

Revised Constitution  
of  
Fellowship Bible Church  
Pearland, Texas

Approval Date: ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING  
December 11, 2016

LAST REVISION BY: Congregation at Congregational Meeting held December 11, 2016, changing Article III, Section 7 third paragraph, wording of women to woman; adding a new Section 8 Sanctity of Human Life to Article III; and in Article V, section 12 paragraph E, adding clarification to Limitation of Activities and expanding its coverage to Constitution Article III in addition to Articles I and II.

## **PREAMBLE**

As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, we purpose to officially affiliate ourselves together in a local church as God has commanded. In so doing we make the following declarations:

We recognize that the ultimate purpose of this local church is to glorify God! This is accomplished as we fulfill Christ's Great Commission by developing and deploying disciples who make disciples through corporate public worship, through the consistent practice and teaching of His Word, through the spreading of the Gospel and through fellowship with other believers.

We recognize all who trust the Lord Jesus Christ alone as their personal Savior are members of God's universal Church and as such all are welcome to fellowship with us.

We also recognize there are varying interpretations of many Christian doctrines. We deliberately identify those truths we hold to be fundamental to the faith in our doctrinal statement. Those doctrines or interpretations held by Fellowship and its leaders, but not required for membership are so noted. This church and all its leaders shall adhere to these truths and will commit themselves to support and propagate them.

We further recognize for the church to conduct its proceedings in an orderly manner, it is necessary to establish guidelines for church government and administration.

**WE THEREFORE SET FORTH THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES...**

## **ARTICLE I - NAME**

The name of this church shall be "FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH". It is located in Pearland, Texas. It shall be incorporated as a nonprofit organization under the laws of the State of Texas and organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(C)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or corresponding provisions of any future United States Revenue Law) as well as Section 84.003(1)(a) of the Texas Civil Practices and Remedies Code. It shall be denominationally unrelated.

## **ARTICLE II - Purpose and Motto**

It will be the purpose of Fellowship Bible Church to trust God and participate with Him to grow its people spiritually and numerically and to grow its ministries in effectiveness in meeting spiritual, emotional, and physical needs. This growth will occur as Fellowship's members and attendees cultivate and maintain their relationships with God and others in accordance with scriptural principles. In so doing, God will be glorified. It is our conviction that the means of fulfilling our purpose is by developing and deploying disciple-making disciples. Therefore, our motto will be...

...growing together to glorify God by developing and deploying disciple-making disciples.

## **ARTICLE III - DOCTRINES**

### **Section 1. The Holy Scriptures**

We believe the Holy Scriptures, as originally given, to be the inspired Word of God, authoritative, inerrant, infallible, and God-breathed (2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Pet. 1:21, 1 Thess. 2:13).

### **Section 2. The Godhead**

We believe in the living and true God of the Bible, who is all knowing (Isa. 46:9-10), all powerful (Jer. 32:17), all present (Ps. 139:7-22), unchangeable (Mal. 3:6), eternal (Ps. 102:12), and sovereign (1 Sam. 2:6-8). He is also holy (1 Pet. 1:15), righteous (Ps. 11:7), wise (1 Cor. 1:18-31), true (Isa. 65:16), merciful (Lk. 1:50), love (1 John 4:8), patient (Num. 14:18), and wrathful (Rom. 1:18). God is One (Deut. 6:4) in His essence but eternally subsistent in the three persons of the Trinity - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19, 2 Cor. 13:14).

### **Section 3. The Person and Work of God the Father**

We believe a central biblical teaching about the First Person of the Trinity is His Fatherhood. In the Old Testament, His Fatherhood is shown as the Creator and Sustainer of the universe (Gen. 1:1, Ps. 24:1-2). He is also the Creator and Preserver of Israel (Deut. 32:6). In the New Testament, His Fatherhood is expressed as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 15:6). Through Christ, He is also the Father of all Christians (Gal. 3:26). As Creator of all mankind (Jer. 27:5), He desires that none should perish (2 Pet. 3:9, John 3:16-18). As Father, He has and will provide believers with all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3-6), all of life's essentials (Rom. 8:32), and necessary spiritual discipline to grow to spiritual maturity (Heb. 12:9-11).

#### **Section 4. The Person and Work of God the Son**

We believe the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal (Col. 1:16) Son of God (Matt. 16:16), became man (Gal. 4:4) without ceasing to be God (Phil. 2:6-11). Having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary (Matt. 1:18, 25), He reveals God and redeems sinful man (Gal. 4:4-5). He accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood on the cross (1 Pet. 1:18-19). This redemption is assured by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead (1 Cor. 15:3-4).

We believe the Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9-11) and now intercedes at the right hand of God the Father for those He redeemed (Heb. 7:25) as our exalted High Priest (Heb. 1:3).

#### **Section 5. The Person and Work of God the Holy Spirit**

We believe the Holy Spirit is a person with an intellect (Rom. 8:27), a will (1 Cor. 12:11), and emotions (Eph. 4:30). The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:5-11). He also imparts eternal life (regeneration: Tit. 3:5) to anyone who believes in Christ (John 3:16), permanently indwells every believer (1 Cor. 6:17-19) and seals every believer until the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30).

All who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and Spirit baptism at the time of belief (Rom. 8:9, 1 Cor. 12:13). The Holy Spirit is permanently involved in the believer's life (John 14:16) by giving spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:11) and teaching spiritual truths (John 16:13). God commands all believers to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18).

#### **Section 6. Angels - Elect and Evil**

We believe in the existence of angels who were created by God (Matt. 18:10, 26:53) as immortal spirit beings (Heb. 1:14, Luke 20:36). Angels are intelligent and powerful (2 Pet. 2:11), yet limited. They were created holy (Jude 6) and in vast numbers (Heb. 12:22).

We believe the elect or holy (unfallen) angels minister to God (Isa. 6:1-3, Gen. 3:22-24), to Christ, to believers, to the Nations (Dan. 12:1, 10:21), and even to unbelievers (Acts 12:23, Rev. 14:6-7).

We believe in the existence of the person of Satan (Job 1:6-7). God created him as a holy angel (Eze. 28:12-19) who later rebelled against God (Isa. 14:12-14). He is the originator of sin (Isa. 14:13-14), the open and declared enemy of God (2 Cor. 4:3-4) and God's people (1 Pet. 5:8, Eph. 6:11).

His work is in direct opposition to the work of God. His activities include counterfeiting God's system of truth (2 Cor. 11:13-15), deceiving the nations (Rev. 20:8) and individuals (2 Cor. 11:3), preventing the acceptance of truth (2 Cor. 4:3-4), promoting warfare with believers (Eph. 6:11-12), slandering believers (Rev. 12:10), tempting to sin (1 John 5:19, 2:15-17), preventing service (1 Thess. 2:18), and promoting division (2 Cor. 2:10-11).

We believe some angels followed Satan in rebellion against God. These evil angels, also called demons, unclean spirits and fallen angels, have no hope of salvation. They serve their leader, Satan, in his war against God, continually attempting to lead mankind away from God's salvation and eternal plan. Fallen angels are, like Satan, accountable to God and are destined to be cast into the lake of fire. (Matt. 25:41, Matt. 12:14-26, Jude 9, Dan. 10:13, 2 Pet. 2:4).

## **Section 7. The Creation, Estate, and Sexuality of Mankind**

We believe mankind was created in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26). We further believe that the unborn child is a living human being bearing the image and likeness of God (Job 3:16, Ps.51:5, 139:14-16, Jer.1:5, 20:15-18, Lk.1:44).

In Adam's sin, mankind fell (Gen. 2:17, Rom. 5:18), inherited a sin nature (Rom. 5:12), and became separated from God (Rom. 3:23, Eph. 4:18). All mankind is now totally unable to redeem themselves from their lost condition (Eph. 2:1-3, 8-9). There is nothing within any natural man, woman or child to give them merit for salvation in God's sight (Rom. 3:10-17).

We further believe God created mankind as men and women and has provided the marriage relationship for the well-being of mankind and the continuation of the race. We believe that the only legitimate expression of marriage is the joining of one man and one woman (Gen. 2:24, Rom. 7:2, 1 Cor. 7:10, Eph. 5:22-23). We believe God intends sexual intimacy for the marriage relationship alone and that all other expressions of human sexuality are a perversion of God's gift of sex (Gen. 19:5, 26:8-9, Lev.18:1-30, Rom 1:26-29, 1 Cor.5:1, 6:9, 1 Thes. 4:1-8, Heb. 13:4).

## **Section 8. Sanctity of Human Life**

We believe that God created mankind in His image and that all human life is sacred. We believe that human life is inestimable in its worth no matter the age or physical or mental condition of that life. We believe that the life of a human begins at conception and continues until death. We affirm that God is sovereign over all human life and mankind is responsible under God to value, respect and treat with-biblical dignity the sanctity of human life.

## **Section 9. Salvation**

We believe salvation is an unmerited gift of God offered to man by God's grace (Eph. 2:8-9). It is received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16-18), whose precious blood was shed to redeem us from our sin (1 Pet. 1:18-19). Salvation affects mankind in the following ways: he/she is freed from the condemnation, power, and penalty of sin (John 5:24), which is death (1 Cor. 15: 55-56), given eternal life (Rom. 6:23), and justified or declared righteous before God (Rom. 5:17).

## **Section 10. The Security of the Believer**

We believe Christ performed His redemptive work once for all. It is a finished work (Heb. 10:10-14). Those who trust Christ receive eternal life, are united with Christ as joint heirs with Him, and are given authority to be called children of God the Father (John 1:12, Rom. 8:13-17, 1 Cor. 12:13). We believe our possession of this new life (Rom. 6:4) and our position in Christ (Eph. 2:5-6) are irrevocably secured by God Who gives His Spirit as the seal of His promise (Eph. 4:30) and the pledge of His love (Rom. 8:38-39).

## **Section 11. The Responsibility of the Believer**

We believe each Christian is responsible to glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31) through worship - expressing awe, adoration and thanksgiving to God (John 4:23-24, Rev. 5:8-14), through evangelism - proclaiming the gospel to unsaved individuals in our community and throughout the world with an invitation to trust Christ (Mk. 16:15-16), through spiritual growth - developing personal and corporate maturity in Christ (Eph. 4:11-12), and through fellowship - participating together with believers to further the cause of Christ (Phil. 1:5, 1 John 1:3).

## **Section 12. The Church**

We believe God's universal Church is comprised of all born-again believers (John 3:3-8) from Pentecost (Acts 2) to the rapture (1 Thess. 4: 15-17). God's universal Church is a spiritual organism (1 Cor. 12:1-13) of which Christ is the Head (Eph. 5:23). God's universal Church is also known as the body of Christ (Col. 1:18), and will be His bride in eternity (Eph. 5:25-27, 32).

We believe the local church (Acts 14:7) is God's primary spiritual organism for the assembly of believers today. The local church is a visible, local representation of the universal Church. God intends all believers to publicly identify with a local church (Heb. 10:24-25). Each local church is to minister to its own members through individual spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:4-26), teaching God's word, having fellowship with believers, worshipping, and praying (Acts 2:42). The local church is also God's primary means to spread the gospel and make disciples throughout the world (Mat. 28:17-20, Acts 1:8).

## **Section 13. Church Ordinances**

We believe the Lord Jesus Christ instituted the ordinances of water baptism (Matt. 28:19) and communion (1 Cor. 11:23-29) to be observed until He returns.

We practice water baptism, normally by immersion, for those who have placed their trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation. Our communion services are open to all who have placed their trust in Jesus Christ for salvation in memory of His death for us, as a celebration of His spiritual presence with us now, and as a reminder of His promise to receive Christians into His eternal presence.

## **Section 14. The Blessed Hope of the Church**

We believe those trusting in Christ are to expect the imminent coming of Christ for the Church, at which time all dead and all living Christians will be glorified (1 Cor. 15:20-58, 1 John 3:1-3) and translated into the presence of Christ in the air (1 Cor. 15:51-52, 1 Thess. 4:13-18). This event is popularly known as the rapture of the Church. We further recognize that sincere Christians may differ on the events and timing of Christ's return, but not on the belief that Christ will return for His Church.

## **Section 15. The Second Coming of Christ**

We believe a period of great tribulation on the earth will be climaxed by the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth from heaven with power and great glory. He will then introduce the millennial age (Matt. 24:15-31) by binding Satan and placing him in the abyss (Rev. 20:1-3), by lifting the curse which now rests upon creation (Rom. 8:19-23), and by restoring Israel to her own land, thus fulfilling God's covenant promises, and by bringing the world to the knowledge of God (Eze. 37:21-28, Rom. 11:25-27). Fellowship Bible Church also recognizes that the understanding of events and sequences of Christ's bodily return to the earth differ among sincere Christians. We will not refuse church membership to those who hold other understandings of Christ's return, provided that these issues are not used to cause division among the members of this local church.

## **Section 16. The Eternal State**

We believe there will be a bodily resurrection of all people. The saved will be raised to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Dan. 12:2-3, Matt. 25:46, John 5:28-29).

## **ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section 1. Qualification**

Any individual who is trusting in Jesus Christ alone for their salvation on the basis of the authority of Scripture is eligible for membership at Fellowship Bible Church, provided they will also agree to submit themselves to the authority of this church as defined and described in this Constitution.

### **Section 2. Procedure**

Individuals desiring to be members of Fellowship Bible Church should inform the church office. The office will provide all relevant information and forms to the prospective member. An interview of each applicant will be conducted by two leaders. One of these leaders must be a current elder or member of the pastoral staff. The other leader must be a current elder, deacon, or member of the pastoral staff. The interview of each individual applicant will focus on the basis of their salvation, their current Christian experience and their willingness to enjoy the privileges and fulfill the responsibilities as members of Fellowship Bible Church.

The names of those whose qualification for membership is established in the membership interview will appear in the church bulletin for two consecutive Sundays. Should a prospective member be recognized as someone under church discipline in another local church or involved in sin requiring church discipline, the membership process will be suspended until the issue is resolved. They will seek to restore the individual to fellowship with the Lord and their previous church family before accepting them into the membership of this body. After the name of a prospective member has appeared in the bulletin for two weeks without adverse comment, that individual will be welcomed into the membership and assume all accompanying privileges and responsibilities.

### **Section 3. Privileges and Responsibilities**

Members of Fellowship Bible Church should expect the privilege of consistent biblical and spiritual nurture from Fellowship Bible Church's leadership. They and their immediate family will be prayed for regularly. Their spiritual condition will be lovingly explored and their spiritual growth encouraged by their leaders, teachers and fellow members. They should expect an environment of care and accountability which helps them keep their commitments to God in the context of loving relationships. They should expect that quality ministries designed to facilitate their growth in their relationship with God and other people will be provided, and that these ministries will be characterized by godly excellence. They should expect to experience genuine care and concern from the Pastoral Staff, Elders, Deacons, teachers, leaders and fellow members especially during times of known crisis or difficulty. They should expect to be heard and responded to in a timely manner by the appropriate ministry leaders. They should expect that their leaders will strive to be model-followers of Jesus Christ.

The ultimate goal for each member of Fellowship Bible Church is that they will be a mature follower of Jesus Christ, serving Him faithfully and participating with Him as He builds His Church both at Fellowship Bible Church and around the world.

Members of this church, as all believers, are responsible to honor Christ with their lives. Christian living consists of separating oneself from sinful attitudes and practices as God commands, maintaining a ready witness of faith before the world, being diligent to learn and obey God's Word, and faithfully strengthening and supporting fellow Christians in the faith by prayer and worship.

Members are expected to adhere to the fundamental doctrines of the church and contribute to this local church in at least four areas so that its mission and purpose will be furthered:

1. Members are encouraged to take advantage of the ministry structures provided by Fellowship Bible Church to enhance their spiritual growth and development. Members are expected to attend and participate in worship services. They are further encouraged to participate in an Adult Bible Fellowship (or its equivalent) and an Adult Small Group appropriate to their level of spiritual need.
2. Members are expected to use their spiritual gifts and personal talents to benefit this local church body in a regular ministry responsibility appropriate to their gifts, burden, and spiritual maturity.
3. Members are expected to invest their financial resources proportionate to God's blessing to support the ministries of this church here and around the world.
4. Members are expected to support, encourage, and pray for those who exercise spiritual oversight for their benefit.

Members who consistently attempt to fulfill their responsibilities are considered Active Members of Fellowship Bible Church.

Active Members of Fellowship Bible Church who are eighteen years of age or older also have the privilege of involvement in the decision-making process and governance of this church. Any active member who is 18 years of age or older is an eligible voting member of Fellowship Bible Church. (see Article V).

Members who neglect these responsibilities (usually indicated by a lack of attendance) without explanation for a period of six months will be considered inactive and will lose their voting privileges after notification by letter to their address of record. Those who so continue for a period of one year will be subject to termination of membership in accordance with Article IV, Section 5 of this Constitution.

#### **Section 4. Church Discipline**

Fellowship Bible Church practices church discipline for its members in accordance with the instructions and commands of Scripture (Matt. 18:15-17, 1 Cor. 5:1-13, 2 Cor. 2:6-8, 1 Tim. 5:19-20). Members who, in the determination of the Elder Board, are involved in repeated, divisive, or scandalous sin will be subject to discipline in order to restore them to fellowship with God and other Christians and to maintain the purity of this body (1 Cor. 5:6-13, James 5:19-20, 1 John 5:16-21).

The Elder Board will establish, in accordance with Scripture, appropriate policies and procedures to handle cases where disciplinary action is necessary. These policies and procedures will include but are not limited to an initial private discussion or confrontation with the individual(s) believed to be involved in repeated, divisive, or scandalous sin by the member or officer who believes such sin is occurring. If repentance does not occur, subsequent discussion and confrontations involving larger numbers of members and officers will occur.



This process usually in the following order:

1. Two or three members or officers who have reason to believe such sin is occurring.
2. The Elder Board.
3. The members of Fellowship Bible Church in a closed congregational meeting.

These procedures may result in disclosure of the behavior and activities of the subject member to the members present at the duly called, closed congregational meeting and encouragement of other members to terminate all social and spiritual contacts with the individual involved in such sin until they choose to repent and be restored to fellowship within this congregation. Church disciplinary proceedings which progress to a closed, congregational meeting may result in the termination of the subject's membership in this local church. Employees of Fellowship Bible Church involved in repeated, divisive, or scandalous sin as determined by the Elder Board will be subject to termination of employment.

### **Section 5. Termination**

The Elder Board will remove a person from membership in the church at the member's request. They may also remove a person from membership if the member joins another church, has an habitual and prolonged absence without reasonable explanation, or is no longer faithful to their responsibilities as a member of Fellowship Bible Church (see Article IV, Section 3). If the Elder Board determines that a member should be declared inactive or removed from membership, that individual shall be informed by letter to their address of record of the intended action. The letter shall include the location, date and time of the Elder Board Meeting when the proposed action shall be taken and the member shall be given an opportunity to present a defense or appeal the decision at that meeting. Termination of membership will require a 75% vote of a quorum of Elders.

## **ARTICLE V - GOVERNMENT**

### **Section 1. Church Government**

Fellowship Bible Church recognizes it is governed by its Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, through the leadership of the Holy Spirit, in accordance with Scripture. Therefore, its leadership at all levels will be held accountable by the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word.

It is further recognized that Christ has given gifted individuals called evangelists, pastors, and teachers for the purpose of leading His Church to greater personal growth and ministry effectiveness (Eph. 4:11-16).

Scripture also describes the leadership of Elders in the government of the local church. Elders are charged with the oversight of individual local churches (Titus 1:5). These individuals must be people of exemplary character and proven ministry effectiveness (1 Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9, 1 Pet. 5:1-4).

The governing of Fellowship Bible Church, under the leadership of duly elected Pastor(s) and Elders, is ultimately vested in the body of members who compose it, whose vote in accordance with the following specifications shall be final.

Any Active Member 18 years of age or older is eligible to vote.

Specific matters requiring approval by the voting membership of the congregation include the following:

- The election of Elders and Deacons proposed by the Nominating Committee,
- Annual Church Budget approval, along with any necessary modifications.
- Proposed calling or dismissal of Pastoral Staff,
- Non-budgeted expenditures exceeding 10% of the approved budget line item or a combination of items totaling more than 5% of the total Annual Church Budget,
- Acquisition, sale, exchange, mortgaging, encumbrance, or disposition of real property,
- Constitutional amendments or revisions.

The authority to establish doctrinal positions, philosophy of ministry, or policies and procedure in areas not otherwise specified in this Constitution is vested in the Elder Board.

## **Section 2. Annual Congregation Meeting**

The Church Year shall end on the thirtieth day of June each year. An annual meeting of the congregation shall be held within six weeks prior to the end of the Church Year. The time will be determined by the Elder Board. The Annual Congregational Meeting will be for the purpose of electing Elders and Deacons, reviewing the Annual Church Budget and expenditures for the current calendar year, apprising the congregation of matters related to this church's health and growth, and other matters determined by the Elder Board. The Church Fiscal Year shall end on the thirty-first day of December each year. The Annual Church Budget Meeting shall be held within six weeks prior to the end of the Church Fiscal Year for the purpose of establishing the Annual Church Budget and conducting such other church business as may come before it.

## **Section 3. Business Meetings**

Any regular or called meeting of the congregation must be announced or publicized in the worship services, weekly church bulletin, and church-wide publications during the 14 days preceding said meeting. All meetings of the congregation will be open to all eligible voting members and attendees, unless an issue of Church Discipline is being discussed. Meetings to discuss Church Discipline shall be open only to eligible voting members.

Special meetings of the congregation may be called at any time by a majority vote of the Elder Board. Special meetings of the congregation will also be called upon the Elder Board's receipt of a petition signed by 10% of the eligible voting members. Business meetings called apart from this process are out of order.

In all congregational meetings, the Chairman of the Elder Board shall preside. In the absence of the Chairman or his duly appointed substitute, the Elders present shall appoint an Acting Chairman for that meeting.

In the conduct of congregational meetings, "Robert's Rules of Order" shall be used in cases not covered in this Constitution. In the case of disagreements in the interpretation of particular procedures or rules within "Roberts Rules of Order" the Acting Chairman will be responsible for determining the interpretation of the procedure or rule in question.

## **Section 4. Quorum**

A quorum for all congregational meetings shall consist of 25% of the eligible voting members from a list of voting members. The Recording Secretary shall keep a current record of all members of Fellowship Bible Church and their membership status and provide a record of all eligible voting members to the Elder Chairman prior to any duly called congregational meeting for the purpose of establishing a quorum for that meeting. If a quorum is not achieved, those present will recess the meeting to reconvene at least one week later. The reconvened meeting shall be announced at the Sunday morning services and in the weekly church bulletin. Those present at the reconvened meeting shall constitute a quorum.

The Elder Board may make provision for absentee balloting by eligible, voting members who are unable to attend a congregational meeting. Absentee ballots must be signed by the active voting member. Valid absentee ballots will be numbered in the quorum count.

## **Section 5. Commitments**

All obligations and commitments agreed upon or made by any officer, member, or other person wherein Fellowship Bible Church or the membership thereof is involved, must be in accordance with the procedures defined within this Constitution.

No church-wide solicitations may be made, nor church-wide offerings received, without the prior approval of the Elder Board or its specific designee. Solicitations may be made and offerings taken by a specific ministry, such as an Adult Bible Fellowship or an Adult Small Group or their equivalents, for expenses and special needs related to that ministry and its participants after obtaining approval from the ministry leader and Elder overseeing that area of ministry. No purchase contracts, agreements, etc. wherein Fellowship Bible Church is involved, shall be executed without prior approval of the Elder Board or its designee.

## **Section 6. Officers**

The officers of the Fellowship Bible Church shall consist of the Elders, Deacons, a Recording Secretary, a Treasurer, and a Financial Secretary. Ministry descriptions and procedures will be approved by the Elder Board and maintained for each of these offices. All officers of Fellowship Bible Church must agree to abide by and implement its Constitution and be willing to work within its Philosophy of Ministry and its standing policies and procedures. All elected officers of Fellowship Bible Church serve in that capacity as volunteers and are not paid for their services.

Fellowship Bible Church is incorporated under the Texas Non-Profit Corporation Act (Charter NUMBER 00072941). As an accommodation to legal relationships outside of Fellowship Bible Church, the Senior Pastor will serve as the President of the Corporation; the Recording Secretary shall serve as the Secretary of the Corporation; the Church Treasurer will serve as the Treasurer of the Corporation; and the Elder Chairman shall serve as the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Corporation (i.e. the Elder Board). The Elder Board shall have the authority to designate additional officers (e.g. Vice President, etc.) of the Corporation from the Pastoral Staff, other qualified employees, or from the Church Officers.

## **Section 7. Duties of Officers**

It shall be the duty of the Elder Board to determine and oversee the spiritual direction and effectiveness of the church in coordination with the Pastoral Staff. They will also be responsible to make provision for the supply of the pulpit and take charge of all services not otherwise conducted by the Pastoral Staff. The Elder Board will serve as the legal trustees of Fellowship Bible Church's real property. Each Elder will be expected to actively participate in making disciples through ministry tasks as well as decision-making

responsibilities. Their duty includes, but is not limited to, shepherding the congregation, teaching, modeling, mentoring, praying, maintaining the purity of the congregation, leading various leadership and ministry teams, and using their spiritual gifts to build up the congregation. They will be responsible to propagate ministry vision, set ministry goals to achieve that vision, and evaluate ministries as to their effectiveness in fulfilling our purpose as a church. Elders leading ministry teams or doing other ministry tasks will be supervised by the Pastoral Staff member assigned the oversight of the ministry area(s) involved. All other Elder ministries and responsibilities will be supervised by the Elder Chairman or as otherwise agreed by the Elder Board. The Elder Board is responsible to the congregation.

It shall be the duty of the Deacons to provide practical and physical service to the Church. The Deacon's duty includes, but is not limited to, keeping the church property and equipment in good repair, supervising the facilities and equipment use and effectiveness, ministering to the widows, orphans, and other needy, and assisting the Elders with practical and physical aspects of implementing spiritual ministry. They will use their spiritual gifts to build up the congregation. The Deacons are responsible to their ministry team leaders and, through them, to the Elder Board.

It shall be the duty of the Recording Secretary to keep a proper record of all called meetings of the congregation and of the Elder Board. The Recording Secretary shall also keep a current record of all members of the Church and their membership status and provide a record of all eligible voting members to the Elder Chairman prior to any duly called congregational meeting for the purpose of establishing a quorum for that meeting. Upon request, the Recording Secretary shall make available in a timely manner a current list of members to any Active Member with legitimate need. The Recording Secretary is responsible to the Elder Board through its Chairman.

It shall be the duty of the Church Treasurer to disburse all Church funds as authorized and to render an accounting of the Church's financial transactions whenever requested by the Elder Board. The Treasurer is responsible to the Elder Board through its Chairman.

It shall be the duty of the Financial Secretary to keep a complete, current, and detailed record of all church financial accounts, and to render this record whenever requested to the Elder Board. The Financial Secretary is responsible to the Elder Board through its Chairman.

The Elder Board shall meet in session at least once a quarter. All Elder Board meetings will be duly scheduled and announced to all Elders in a timely manner. Special meetings may be called by the Chairman or 25% of all current Elders. Special Elder Board meetings will be announced to all current Elders in a timely manner. A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of current Elders. Decisions of the Elder Board shall be binding as provided for in this Constitution.

In the conduct of all Elder Board meetings, "Robert's Rules of Order" shall be used in cases not covered by this Constitution.

## **Section 8. Election and Termination of Officers**

All officer candidates shall be selected by a nominating committee of seven, consisting of the Senior Pastor or his Pastoral Staff representative as chairman, three members who are Elders or Deacons elected by the Elder Board and three members of the congregation elected by the congregation. Nominating Committee members will serve for one year. The Nominating Committee will adhere to the Policies and Procedures for the Nominating Committee provided by the Elder Board. The qualifications for the office of Elder shall be those as set forth in Titus 1:5-9, 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and 1 Peter 5:1-4 as defined and approved by the Elder Board. Other ministry training or skills may also be required as deemed necessary by the Elder Board. The qualifications for Deacon shall be those as set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 as defined and approved by the

Elder Board. Other ministry training or skills may also be required as deemed necessary by the Elder Board.

The Nominating Committee shall seek to ascertain the qualifications, faithfulness, and commitment of perspective candidates through personal interview, references, or testimonial in accordance with the Process and Policies of the Nominating Committee as adopted by the Elder Board. The Nominating Committee will provide opportunity for written and signed objections to individual nominations through the chairman or members of the committee. The nominations shall be posted at least 21 days before the Annual Congregational Meeting.

The Elders and Deacons shall be elected from the candidates by a 75% majority of the vote at the Annual Congregational Meeting. Elders and Deacons will serve for a term of two years.

Within thirty days after the Annual Congregational Meeting the Elders shall select one of their number to serve as Chairman. The Recording Secretary, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary shall be elected for a period of one year by the Elder Board at the first meeting of that body, following the Annual Congregational Meeting.

Conflict between officers shall be handled in accordance with the written policies and procedures for conflict resolution adopted by the Elder Board. "Robert's Rules of Order" shall be used in cases not covered by this Constitution or the standing Policies and Procedures.

If the Elder Board determines that an officer should be considered for removal from office, that individual shall be informed by letter to their address of record of the intended action. The letter shall include the location, date and time of the Elder Board meeting when the proposed action shall be taken. The officer shall not have a vote in his or her own case, but shall be given an opportunity to present a defense and/or appeal before the Elder Board prior to their vote at that meeting. The officer may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of all current Elder Board members. If the officer is an Elder, his vote will not be counted in determining a two-thirds majority.

## **Section 9. Pastoral Staff**

### **A. Selection of Pastoral Staff**

The selection of Pastoral Staff members shall be accomplished by a Staff Search Committee of seven appointed by the Elder Board. At least three individuals on the search committee shall be Elders or Deacons. Others members shall be selected from the voting membership of the congregation on the basis of spiritual maturity and demonstrated faithfulness in the area of ministry for which a staff person is being sought. The Elder Board will supply the Search Committee with those qualifications, experiences, and characteristics deemed necessary for the staff position. A Pastoral Search Committee and its members serve at the discretion of the Elder Board until dismissed.

In staff searches for positions other than Senior Pastor, the Senior Pastor will chair the Search Committee. In searches for a Senior Pastor, the committee will be chaired by an Elder appointed by the Elder Board.

All Pastoral Staff candidates must agree with the Constitution of Fellowship Bible Church and be committed to work within any adopted Philosophy of Ministry, Policies, and Procedures.

A thorough investigation of each candidate will be made through appropriate questionnaires, interviews, reference calls and letters, personal visits, and other measures. The search committee will recommend only one candidate at a time to the Elder Board for consideration. The recommendation of the search committee must be a minimum of 100 percent of the committee less one vote.

Pastoral candidates must then be recommended to the congregation by at least 100 percent less two votes of the Elder Board. The Elder Board will review the questionnaires, interviews, references, and other data accumulated on the candidate. They may also choose to conduct face to face interviews with prospective candidates. Potential Pastoral Staff members must be elected by at least a 75% vote of the members present at a duly called congregational meeting (see Article 5, Sections 2, 3 and 4). Only one candidate at a time will be presented to the congregation for a vote.

## **B. The role and relationship of Pastoral Staff**

The Senior Pastor's role and commitment, in coordination with the Elder Board, is to provide biblical vision and direction to accomplish that vision. He will model biblical principles of leadership. The primary way he will model leadership is by developing other leaders to their potential and deploying them into the leadership community. He will also preach and teach the Scriptures so each individual will be encouraged to progress in the life of faith. He will oversee and coordinate the ministry of other Pastoral Staff members as a player-coach. Since his goal is the development and deployment of disciples, he should refrain from performing ministry functions which others can and should do. The Senior Pastor will be accountable to the Elder Board.

The role and commitment of other Pastoral Staff members is identical in kind to that of the Senior Pastor, but focused primarily within that staff member's area of ministry assignment. The Pastoral Staff members will be accountable to the Senior Pastor.

Pastoral Staff members will be so designated in their ministry title and description (e.g. Senior Pastor, Pastor of Education, Associate Pastor of Jr. High Ministries, etc.). Pastoral Staff members must possess the character qualifications of an Elder. They will also possess the professional credentials and experience in keeping with the requirements and responsibilities of the ministries they lead and oversee. Pastoral Staff members will be model disciples.

Pastoral Staff members may hold the office of Elder, but shall be required to stand for election as do other Elder candidates. They will be afforded the responsibilities and privileges of that office, if elected. Pastoral Staff members serving as Elders shall not receive remuneration in any form for their service as an Elder or their activities as a member of the Elder Board.

## **C. The Termination of Pastoral Staff**

The termination of a Pastoral Staff member's services may be effected by a two-thirds vote of all Elder Board members and a subsequent majority vote of the members present at a duly called congregational meeting (Article V, Sections 2, 3 and 4). If the Elder Board determines that a member of the Pastoral Staff should be considered for termination, that individual shall be informed by letter to their address of record of the intended action. The letter shall include the location, date and time of the open Elder Board meeting when the proposed action shall be taken. If the Pastoral Staff member is an Elder, his vote will not be counted in determining a two-thirds majority. The Pastoral Staff member shall not have a vote in his own case, but shall be given an opportunity to present a defense and/or appeal prior to their vote at that meeting.

Should the Elder Board vote to terminate, they will set the date for a duly called congregational meeting and inform the Pastoral Staff member by letter to his address of record as to the location, date and time of the congregational meeting at which the congregation will vote on the Pastoral Staff member's termination. The Elders will present to the congregation the information which led them to vote for termination and the information used in the Pastoral Staff member's defense and/or appeal.

## **D. The Role and Relationships of Other Ministry Personnel**

The role and commitment of other ministry staff such as Ministry Directors, Interns, and other personnel will be to facilitate the ministry of the Pastoral Staff in fulfilling the mission and purpose of this church. They will be accountable to the Senior Pastor or another member of the Pastoral Staff as recommended by the Senior Pastor and approved by the Elder Board.

### **Section 10. Church Finances and Administration**

Fellowship Bible Church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. Contributors may suggest uses for their contributions, but all suggestions shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature unless a specific arrangement is authorized by the Elder Board. All other contributions made to specific funds or otherwise designated shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the Elder Board or its designees. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to the church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes stated in Articles I and II or as agreed by the Elder Board in its normal course of business. The Elder Board may reject any funds or non-cash gifts it deems inappropriate or administratively burdensome. Other gifts given for specific purposes in the form of endowments or trusts, or contributions thereto, may be accepted, if proper administrative procedures are established to assure that they are administered in accordance with any applicable laws and regulations. All funds or non-cash gifts received by Fellowship Bible Church are under the oversight of the Elder Board. Funds not otherwise designated are called Ministry funds and are to be used to fund the Annual Church Budget.

The Elder Board, acting within the constraints provided in this Constitution, has the authority and responsibility to provide for the orderly conduct of the financial and administrative affairs of Fellowship Bible Church. This includes the establishment of appropriate Plans, Policies and Procedures as they deem necessary or convenient to accomplish this purpose.

Consistent with this general authority and subject to the restrictions established in this Constitution, the Elder Board is specifically empowered to arrange banking and other financial services, legal services, consulting services, and the like, as well as services which may be required to operate, maintain, and improve or expand church facilities, equipment, and land. The Elder Board also has the authority to hire non-pastoral staff and set all staff salaries and benefits within the context of the budgeting process. These authorities may be delegated as the Elder Board deems appropriate.

Each year the Elder Board will appoint a budget task force which will include the Senior Pastor or his representative, the Treasurer, the Financial Secretary, and at least one other church officer or designee. This task force will solicit input from all staff, officers, and recognized Ministry leaders to formulate a proposed budget for the coming fiscal year. This budget will be summarized by Ministry areas and will reflect the Ministry objectives and priorities determined by the Elder Board. This proposed Annual Church Budget shall contain sufficient provisions for fixed and variable operating costs, missionary support, maintenance and renovation programs for buildings, facilities and equipment, other anticipated expenses in the next fiscal year, and an operating cash reserve.

The task force will also provide a commentary explaining the premises assumed for funding the budget and the basis for escalation or reductions of costs. Their report will be presented to the Elder Board for discussion, necessary modifications, and approval at least six weeks before the Annual Congregational Meeting. The proposed Annual Church Budget will not contain funds to purchase real estate, expand existing buildings, or construct new buildings; however, proposals for these activities may be made at the Annual Congregational Meeting or any other duly called congregational meeting.

At least 15 days before the Annual Congregational Meeting the Elder Board will publish and release for study a budget for the new year which has been approved by the Elder Board. A commentary should be

included explaining to the voting members the premises for funding the budget and the basis for escalation or reduction of costs. The budget will be presented to the congregation at the Annual Congregational Meeting for approval. The approved Annual Church Budget will serve as the authorization by the congregation for the Elder Board and/or its designees to obligate Fellowship Bible Church for any expenditures in the budget. The Elder Board has the authority to exceed this budget by 10% of any Ministry area budget to a maximum of 5% of the Annual Church Budget for all increases in a given fiscal year.

No expenditure may be made, nor has the Treasurer authority, to disburse Ministry funds not included in the approved Annual Church Budget. Exceptions may be approved by specific action of the Elder Board or its designees as outlined in the preceding paragraph of this Section.

The Elder Board will alert the congregation to any significant financial changes which arise during the budget year in a forthright and timely matter. Such changes will include, but are not limited to, expenditures from the established cash reserve due to income shortfalls.

## **Section 11. Indemnification**

### **A. Actions Subject to Indemnification**

Fellowship Bible Church may indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit, or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, including all appeals (other than an action by or in the right of Fellowship Bible Church) by reason of the fact that the person is or was a Pastoral Staff member, officer, employee, or agent of Fellowship Bible Church, against expenses, including attorneys' fees, judgments, fines, and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by them in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding; and if that person acted in good faith and in a manner they reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of Fellowship Bible Church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his conduct was unlawful. The termination of any action, suit, or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or on a plea of *nolo contendere* or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner that he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of Fellowship Bible Church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful.

### **B. Expenses Subject to Indemnification**

To the extent that a pastor, officer, employee, or agent has been successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of any action, suit, or proceeding referred to in this Article, or in defense of any claim, issue, or matter in that action, suit, or proceeding, he or she may be indemnified against expenses, including attorneys' fees, actually and reasonably incurred by him or her in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding.

### **C. Limitations of Indemnification**

Any indemnification made under this Article, may be made by Fellowship Bible Church only as authorized in the specific case on a determination that indemnification of the Pastoral Staff member, officer, employee, or agent is proper in the circumstances because he has met the applicable standard of conduct set forth in Section A of this Article. The determination shall be made (a) by a majority vote of the Elder Board members who were not and are not parties to, or threatened with, the action, suit, or proceeding; (b) if the described quorum is not obtainable, or if a majority vote of a quorum of disinterested Officers so directs, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion; or (c) by a majority vote of the members of Fellowship Bible Church present at a duly called Congregational Meeting. Approval of payment of indemnification will be subject to the provisions of Article V, Section 10 of this Constitution.



## **D. Timing of Indemnification**

Expenses of each person seeking indemnification under this Article, may be paid by Fellowship Bible Church as they are incurred, in advance of the final disposition of the action, suit, or proceeding, as authorized by the Elder Board in the specific case, on receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the Pastoral Staff member, officer, employee, or agent to repay the amount if it is ultimately determined that he or she is not qualified to be indemnified by Fellowship Bible Church.

## **E. Extent of Indemnification**

The indemnification provided by this Article shall be deemed to be discretionary unless otherwise required as a matter of law or under any agreement or provided by insurance purchased by Fellowship Bible Church, both as to action of each person seeking indemnification under this Article in his official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding that office, and may continue as to a person who has ceased to be a Pastoral Staff member, officer, employee, or agent and may inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of that person.

## **F. Insurance**

Fellowship Bible Church may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a Pastoral Staff member, officer, employee, or agent of Fellowship Bible Church against any liability asserted against him and incurred by him in that capacity, or arising out of his status in that capacity, whether or not Fellowship Bible Church would have the power to indemnify him against liability under the provisions of this Article.

## **Section 12- Tax-Exempt Provisions**

### **A. Private Inurement**

No part of the net earnings of Fellowship Bible Church shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for the services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Articles I and II hereof.

### **B. Political Involvement**

No substantial part of the activities of Fellowship Bible Church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. Fellowship Bible Church shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

### **C. Dissolution**

Upon the dissolution of Fellowship Bible Church, the trustees shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of Fellowship Bible Church, dispose of all of the assets of the church to such organization or organizations formed and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the trustees shall determine. Assets may be distributed only to organizations which agree with Fellowship Bible Church's statement of faith.

#### **D. Racial Nondiscrimination**

Fellowship Bible Church shall have a racially nondiscriminatory policy and therefore shall not discriminate against members, applicants, students, and others on the basis of race, color, or national or ethnic origin.

#### **E. Limitation of Activities**

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Constitution, Fellowship Bible Church shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities, use its facilities and personnel or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the purposes and faith as stated in Articles I, II and III.

### **ARTICLE VI - MISSIONS SUPPORT POLICY**

To further glorify God through the development and deployment of disciple-making disciples, Fellowship Bible Church will participate in world evangelization through spiritual and financial support of individuals and organizations whose mission's ministries are approved by the Elder Board or its designees. A Missions Committee will be responsible for implementing and accomplishing this participation by the congregation.

The Missions Committee will make recommendations to the Elder Board as to the eligibility of individuals and organizations proposed for support. The decision to support any individual or organization spiritually or financially will come as a recommendation from the Missions Committee and will require the approval of the Elder Board. The proposed budgeted support levels for each individual or organization will be based on the Missions Committee recommendation and be subject to Elder Board and congregational approval through the annual budgeting process. Support eligibility will be determined by an evaluation of the candidate's consistency with Fellowship Bible Church's doctrinal position (cf. Article III) and Philosophy of Ministry, leadership qualifications, type and location of ministry proposed, and overall need of proposed ministry.

Upon request, those missionaries seeking support who are now, or who have been, members of Fellowship Bible Church for three or more years and who meet the above-mentioned qualifications and requirements will be given preferential consideration for regular and consistent spiritual and financial support. The financial support will be approved by the Elder Board and made a part of the Annual Church Budget as defined in the financial procedures described above (Article V, Section 10). The support level will be established by the Missions Committee and approved by the Elder Board.

Eligibility of supported individuals and ministries, and budgeted support levels for each are subject to continued evaluation and review by the Missions Committee and the Elder Board.

The Missions Committee will conduct appropriate programs and activities to enhance the congregation's awareness, understanding, support, and involvement in world missions.

### **ARTICLE VII - LICENSING AND ORDINATION**

It shall be within the power of Fellowship Bible Church to license or ordain into the Gospel Ministry those of its members whom God has called and equipped for ministry.

Such persons may be licensed to preach and administer the Ordinances by the Elder Board through its 100 percent less one vote conviction that the candidate has the character, skills, gifts, and experience suitable for Gospel Ministry. The Elder Board shall thoroughly examine all applicants for licensing as to their conversion, call to the Christian ministry, education, Christian experience, reputation, character, doctrinal belief, and demonstrated effectiveness and faithfulness in Christian service.

The process of ordination is also available to persons performing or pursuing full-time vocational ministry. The Elder Board of Fellowship Bible Church may ask for assistance in ordination by calling an ordination council comprised of other ordained Christian leaders and chaired by an ordained member of the Pastoral Staff. This council will thoroughly examine all applicants as to their conversion, call to Christian Ministry, education, Christian experience, character, doctrinal beliefs, demonstrated effectiveness, and faithfulness in Christian service. This council will recommend ordination by their 100 percent less one vote recommendation as to the candidate's suitability for ordination based on spiritual character, personal and ministry skills, and Christian experience.

### **ARTICLE VIII - AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution may be amended or revised by the following process:

1. All proposed amendments or revisions must first be approved by a 75% vote of a quorum of the Elder Board.
2. The Elder Board will make the text of all proposed amendments and revisions available to the congregation for a minimum of twenty-one days prior to a duly announced congregational meeting.
3. The congregation will vote on all amendments and revisions. A 75% vote of the quorum present at the duly called congregational meeting is needed to ratify proposed amendments and revisions to this Constitution.

### **ADOPTION**

This Constitution was adopted by a vote of at least 75% of the members present at a duly-called meeting of the Fellowship Bible Church in which a quorum was present.

This Constitution supersedes any other Constitution of Fellowship Bible Church.

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Recording Secretary

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Elder Board Chairman