice of these confidentiality provisions, but these provisions shall be in effect regardless of whether such notice is given.

## **14. Church Discipline**

Church discipline is the exercise of that authority that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed to the visible church for the preservation of its purity, peace and good order. All members of the church are under the care of and subject to the discipline of the church.

Repentance, reconciliation, and restoration is always the purpose for and the goal of church discipline. Mutual accountability and discipline within the church is commanded by God in scripture and is one of the most important responsibilities for a true church of Jesus Christ.

### **SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES:**

Ezek. 34:4,8,16; Prov. 14:12; Prov. 15:9-10, 31-33; Isa. 55:7-9; Matt. 18:12-20; Rom. 16:17; I Cor. 5:1-13; Gal. 2:11-14; Eph. 5:1-11; I Thess. 5:14-22; II Thess. 3:6-15; I Tim. 1:20; 5:19-20; II Tim. 3:1-5; Titus 3:9-11; Heb. 10:24-30; 12:5-17; II John 7-11; Rev. 3:19; Luke 15:11-32; Rom. 2:24; I Cor. 10:31; II Cor 2:5-13; 7:8-10; Gal. 6:1-2; II Thess. 3:6-14; Eph. 4:25-5:6; II Tim 1:7; II Peter 1:5-11; Col. 3:16; II Tim 4:2; Heb. 13:17; I Cor. 12:12-30; Rom. 12:15-16; II Tim 1:15, 2:16-18, 4:9, 14-15; III John 9-10

## **15. Ownership and Distribution of Property**

- a. The church shall hold, own, and enjoy its own personal and real property, without any right of reversion to another entity, except as provided in these bylaws.
- b. "Dissolution" means the complete disbanding of the church so that it no longer functions as a congregation or as a corporate entity. Upon the dissolution of the church, its property shall be applied and distributed as follows: (1) all liabilities and obligations of the church shall be paid and discharged or adequate provision shall be made therefor; (2) assets held by the church upon condition requiring return, transfer, or conveyance, which condition occurs by reason of the dissolution, shall be returned, transferred, or conveyed in accordance with such requirements; (3) assets received and not held upon a condition requiring return, transfer, or conveyance by reason of the dissolution, shall be transferred or conveyed to one or more domestic or foreign corporations, societies, or organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the responding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), and are engaged in activities substantially similar to those of the corporation; this distribution shall be done pursuant to a plan adopted by the Board of Elders, provided that no assets are distributed to any organization governed by a member of the Board of Elders; and (4) any assets not otherwise disposed of shall be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the corporation is then located, for such purposes and to such organizations as said court shall determine.

**16. Indemnification of Directors**

- a. The Board of Elders may choose to indemnify and advance church-related expenses of any elder, deacon, employee, or agent of the church.
- b. Subject to the provisions of paragraph c. of this section, the church shall indemnify any elder or deacon or former elder or deacon of the church against claims, liabilities, expenses, and costs necessarily incurred by him in connection with the defense, compromise, or settlement of any action, suit or proceeding, civil or criminal, in which such person in made a party by reason of being or having been an elder or deacon, to the extent not otherwise compensated, indemnified or reimbursed by insurance, if:
  - 1. The conduct of the elder or deacon was in good faith.
  - 2. The elder or deacon reasonably believed that his conduct was in the best interests of the church, or at least not opposed to its best interests; and
  - 3. In the case of any criminal proceedings, the elder or deacon had no reasonable cause to believe that his conduct was unlawful
- c. The church may not indemnify an elder or deacon in connection with a proceeding brought against him by or in the right of the church, in which he was adjudged liable to the church, or where the elder or deacon is charged with receiving an improper personal benefit and he is adjudged liable on that basis.

**17. Amendment of Bylaws**

These bylaws may be amended or repealed only by the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Board of Elders present at a duly called meeting called for such purposes.

THESE BYLAWS ARE SUBJECT TO ARBITRATION PURSUANT TO THE VA ARBITRATION ACT, VA CODE SECTION 8.01, CODE OF VIRGINIA, (1950 AS AMMENDED) ARBITRATION ACT, CHAPTER 21, ARTICLE 2.

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

*Please complete this form before your membership interview. Married couples may use the same form.*

Man's full name \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_

Believer's Baptism?  Yes  No  
 Marital Status:  Single  Married  Widowed  Divorced

Woman's full name \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_

Believer's Baptism?  Yes  No  
 Marital Status:  Single  Married  Widowed  Divorced

Maiden name \_\_\_\_\_ Anniversary \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Man's work \_\_\_\_\_ Woman's work \_\_\_\_\_

Children's names	Birth Date	Believer's Baptism?	Wishes to become communicant member?
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Name and address of the church you used to attend:

\_\_\_\_\_

Has that church been notified of your plan to join us?  Yes  No

During your interview, you will be asked to answer the following four questions:

*Do you believe the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, to be the Word of God, and its doctrine of salvation to be the perfect and only true doctrine of salvation?*

*Do you confess that because of your sinfulness you abhor and humble yourself before God, and that you trust for salvation not in yourself, but in the Lord Jesus Christ alone?*

*Do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as your sovereign Lord and do you promise, in reliance on the grace of God, to serve Him with all that is in you, to forsake the world, to mortify your sinful nature, and to lead a godly life?*

*Do you agree to submit in the Lord to the government of this church and, in case you should be found delinquent in doctrine or life, to heed its discipline?*

If you have any questions about these questions or about any other aspect of church membership, please make a note of them on the back of this form so that you may mention them during your interview.

## MEMBERSHIP COMMITMENT

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You will be asked to sign this agreement during your membership interview.

I, the undersigned party, wish to become a member of Fellowship Bible Church. I have read the bylaws of FBC. I understand that this church is governed by these documents, and I hereby covenant and agree to be bound by the policies and procedures set forth in them.

Dated this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's or Guardian's name (for minors)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's or Guardian's Signature (for minors)

Elders Conducting Interview \_\_\_\_\_