

# Bylaws

## ARTICLE 1: CHURCH FAMILY MEMBERS

### ***Section 1 – View of Church Family Membership***

By God's grace, when a person becomes a Christian through faith in Jesus and accepts Jesus as his or her Lord and Savior, that person becomes a member of God's eternal family (the universal church) along with every other believer in Jesus. The Bible states that it is God's desire for every Christian to grow in spiritual maturity and become conformed to the likeness of the Lord Jesus. WAY OF LIFE FELLOWSHIP understands the New Testament as having certain directives for disciples of Jesus. They include: each disciple will be part of a local church and is to be growing in the likeness of the Lord Jesus (Ephesians 2:8-9; Galatians 3:26; Romans 8:29; Hebrews 6:1, 10:25; 2 Peter 3:18; Galatians 4:19).

In reflecting these spiritual truths, WAY OF LIFE FELLOWSHIP views church family membership as a dynamic process that seeks to help people grow in their relationship with, and into the likeness of, Jesus. It is expected that Christians serving in ministry at WAY OF LIFE FELLOWSHIP will be church family members.

### ***Section 2 – To Become a Church Family Member a Person Must:***

- Have accepted the Lord Jesus as his or her Savior
- Have taken the step of obedience toward believer's baptism by immersion
- Agreed to the WAY OF LIFE FELLOWSHIP's mission, vision and Statement of Faith
- Agree to support WAY OF LIFE FELLOWSHIP, prayerfully, financially and physically by regular attendance and service where God leads
- Sign the Family Member's Covenant (in progress)

### ***Section 3 – Responsibilities of Church Family Members***

Family members of WAY OF LIFE FELLOWSHIP will be called upon to fulfill the responsibilities in the Family Member's Covenant:

## FAMILY MEMBER'S COVENANT

### **Protect Unity**

By acting in humility and love

By refusing to gossip and resolving conflicts using (Matthew 18:15-17)

By being teachable (Romans 15:5, 19; 1 Peter 1:22; Ephesians 4:29; Hebrews 13:17)

### **Share Responsibility**

By praying for and with fellow believers

By inviting the unchurched to attend and warmly welcoming those who visit

(1 Thessalonians 1:2; Luke 14:23; Romans 15:7)

By being open to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit

### **Serve in Ministry**

By discovering one's spiritual gifts and talents

By developing a servant's heart

By finding opportunities to serve the church as God directs and leads (1 Peter 4:10; Ephesians 4:11-12; Philippians 2:3-4, 7)

### **Support Our Witness**

By attending faithfully

By living a growing, Godly life, privately and publicly

By giving regularly and sacrificially (Hebrews 10:25; Philippians 1:27; 1 Corinthians 16:2)

### **Section 4 – Termination of Church Family Membership**

Family members will be removed when they (1) transfer their membership (2) request termination, (3) die, (4) if they become inactive for more than six months at a time, or (5) if they are unrepentant in a sinful lifestyle, doctrine, or are engaged in divisive behavior.

The active church family members shall do all that they can to reclaim inactive or disciplined family members, or those living in disobedience to Christ and Biblical mandates in a positive attitude of love, forgiveness, and unity that glorifies the Lord. Family members dismissed shall be restored by the Elders according to the spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:7-8, when their lifestyle is judged to be in accordance with the Statement of Faith and Family Member's Covenant.

## **ARTICLE 2: ELDERS**

Responsibility for spiritual guidance, direction, and oversight of the church shall be vested in a council of Elders. Each elder will be a man who meets the Biblical qualifications of the office of elder/overseer. The Elders will have regular meetings and a quorum of 3/5 of the elders must be present to conduct business.

### **Section 1 – Qualifications of Elders**

In order to serve as an elder, a male family member of WAY OF LIFE FELLOWSHIP must meet the spiritual qualifications of the office of elder/overseer as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4; and Hebrews 13:17.

We affirm the Biblical teaching that an elder in the church (when married) be the husband of one wife (literally "a one woman kind of man") and affirm the sanctity of God's institution of marriage (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6). A married elder must have a healthy marriage as demonstrated by selflessness and devotion to his wife and family.

Each elder candidate must be carefully and prayerfully examined in every area of his current life in light of all applicable Scriptures and Biblical guidelines. He must be a man who not only lives a life above reproach (1 Timothy 3:2a), but has demonstrated a servant's heart

and also has a vibrant healthy and readily-observable walk of faith with God. He must manifest the fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) in an ever-increasing degree and be held to the highest of Biblical standards as one aspiring to help lead God's church.

The Senior Pastor will serve as an elder; other pastoral staff may also serve as an elder, though not automatically. Elders who are pastoral staff may not vote on issues involving dismissal of church staff. Pastoral staff, who are not elders, are encouraged to be non-voting participants in meetings of elders.

## **Section 2 – Responsibilities of Elders**

An elder shall fulfill the duties conferred on them including:

- Actively participate in the prayer ministries of the church; regularly and faithfully pray for the pastoral staff, the spiritual growth of the church body, and the salvation of the unsaved in the community.
- Serve as a sounding board for the Senior Pastor in developing vision, aims, and goals and to champion them before the congregation.
- Help guide the spiritual development of the congregation in the areas of worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry, and mission.
- Support and empower the pastoral staff in the development of ministry teams to develop and grow each ministry so the overall church fulfills its purpose.
- Prepare the annual budget, including staff salaries and benefits, and oversee the expenditures against the budget.
- Oversee the church family membership, which includes the admission of new family members and the discipline or removal of existing family members.
- Be attuned and responsive to the needs and concerns of the congregation and represent them to the Elders.

## **Section 3 – Selection of Elders**

The Elders may appoint a new elder after substantial prayer and a careful and confidential interview in order to confirm that they meet the qualifications (Article 2: Section 1) and have demonstrated leadership skills.

An elder shall serve for a three-year term. If two full terms have been served, a mandatory one-year sabbatical shall be required.

## **Section 4 – Dismissal of Elders**

Any elder, other than the Senior Pastor (Article 3: Section 1), may be removed from office by resignation, term expiration, or action of the Elders for good and sufficient cause. Every current elder shall be notified prior to a decision and no elder shall be removed from office until positive effort has been made to assist them in correcting the problem, except in the case of gross moral, civil, or criminal misconduct in which case removal will be immediate.

## **ARTICLE 3: APPOINTED OFFICERS**

### ***Section 1 – Senior Pastor***

The Senior Pastor is recognized as the under-shepherd of Christ's local church and WAY OF LIFE FELLOWSHIP'S President and Chief Executive Officer. He shall qualify as and serve as an elder.

The responsibilities of the Senior Pastor are not limited to but include:

- Be the primary (though not exclusive) pulpit teacher of the congregation.
- Be the visionary of the church, responsible to cast the overall vision, goals and objectives of the church.
- Oversee all leadership development ministries/programs in the church.
- Be responsible to meet with, encourage, and motivate both vocational and volunteer staff to accomplish ministry goals and objectives.
- Provide leadership to all ministry team leaders in an advisory capacity.
- Be directly accountable to the Elders.

When a vacancy occurs in the Senior Pastorate, the Elders will form a search committee, pray diligently and will seek the assistance from other like minded churches to assist in the hiring of a new leader. Elders are encouraged to look into a natural and seamless transition from the former pastor to the new leader.

The Senior Pastor may only be removed by resignation or after significant prayer and a 2/3 majority vote of all Elders, excluding those who are staff. All current elders shall be notified prior to a vote to remove the Senior Pastor.

### ***Section 2 – Secretary***

The Secretary shall be appointed from among the Elders; the Senior Pastor, as President, shall not also hold the office of Secretary.

The Secretary shall preserve and properly file all minutes, reports, and other official church documents pertaining to his office as required by federal, state, and local laws governing non-profit corporations.

## **ARTICLE 4: CHURCH STAFF**

Vocational workers in the church who are financially compensated for their work as employees are considered church staff. They shall function in pastoral/ministry leadership or support roles in specifically defined areas as outlined in their job description. They will be directly accountable to the Senior Pastor unless otherwise stated.

The Senior Pastor will hire church staff after approval by the Elders. Church staff shall meet the same qualifications as a regular family member of the church (Article 1: Sections 2 & 3) and any additional qualifications list in their job description.

Subject to the rights, if any, under contract of employment, the Senior Pastor may dismiss

church staff in accordance with employment policies after approval from the Elders.

**ARTICLE 5: AMENDING THE BYLAWS**

Any amendments to the Bylaws shall be enacted after substantial prayer and a unanimous vote of the Elders.