

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

I. IDENTITY

We are a fellowship of believers united by our salvation in Jesus Christ, whose common goal is to glorify God. While we come from many varied backgrounds, His life within us is the basis of our unity (1 Cor. 1:9-10). As those sharing His common life, we solemnly recognize our responsibility of "being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). The corporate name of this assembly of believers shall be Fellowship Bible Church, E.F.C. of Waco.

The church is affiliated with The Evangelical Free Church of America and its South Central District. It shall, however, remain as its own authority in matters of purpose, government and operation.

II. PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

The Philosophy of Ministry summarizes the ground and method of operation of the church. This statement demonstrates the integration of the Statement of Purpose into the corporate life of the assembly.

A. Our Source of Authority and Its Implementation

1. The Bible is the basis for all decisions regarding purpose, structure and function of the local church. The Word is central to all issues and practices of the assembly. All issues are clarified and all decisions are made based on the Word.
2. The application of those decisions should follow the pattern of Acts 1:8—first address the needs of those attending the church and then move gradually to a mature world vision. The power of God is available for such decision-making and application, by means of His indwelling presence.

B. Our Method of Operation

1. The ministry of the church should be practiced by the lay members of the church, following the instruction of Ephesians 4:11, 12. This means that training and biblical discipleship are essential to the success of the church. The role of church staff and elders is to create a positive, affirming environment which will encourage the members of the church to grow toward spiritual maturity and to practice their gifts, talents and abilities.
2. The plan for implementation should follow this pattern: The goal of the individual in the church is personal and then corporate maturity (*Ephesians 4:1-16*). The focus of care and concern is the church and then the world (*Galatians 6:10*). The present plan is a means of implementing what the Bible calls Disciplemaking (*Matthew 28:19, 20*).

Implementation will follow this sequence:

- a. Meet the needs of believers in the local church. The needs of the individual which are met by the church should be both declared needs (that is, declared by the Word; i.e., instruction in the Word, spiritual walk, fellowship with Christians, etc.) and felt needs. Felt needs, for example, would include family issues, self-image, Christianity in the work-place, etc. The **priorities** are: personal spiritual needs (relating to God), personal significance and vision, the family, the value and role of work, church relationships and function, ministry in the community and world (taking advantage of all social contacts). (This last arena will overlap with the work environment.)
- b. Train members of the flock to meet the needs of others in the flock. This is an application of the principles of 2 Timothy 2:2. The leader should model his

training/discipling lifestyle with a few in the flock, then have them take up his tasks gradually.

- c. Train members of this group to meet needs of people outside the flock. This prepares the entire flock for outreach by giving them models.
- d. Train members of the outreach group to reach out to people outside the culture they live in. This includes overseas missions, U.S. missions, missions in their own city but across cultural lines, and outreach into their own social sphere. This allows for the implementation of an outreach mentality in every day life, rather than keeping outreach something one does once a year out of view of the rest of life.
- e. Develop a clear world perspective which the local assembly can understand and in which it can play a voluntary part. The mission of the church will be clear to all who attend and join. As soon as this world perspective is developed, it will be included in the statement of philosophy.

III. GOALS OF THE MINISTRY

- A. To proclaim the Gospel in its simplicity, and especially to show that salvation is based, not upon feelings or works, but by the grace of God through the finished work of Jesus Christ; that justification is ours the moment we believe, and that we are to accept and claim our place as accepted in the Beloved without regard to inward states of feeling or emotion
- B. To love, praise, and give thanks to the Triune God (*Hebrews 13:15*) and to meet for prayer and administration of the ordinances of baptism and communion
(*Matthew 26:28-29, 28:19; Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 11:24-34*)
- C. To lead believers to certainty of their salvation, and to realize their standing in Christ, in order that each may press on to maturity in Jesus Christ and to live out the righteousness we have been granted
- D. To bring believers back to the Scriptures, to search the Word for its hidden treasures; to test everything by this Divine standard; and to hold fast only that which will stand this test, to make it the daily subject of meditative, prayerful examination in order to translate it into daily obedience, so that the Beloved might be strengthened in the faith, and equipped and encouraged to share in the work of the ministry
(*Ephesians 4:11-16, 6:11-20; Colossians 2:6-10*)
- E. To promote brotherly love among all believers and to lead them to make less of those non-essentials in which believers differ and to make most of those great essential and foundational truths in which all believers are united, to help all who love and trust in the Lord to rise above narrow sectarian prejudices and barriers to fellowship
- F. To strengthen the faith of believers, encouraging a simpler trust and a more real and unswerving confidence in God, particularly in the sure answer to believing prayer based upon His divine promises
(*Philippians 4:6, 7*)
- G. To bring members of the assembly to maturity in Christ by means of teaching the Word of God, training in ministry skills and encouraging and admonishing through the relationships developed in small groups
- H. To promote separation from the self-centered world system and to increase Christ-mindedness in the children of God, at the same time warning against fanatical extremes and extravagances
(*Romans 12:2; John 17:14-19; re: VI. A.2.*)

- I. To meet the needs and goals of the body of Christ through the service of one's spiritual gifts, talents, abilities, privileges, and responsibilities (Ephesians 4:7-16), and to do the same for those outside the Body of Christ *(Galatians 6:10)*
- J. To fix the hope of the believers on the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, which now seems to be near; to instruct them as to the character and object of the present time and the gathering of the Bride of Christ
(Acts 1:9-11; 2 Peter 3:10-13)
- K. To lead the lost to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, to support and be involved in regional and foreign missions, and to teach by example our love for mankind who are yet without Christ
(Romans 10:14,15; Acts 1:8)

IV. DOCTRINAL STATEMENT OF FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH

- A. We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the verbally inspired Word of God. Inspiration is God's superintending of human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man in the original autographs. All Scripture is authoritative and without error 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 Scriptures are to be interpreted in a literal and normal way. This means to consider history, grammar, context, and harmony with other Scriptures as guidelines for interpretation. We believe the Holy Spirit guides the believer to understand the Bible. *(John 10:35; Matthew 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21)*
- B. We believe in one God eternally existing in three equal persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
(Deuteronomy 6:4; Hebrews 1:8; Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3,4)
- C. We believe that God the Son became Flesh in the person of Jesus Christ Who was begotten by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, and Who is true God and true man
(John 1:14; Matthew 1:18-25, 26:38; Hebrews 2:14; Isaiah 7:14)
- D. 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. *(John 3:5-7, 14:16-17, 16:8; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 1:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:13)*
- E. We believe that man was created in the image of God and that he sinned and consequently experienced not only physical death, but also spiritual death (which is separation from God). This sin affects the entire race. All human beings are born with a sinful nature and become sinners in thought, word and deed.
(Genesis 1:26, 27, 2:17, 3:6; Romans 5:12-19)
- F. We believe that Jesus died for our sins as a substitutionary sacrifice and that all who repent of their sins and trust in Him for the payment of their sin debt on the basis of His shed blood are declared righteous before God. Repentance means 'to change one's mind.'
(2 Corinthians 5:14; Mark 10:45; Romans 3:24-26, 5:8,9; 1 Peter 3:18; Acts 3:19; Ezekiel 18:30)
- G. We believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ, in His ascension into heaven, and in His present life there for us. Jesus Christ now serves as high priest, intercessor and advocate in our behalf with the Father.
(Romans 1:4; John 20:25-27; 1 John 2:1; Hebrews 7:25)
- H. We believe that whoever by faith trusts Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord becomes a child of God. This salvation is not the result of any human effort or merit. This does not mean that Christ's lordship must be evident in one's life before salvation is possible! Rather, that the seeker acknowledges his Savior as Lord of the universe and of his life. The issue is the identity of the Savior.
(John 1:12; Ephesians 2:8,9; Romans 3:28)

- I. We believe that all believers still possess a sinful nature, but that God has made full provision for believers to overcome this sinful nature and to live for God through a knowledge of the Scriptures, identification with Christ, and by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. God has promised that all Christians will be sanctified; that is, He will complete His work within them. The presence of the Holy Spirit is manifested by the fruits of the Spirit. *(Romans 6:1-11, 8:11-13; Ephesians 2:10, 5:18; Phiippians 1:6)*
- J. We believe that all Christians are to give attention to becoming spiritually mature in order to bring glory to God and to function well in the Body of Christ. The emphasis of Scripture is on the qualities of maturity for the individual and on the development of faith, hope and love for the corporate assembly.
(1 Corinthians 12-14; Colossians 1:3-5; 1 Timothy 3:1-12)
- K. We believe that all believers are kept eternally secure by the power of the Holy Spirit, and the intercession of Jesus Christ. This security in Christ is manifested by the divinely imparted ability to persevere in faith. Although it is possible for a Christian to sin, even to 'backslide,' anyone born of the Spirit of God will demonstrate new life.
(John 10:28-30, 14:16-17; Romans 8:38, 39; Ephesians 4:30; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 2:1)
- L. We believe that God gives spiritual, enabling gifts for service to all believers. We believe that spiritual gifts are designed by God to bring each member of the Church to maturity and the entire Church to unity. Abuse of spiritual gifts is a reflection of immaturity and will generally result in division in the local assembly.
(Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Ephesians 4:11-16)
- M. We believe that the Church is composed of all believers from the day of Pentecost until the time when God declares that it is complete. The Church in its invisible form is universal, the true Body of Christ, not limited by organizational affiliation. The Church is visible in the local assembly of saints committed to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, communion and prayer. Individual believers are encouraged to commit themselves to be accountable to and to be held accountable for their commitment to this assembly of saints. Decisions of each assembly are to be made following the pattern of Acts 14 and 15: elders accountable to the members of the assembly challenge the assembly to respond to Christ in specific ways; the members then deny or affirm the leadership of the Spirit in each matter. We believe that Christ ordained the observance of water baptism and the Lord's Supper until He returns.
(Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:5, 11:15,16; Ephesians 4:4-6; Colossians 1:18; Acts 2:42)
- N. We believe in the reality and personality of Satan. When given the opportunity, he attempts to defeat Christian work. Christians can overcome Satan's schemes by applying Scriptural truth.
(Luke 10:18; John 8:44; Ephesians 6:10-19)
- O. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men. Believers are to be resurrected to enjoy eternal life with God and unbelievers to experience judgment and then eternal suffering apart from God.
(John 5:28, 29; 1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 20:4-6, 21:1-8)
- P. We believe that this age will end with the glorious return of Christ for His church, which is our blessed hope; and that Christ Himself will one day personally, physically and visibly return in the glory of His Father to set up in the earth a kingdom in which He shall reign in righteousness and peace.
(1 Thessalonians 4:15-18; Isaiah 9:6,7, 11:2-5; Matthew 24:30; Acts 1:11; Revelation 20:4-6)

V. GOVERNMENT

A. Spiritual Leadership

Fellowship Bible Church acknowledges the Lord Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd, as our Head (1 Peter 5:4), the Holy Spirit as our Teacher (John 16:13), and the Holy Scriptures as our only infallible guide in matters of faith, church order, and discipline. *(2 Timothy 3:16)*

B. Board of Elders

1. The authority of this church is Biblically invested upon those who are held most responsible and answerable before God in service--the Elders. As overseers, it is assumed that the Elders have a godly and eager desire for the spiritual best interest of those to whom they minister. They shall have the enjoyment of caring for the spiritual condition of individuals within the church, of guarding the purity of doctrine that is taught, and the exercising of discipline when needed in accordance with the Word of God. The Elders will constantly seek input from the deacons, and all leadership levels as well as the congregation concerning the ministry. Information will be sought by means of questions, surveys, and by personally sensing the needs of the body. Ultimately, however, with prayerful dependence upon the Lord for direction, the decisions concerning the ministry are the responsibility of the Elders, to be affirmed by the Congregation in open meeting. A quorum for the transaction of business in a board meeting shall consist of three-fourths (3/4) of the members on the board. Differing views and alternating suggestions are expected to be expressed among the Elders. However, once a motion has been passed, it is understood that all Elders will wholeheartedly support the decision. If in the view of the Board of Elders the matter under discussion is critical to the direction and/or harmony of the church and if the decision cannot be supported wholeheartedly by the dissenter, the dissenting Elder(s) may be asked to resign from the Board. Elders shall be selected in accordance with the guidelines expressed in the leadership training manual.

(1 Peter 5:1-5; Titus 1:5; 1 Timothy 5:17; Acts 14:23, 15:2-4, 6, 22, 23, 16:4, 20:17-32, 21:18)

Fellowship Bible Church, E.F.C. is an elder-served rather than elder-ruled church. The elders serve at the invitation and discretion of the congregation, which delegates leadership privileges to the elders. The elders are accountable to and under the authority of the congregation and may not serve without the congregation's approval and on-going consent.

Significant congregational decisions (those involving staffing, budget, major facilities issues, major programmatic activities, missions, etc.) are reached through the following process:

- a. Elders solicit input about the issue from the congregation through a formal congregational meeting.
- b. The Elders take this input under advisement and as a group reach an accord on what will be recommended to the congregation about the issue. Elders will have authority to make recommendations only as a board and not as individuals.
- c. The Elder Board's recommendation is presented (over a reasonable period of time) to the congregation for discussion and affirmation. If fewer than two-thirds of church members present at the congregational meeting affirm the decision, the Elder Board may open the issue for further congregational discussion. In light of this feedback, the Elder Board may again present a recommendation to the congregation for affirmation. Until the recommendation is affirmed by two-thirds of the congregation, it is overruled and will not go into effect. Even when a two-thirds majority is reached, the Elder Board may choose to revise or rescind the recommendation if the wisdom of dissenting congregation members shows it not to be in the church's best interest.

Elders will be selected, reviewed, and affirmed for continuing service under the congregational affirmation process outlined above.

2. Basic Duties of the Elders

- a. To oversee the spiritual life of the church *(Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2; Hebrews 13:17)*
- b. To rule *(1 Timothy 3:4-5, 5:17)*
- c. To guard sound doctrine *(Titus 2:1-2)*
- d. To discipline church members *(1 Thessalonians 5:12; 2 Thessalonians 3:15; 2 Timothy 4:2)*
- e. To give special attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word *(Acts 6:6)*

- f. To visit the needy and the afflicted (*James 1:27, 5:14*)
- g. To serve as the official Board of Trustees in matters pertaining to the secular welfare of the church in accordance with State Law.

C. Board of Deacons

1. Deacons are men who work especially near the elders. Etymologically, the word "deacon" means "to raise the dust." Deacons are men who carry out many spiritual and physical tasks that are required of any growing ministry. By so doing, they make it possible for the elders to oversee the church more effectively. Each deacon will be assigned to particular tasks for which he will be personally responsible.
2. Deacons may be involved in "temporal ministries" and/or "personal ministries." Temporal ministries involve organization-oriented tasks such as the care of the physical properties, finances, the taping of messages, printing, ushering, etc. Personal ministries involve leadership in people-oriented ministry tasks such as discipleship teams, visitation, education, youth groups, singles, college, or couples ministries, etc.
3. Deacons shall be selected by the Board of Elders to serve in a subordinate position to the Elders. The selection shall be in accordance with the procedure and qualification found in the Scriptures (*Acts 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 3:8-13*).

D. Role of Women in the Church

1. Throughout the history of Christianity, wherever the Gospel of Jesus Christ has penetrated a culture, women of that society have enjoyed improved social stature. The biblical perspective is that women have equal value with men; in Christ, there is no distinction between the sexes (*Galatians 3:28*).
2. According to the Scriptures, women are to serve their family and others outside the family in a similar way to men. They are to pursue ministry in the home and then are free to minister from the home. There are no sexual distinctions in the lists of spiritual gifts (*Proverbs 31; Titus 2; Ephesians 5*). Role distinctions between the man and woman are not to be demeaning to the woman, in the same way that role distinctions in the Godhead are not demeaning to the Son or the Spirit.
3. There are instructions in the Word of God regarding the role of women. In the home, the woman is to be loved by her husband, as she exhibits respect for him. She is to respect his responsibility to make choices regarding the family. In the church, the woman is to practice her spiritual gifts with the requirement that she not teach men nor have authority over them (*Ephesians 5; 1 Timothy 2*).

E. Meeting Procedures

1. All regular monthly Board meetings will be open to the membership unless otherwise announced by the Board of Elders.
2. All special called meetings of the Board of Elders and Deacons other than regular monthly Board meetings shall require a notice written and be given to each Board member seven days in advance of said meeting. In the written notice, the purpose(s) of the meeting shall be stated in full, as well as the time, date, and location of the meeting. No other business shall be discussed other than that stated in the written notice.
3. All emergency meetings shall be announced as early and as broadly as possible. Emergency meetings are to be called only for treatment of issues which would endanger the life and health of the church in view of an immediate physical or spiritual threat.

F. Role of Pastor-Teacher

1. Qualifications--For a man to be considered for Pastor, he shall show evidence of having successfully completed college and seminary training, or shall offer an educational equivalent judged satisfactory by the Elders. Also, every Pastor must meet the requirements of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 and subscribe to the doctrinal statement and policies of Fellowship Bible Church.
2. Duties of the Pastor/Teacher--The pastor is spiritual leader of the church with the Board of Elders, and both are responsible for its edification. He is the primary teacher of Scripture and equipper of the saints for their work in the ministry (*Ephesians 4:11-16*). Other duties include:
 - a. Through public proclamation and personal example, he is to declare the truth of God as revealed in Scripture (*Ephesians 4:11,12; 2 Timothy 4:2-4; 2:2,15*).
 - b. He will guard himself and the church from error in doctrine and practice (*Acts 20:28-32; Titus 1:9-11*).
 - c. He will serve as an elder with all accompanying qualifications and responsibilities.
 - d. He will oversee the work of the Worship Committee.
 - e. In addition, he will give special attention to the personal study of the Word, jealously guarding time for meditation and prayer. His major responsibility is the spiritual direction of the church and its boards. Therefore, the most important qualification for successful completion of his task is personal godliness (*1 Timothy 6:11; 4:11-13,15,16*).
 - f. He will direct the administration of the ordinances in the church.
 - g. He will do the work of an evangelist. (*2 Timothy 4:5*).
 - h. He is to be in submission to the Board of Elders with reference to any ministry which may impair the work at Fellowship Bible Church.

3. Selection of the Pastor/Teacher

When the church desires to elect a Pastor, the Board of Elders will appoint a pulpit committee. Any Pastor of the church shall be chosen for an indefinite period (unless otherwise specified in the call), upon the recommendation of the Elders after prayerful investigation and examination. Each pastor-nominee shall be recommended to the church by the Elders and shall be affirmed by a hand vote of three-fourths of the qualified members present at a meeting called for the express purpose of considering such recommendation. After his affirmation, the pastor-elect shall be installed at an appropriate service prescribed by the Elders. Each pastor's salary shall be set by the joint action of the Elders and Deacons.

4. Dismissal of the Pastor/Teacher

The Pastor/teacher may be dismissed by the same procedure as found in the section on termination of membership. This dismissal, however, shall require a unanimous vote of the Elders (the Pastor being excluded from the vote), after the following items have been observed--the members of the church must be publicly polled so as to determine their desire in the matter--measured by three-fourths of the membership; the Board of Elders must submit a letter to the pastor stating the specific reasons for dismissal; the church must provide a minimum one (1) month's salary following the date which the dismissal will take effect.

5. Resignation of the Pastor/Teacher

The Pastor will submit a letter of resignation to the Board of Elders at least one month prior to the date of resignation.

TRANSITION PROCEDURES

Before the first Elders are ordained, the church shall be served by a church council comprised of men who are in complete agreement with the policies and procedures described in this document. At such time when a Pastor is chosen, he will automatically become a member of this council. When men of the Body have proven to be ready for Eldership and have been ordained as such, the council will cease to exist. Guidance and wisdom will be solicited from a proxy Elder Board from a sister church of like doctrinal position as Fellowship Bible Church.

VI. MEMBERSHIP

A. Membership Responsibility

1. Members are expected to walk circumspectly in the world and maintain a Christian testimony.
(Romans 6:11-13; 12:1, 2; Ephesians 2:10)
2. Members are urged to weigh carefully all current "doubtful" practices, and live within the spirit of separation unto the Lord *(Romans 14:1-5; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1)*. In order to evaluate the question of "doubtful" practices Biblically, the following principles should be helpful:
 - a. Does this thing harm other persons? *(Romans 14:13; 2 Corinthians 8:9-13)*
 - b. Does this thing harm me? *(1 Corinthians 6:12)*
 - c. Does this thing edify others? *(Romans 14:19)*
 - d. Does this thing glorify God? *(1 Corinthians 10:31)*
3. Members are expected to live according to the truth revealed by the Holy Spirit through the Word, to wholeheartedly support the ministries of the church, to contribute to its material support as the Lord prospers them, and to submit to the discipline of the church.
(Hebrews 10:25; 13:17; 2 Thessalonians 5:17; 1 Corinthians 16:2)

B. Those persons who have by faith in His Cross-work accepted Jesus Christ as their own personal Savior and desire to become members of Fellowship Bible Church are encouraged to inform a Deacon, Elder or the Pastor of their intent.

C. Those desiring membership must be in agreement with the doctrinal statement of Fellowship Bible Church.

D. One must agree to be in submission to the Elders as they govern by this statement of policies and procedures.

E. An Elder in charge of membership or the Pastor will then meet with those wanting to become members to answer any questions about the ministry of Fellowship Bible Church or its governing policies and procedures.

F. Each new member, after being well informed of the goals and purposes of Fellowship Bible Church, will be formally introduced to the church on a subsequent Sunday morning.

G. The privilege of having a voice in congregational meetings shall be limited to regular members on the active membership roll above eighteen (18) years of age.

H. Today, public use of spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues, gifts of healings and other apostolic sign gifts brings confusion and division *(Hebrews 2:3,4)*. Confusion centers on the full revelation of God through His Word and the questionable validity of further 'revelation'. The practice of any spiritual gift in an immature way will produce division in the Body of Christ. Consequently, although every member is encouraged to practice his valid spiritual gifts, each member will be held accountable by the Elders of the church to exercise those gifts in an edifying rather than controversial manner.

I. Termination of membership can occur for the following reasons:

1. Absenteeism
 - a. Membership shall be reviewed periodically by the Elders.
 - b. A member whose whereabouts are unknown, or who has been absent from the church for a period of three consecutive months without satisfactory reasons, shall be removed from the membership list after an attempt has been made to contact him concerning the absences.
2. Discipline
 - a. Harmony in the body should characterize the functioning of the local church.
(Ephesians 4:3-4; Psalms 133:1)
 - b. When personal differences occur they should be handled in accordance with the pattern outlined by our Lord in Matthew 18:15-22, and the principle stressed by the Apostle Paul in Galatians 6:1. Personal offenses should be resolved between the individual believers involved. Unresolved conflicts should then be taken to the Pastor and/or Elder knowledgeable of the situation. If serious conflict remains, the matter shall be resolved by the action of the Board of Elders.
 - c. Any member who manifests an unwillingness to maintain the harmony within the church or behaves in a way that is detrimental to the work and testimony of the church shall be subject to review by the Elders as to his membership status. Likewise, any member may be subject to dismissal for doctrinal variance or for moral offense.
(2 Timothy 1:21; 2 Corinthians 5)
 - d. Discipline shall always have as its aim the eventual restoration of the offender should he correct the offense.
(2 Corinthians 2:6-8)
 - e. Termination of membership through discipline shall require the unanimous vote of the Board of Elders in a scheduled meeting.

VII. MISSIONS

- A. Any mission board or missionary to be considered for regular financial support from Fellowship Bible Church will be required to:
 1. Be in harmony with the doctrinal statement of Fellowship Bible Church.
 2. Appear before the Board of Elders and the congregation in order to present his ministry.
 3. Receive a three-fourths (3/4) vote of approval from the Board of Elders.
 4. The support can likewise be terminated by a three-fourths (3/4) vote from the Board of Elders. When a missionary is terminated, the church shall send him one-half (1/2) of the next month's support. At that time the monthly support shall cease.

VIII. ORDINANCES

- A. Communion

The Lord's Supper shall be observed as often as the Elders shall designate--normally monthly. Communion is both a privilege and a responsibility for all who know Jesus Christ as personal Savior. There is no restriction to the frequency of celebration.
- B. Baptism

We believe that baptism is an act of obedience and a testimony to a spiritual reality for all believers. We believe that the mode of baptism is not a critical issue; and that baptism, although very important, is not essential for salvation.

Baptism is for those who have professed personal trust in Jesus Christ for eternal salvation. It is a willful act of public testimony to new life in Christ (*Acts 16:34*).

Baptism should not be confused with the practice of child presentation. The presentation of a child is seen as a renewed resolve of the parents to 'bring their children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord' (Ephesians 6:4). Any parents choosing to present their children to the Lord are encouraged to make their desires known to an Elder or Pastor. The presentation of children is not considered an ordinance.

IX. FINANCIAL POLICY

We believe that the New Testament teaches that God's will for our individual giving is for each one of us to purpose in our own hearts to give cheerfully and not under compulsion. While we believe that the local church is God's primary tool for ministry and world evangelism, and that one's giving ought to be primarily through the local church, we do not believe in the "storehouse tithe" since that would be compulsion. In fact, we believe that the tithe (giving one-tenth of one's income) is not taught in the New Testament. Generous giving is commanded and each believer should be sensitive to and prayerful about the privilege of supporting God's work. Giving to the Lord is a real occasion for joy as the believer anticipates in advance the blessings that will be received. In light of the instructions to give in Scripture, it is always right to do, whether preceded by joy or not! Joy will certainly follow such willful obedience. According to Scripture, personal giving should be proportional to God's personal financial blessing; it should be systematic, and regular (*2 Corinthians 9:7; 2 Timothy 6:17-19; 2 Corinthians 8:4; Philippians 4:17; 1 Corinthians 16:1,2*).

Non-personal financial records of Fellowship Bible Church are open to public inspection. The finance committee will periodically make financial statements available to the membership.

X. CHURCH DISSOLUTION

In the event that this church ceases to function and disbands, all monies derived from the sale of property or left in funds belonging to the church after the payment of debts and obligations shall be designated by the Elders to mission organizations with a doctrinal statement in accord with the one appearing in this document. In case of dissolution, the property shall be transferred to The South Central District of the Evangelical Free Church of America. In case of a division of the membership, the ownership of property shall remain with those members abiding by this constitution as determined by the executive board of The South Central District.

XI. EVALUATION AND AMENDMENTS

These policies shall be annually reviewed and re-examined and can be amended or altered by a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote by the Board of Elders at a duly scheduled meeting, provided that any proposed changes are in the hands of the Board members at least one week prior to the meeting. Members are free at any time to suggest means of conforming this document more closely to the principles of God's Word. The proposed changes will then be suggested to the Congregation in open meeting. Approval shall require a three-fourths majority of the votes cast. All affirmed changes shall take effect immediately.

XII. STARTUP PROCEDURES

During the period of the formation of the church, or a similar transitional time when the church is being reorganized after a loss of leadership, the assembly shall be led by a church council, in the absence of ordained elders. The council shall lead the church spiritually, administrate the ministries of the church and provide for the shepherding of the flock. Simultaneously, the council shall seek to recognize and ordain men qualified as elders. The resident pastor-teacher shall oversee the development and training of these potential elders, following a biblical pattern of discipleship. At the end of a two or three year period, the men shall be affirmed by the membership of the church and ordained as elders. During the transition period, the resident pastor shall seek the mature wisdom of the elders of a like-minded church, meeting with them on a regular basis.