

BYLAWS OF THE BIBLE CHURCH OF LITTLE ROCK

Adopted May 22, 2016

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Introduction to Bylaws

The following Bylaws are designed to help our church operate in a biblically faithful manner. Like most church bylaws, they cover basic issues related to the governance and function of the church. They also cover issues that are often overlooked in standard bylaws, such as biblical counseling, confidentiality, and conflict resolution. In particular, the Bylaws are designed to accomplish the following goals:

- (1) To prevent surprises and disappointed expectations by providing potential members with a thorough explanation of how the church intends to govern itself.
- (2) To reduce the likelihood of confusion and conflict within the church by establishing clear operational guidelines.
- (3) To prevent the misuse of authority by church leaders by establishing procedures that protect members from being disciplined or losing rights without due process.
- (4) To give our Elders protection from being subpoenaed by a civil court to testify regarding information they receive through pastoral counseling, while at the same time giving them guidelines for reporting actual or suspected harm to others.
- (5) To reduce the church's exposure to legal liability by satisfying recently developed legal requirements, even in areas where we deny that the state has jurisdiction, and by requiring that potential lawsuits will be resolved through biblical mediation or arbitration rather than through litigation.

Most people would agree that these are worthwhile goals, but some might still be troubled by the amount of detail found in these Bylaws. They might say, "Why can't we live by just a few general rules?" The answer to that question is quite simple: Because general rules are susceptible to differing interpretations, it is often necessary to develop detailed rules to eliminate the possibility of misunderstandings.

Scripture does not tell us exactly how to give notice or establish quorums for congregational meetings, what information should remain confidential and what may be shared with others, how long church officers should serve without re-election, or how to dispose of property if a church dissolves. These Bylaws are designed to answer these types of questions in accord with biblical principles, and will hopefully spare us from unnecessary confusion and conflict, help us to act in consistent and respectful ways, and allow us to devote ourselves to the more important matters of God's kingdom.

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

ARTICLE I
NAME

The name of this organization is The Bible Church of Little Rock, referred to herein as “the church.”

ARTICLE II
CONSTITUTION

The Constitution of the church, which is subordinate to the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments, consists of the statement of faith, Constitution, and amendments thereto. Whenever possible, these Bylaws shall be interpreted so as to be consistent with the Constitution. Should any Bylaw be found to contradict a provision of the Constitution, the Constitution shall control.

ARTICLE III
ORGANIZATION AND INCORPORATION

The church was organized as a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the State of Arkansas on January 7, 1952.

ARTICLE IV
PURPOSE AND LIMITATIONS

In addition to the purposes set forth in the Church Constitution, the purposes of the church are:

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

reasonable consideration, with its members or officers without violating this provision subject to the church's then current Conflict of Interest policy.

ARTICLE V

LOCATION OF OFFICE

The *registered* office of the church shall be located within Little Rock, Arkansas at such address as the Elders of the church shall determine. The Board of Elders or a majority of the members may change the *registered agent* and the address of the registered office from time to time, upon filing the appropriate statement with the Secretary of State.

ARTICLE VI

MEMBERSHIP

- a. All members, as defined by the Constitution of the church, who are at least 21 years old, and in good standing in the church shall be voting members. "Good standing" means that a member is not presently under corrective discipline as defined and set forth hereinbelow. Any voting member in attendance at a duly called meeting shall be entitled to one vote on matters brought before the congregation. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted. The compensated Elders shall also be entitled to vote.
- b. Members may be removed from membership at their own request by informing the Board of Elders of their intention to withdraw and the reasons therefore. If a member requests to withdraw because of specific problems or disappointments with the church,
the Board of Elders may attempt to resolve those matters so that the member may remain in the church, and enjoy greater fruitfulness and personal spiritual growth. If the Board of Elders is unable to resolve those matters, it may offer to assist the member in locating a church of like faith and practice that can respond more effectively to his or her gifts and needs. If it appears to the Board of Elders that a member has requested removal merely to avoid church discipline as defined and set forth hereinbelow, that request shall not be given effect until the disciplinary process has been properly concluded.
- c. Members may also be removed from membership by order of the Board of Elders when they: persistently, over an extended period of time, and without adequate reason absent themselves from the stated services of the church; become a member of another church; cannot be found for a period greater than two years; or are removed by disfellowshipping for persistent impenitence.

ARTICLE VII

NONCOMPENSATED ELDERS AND DEACONS

- a. Noncompensated Elders and Deacons must be male voting members. In order to be eligible for election, a man shall have been a member in good standing in the church for at least one year, shall demonstrate the biblical qualifications as described in 1 Timothy 3:1-12 and Titus 1:5-9, and shall have served the church in functions requiring responsible leadership.
- b. Noncompensated Elders, together with the compensated Elders, are to lead the church in the service of Christ. They are to watch diligently over the people committed to their charge in order to encourage progress and growth in Christian faith, hope and love, and to prevent corruption of doctrine and morals. Evils that they cannot correct by private admonition should be brought to the notice of the Board of Elders. They should visit the people, especially the sick, instruct the uninformed, comfort the mourning, and nourish and spiritually guard the church. They should pray with and for the people. They should have particular concern for the doctrine and conduct of the compensated Elders, and help them in their labors.
- c. Deacons shall show forth the compassion of Christ in a manifold ministry of mercy toward the saints and strangers on behalf of the church. As delegated and directed by the Board of Elders, they shall minister to the temporal needs of members and friends, administer the church finances, and see to the care and maintenance of church property.
- d. Any voting member may propose to the Board of Elders nominations for the office of Elder, Deacon or Trustee (for a description of the office of Trustee, see the Church Constitution, Art. III, Sec. 2). The Board of Elders shall approve those nominees whom, upon examination, it judges to possess the necessary qualifications for office. An Elder, Deacon or Trustee who had been previously approved, but who resigned from or was divested of the office must be re-approved. The Board of Elders shall announce to the church the names of those it has approved at least three Sundays preceding the date appointed for the election of officers. Election shall be from those approved. If an Elder, Deacon or Trustee is elected at a meeting other than the Annual Membership Meeting, his regular term shall expire at the time of the second Annual Membership Meeting following his election.
- e. A noncompensated Elder, Deacon or Trustee may be divested of his office by church discipline.

ARTICLE VIII COMPENSATED ELDERS

- a. It is the charge of the compensated Elders, along with the noncompensated Elders, to feed and to tend the flock as Christ's under-shepherds, and to lead them all in the service of Christ.
- b. Any compensated Elder may resign his position upon thirty days' written notice.
- c. A compensated Elder may be divested of his office by church discipline as set forth in the Church Constitution and these Bylaws.
- d. In order to implement the provisions of 1 Timothy 5:19-22; Titus 3:10 and Article III, Section 2, Subsection D, of the Church Constitution, in the event any Pastor proves himself unfaithful or unfit to spiritually fulfill the duties of his office, the procedure for conflict resolution outlined in Article XV of these Bylaws shall be followed.

ARTICLE IX

BOARD OF ELDERS

- a. The Board of Elders shall have the power and authority to make rules, policy and regulations not inconsistent with the laws of the state of Arkansas, the Church Constitution, and these Bylaws. The Board of Elders shall manage the business and ministry of the church, oversee all matters concerning the conduct of public worship, and determine the best measures for promoting the spiritual growth and evangelistic witness of the congregation. It shall receive, dismiss, and exercise discipline over the members of the church, supervise the activities of the Board of Deacons, and all other organizations of the church, and have final authority over the use of the church property.
- b. The Board of Elders shall meet at least once a month, and shall convene at the call of the compensated Elders, the Chairman, any three members of the Board of Elders, or upon its own adjournment. Either oral or written notice, including the date, time, and place of a meeting, shall be given to all Elders at least three business days before a meeting. If mailed, notice shall be deemed to be effective the day after the letter is postmarked. Notice may be waived either orally or in writing. An Elder's attendance at a meeting waives his right to object to lack of notice or defective notice of the meeting, unless at the beginning of the meeting (or promptly upon arrival), he objects to holding the meeting or transacting business at the meeting, and does not vote for or assent to action taken at the meeting.
- c. A quorum is a majority of the Board of Elders. In no case, however, shall a vote be taken unless the quorum includes at least two compensated and two noncompensated Elders, except those meetings reserved for the noncompensated Elders by the Church Constitution.

- d. The act of a majority present at a Board of Elders meeting at which a quorum is present (when the vote is taken) shall be the act of the Board of Elders. An Elder shall be deemed to have approved of an action taken if he is present at a meeting of the Board of Elders unless: (1) he objects at the beginning of the meeting (or promptly upon arrival) to holding it or transacting business at the meeting; or (2) his dissent or abstention from the action taken is entered in the minutes of the meeting; or (3) he did not approve the action and he delivers written notice of dissent or abstention to the presiding officer of the meeting before its adjournment or immediately after adjournment of the meeting.
- e. If the Board of Elders shall cease to exist or fall below a minimum of five, the congregation by 2/3-majority vote shall provide for the election of Elders from within the congregation.
- f. The Board of Elders may meet by means of a conference telephone call or similar communications equipment, provided all persons entitled to participate in the meeting received proper notice of the telephone meeting, and provided all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time. A member participating in a conference telephone meeting is deemed present in person at the meeting. The moderator of the meeting may establish reasonable rules as to conducting business at any meeting by phone.
- g. The Board of Elders may conduct business and vote by e-mail if all the Elders consent to conduct business in such a manner. In the event business is conducted by e-mail, then copies of all e-mails shall constitute the minutes of any such business, and shall be placed in the record of minutes.
- h. The Board of Elders may establish such committees, as it deems necessary for the work of the church.

ARTICLE X
BOARD OF DEACONS

The Board of Deacons shall collect and disperse funds for the relief of the needy, and shall oversee all matters pertaining to ministry as set forth in the Church Constitution. Other forms of service for the church may also be committed to the Deacons. The Board of Deacons shall choose its own officers from its membership.

ARTICLE XI
CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

- a. An annual meeting of the church membership shall be held the first Sunday of December.

- b. Special meetings of the church shall be called and announced to the church membership in accordance with the Church Constitution. The Elders shall provide a congregational meeting venue for discussing issues of concern. This may or may not be at the Annual Membership Meeting.
- c. The purpose of the meeting shall be announced in advance if it involves: an amendment to the Church Constitution and/or Bylaws; the election or removal of officers; the calling or removal of a compensated Elder; or the dissolution of the church. When a meeting is called for the transaction of specific matters of business, then no other business shall be conducted except that which is stated in the meeting notice.
- d. A member's attendance at a meeting waives the member's right to object to lack of notice or defective notice of the meeting, unless the member at the beginning of the meeting objects to holding the meeting or transacting business at the meeting; and, waives the member's right to object to consideration of a particular matter at the meeting that is not within the purpose or purposes described in the meeting notice, unless the member objects to considering the matter when it is presented.

ARTICLE XII

CHURCH RECORDS

- a. The church shall keep the following records: (1) minutes of Elders' and Deacons' meetings; (2) minutes of the Annual Membership Meeting; (3) minutes of special called meetings of the congregation; (4) rolls of the members in the congregation with the dates of their reception; (5) resolutions adopted by the Board of Elders; (6) appropriate accounting records; (7) the Constitution and all amendments to it currently in effect; (8) the Bylaws and all amendments to them currently in effect.
- b. A member shall be entitled to inspect and copy any of the church records described above, provided the Board of Elders finds that the member has a legitimate purpose. This shall be done at a reasonable time and location, specified by the Board of Elders, and upon reasonable notice of at least 5 business days. The Board of Elders may limit access to any records that contain confidential information about a particular person or persons.

ARTICLE XIII

BIBLICAL COUNSELING

- a. All Christians struggle with sin and the effect it has on their lives and relationships (see Romans 3:23, 7:7-25; Galatians 5:19-23). Whenever a Christian is unable to overcome sinful attitudes or behaviors through private efforts, God commands that

he should seek assistance from other members, and especially from the Elders, who have the responsibility of providing pastoral counseling and oversight (see Romans 15:14; Galatians 6:1-2; Colossians 3:16; 2 Timothy 3:16-4:2; Hebrews 10:24-25, 13:17). Therefore, this church encourages and enjoins its members to make confession to and seek counsel from each other, as clearly provided in James 5:16, and from the Elders.

- b. We believe that the Bible provides thorough guidance and instruction for faith and life. Therefore, our counseling shall be based on Scriptural principles rather than those of secular psychology or psychiatry. Neither the pastoral nor the lay counselors of this church are trained or licensed as psychotherapists or mental health professionals, nor should they be expected to follow the methods of such persons.
- c. Some church members who serve as recognized pastoral or lay counselors on behalf of the church may also work in professional fields outside the church. In this situation it is understood that as counselors of the church, they provide biblical counseling. They do not provide professional advice or services from retention in their professional practice or from their professional expertise, training, licensing, experience or capacity.

ARTICLE XIV CONFIDENTIALITY

- a. The Bible teaches that Christians should carefully guard any personal and private information that others reveal to them (Proverbs 11:13). Protecting confidences is a sign of Christian love and respect (Matthew 7:12). It also discourages gossip (Proverbs 16:28; 17:9; 20:19; 26:20), invites confession (Proverbs 28:13; James 5:16), and encourages people to seek counseling (Romans 15:14). Since these goals are essential to the ministry of the gospel and the work of this church, all members are expected to refrain from gossip and to respect the confidences of others. In particular, our Elders shall carefully protect all information that they receive through pastoral counseling, subject to the following guidelines.
- b. Although confidentiality is to be respected as much as possible, there are times when it is appropriate to reveal certain information to others. In particular, when the Elders of the church believe it is biblically necessary, they may disclose confidential information to appropriate people in the following circumstances:
 - (1) When an Elder is uncertain of how to counsel a person about a particular problem and needs to seek advice from other Elders in this church or, if the person attends another church, from the leaders of that church (Proverbs 11:14; 13:10; 15:22; 20:18; Matthew 18:15-17).
 - (2) When the person who disclosed the information or any other person is in imminent danger of serious harm unless others intervene (Proverbs 24:11-12).

- (3) When a person refuses to repent of sin and it becomes necessary to institute disciplinary proceedings (Matthew 18:15-20), or seek the assistance of individuals or agencies outside this church (Romans 13:1-5).
 - (4) When required by law; e.g., to report suspected child abuse (Mark 9:36-37, 42; Matthew 18:1-14).
- c. Scripture commands that confidential information is to be shared with others only when a problem cannot be resolved through the efforts of a small group of people within the church (Matthew 18:15-17). Therefore, except as provided in Article XIV, section B, an Elder may not disclose confidential information to anyone inside or outside this church without the approval of the Board of Elders or the consent of the person who originally disclosed the information. The Board of Elders may approve such disclosure only when it finds that all internal efforts to resolve a problem have been exhausted (1 Corinthians 6:1-8), and the problem cannot be satisfactorily resolved without the assistance of individuals or agencies outside this church (Romans 13:1-5), or when the Board of Elders deems it appropriate for the giving of testimony in a court of law, the reporting of physical or sexual abuse, or other cooperation with civil authorities.
- d. The Elders may, but need not, provide counselees with written notice of these confidentiality provisions, but these provisions shall be in effect regardless of whether such notice is given.

ARTICLE XV

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- a. This church is committed to resolving in a biblical manner all disputes that may arise within our body. This commitment is based on God's command that Christians should strive earnestly to live at peace with one another (see Matthew 5:9; John 17:20-23; Romans 12:18; Ephesians 4:1-3) and that when disputes arise, Christians should resolve them according to the principles set forth in Holy Scripture (see Proverbs 19:11; Matthew 5:23-25; 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8; Galatians 6:1). We believe that these commands and principles are obligatory on all Christians, and absolutely essential for the well being and work of the church. Therefore, any and all disputes in this church shall be resolved according to biblical principles, as provided in the Church Constitution and these Bylaws.
- b. When a member of this church has a conflict with, or is concerned about the behavior of another member, he shall attempt to resolve the matter as follows: (1) The offended or concerned person shall prayerfully examine himself and take responsibility for his contribution to a problem (Matthew 7:3-5), and he shall prayerfully seek to discern whether the offence is so serious that it cannot be overlooked (Proverbs 19:11; see also Proverbs 12:16; 15:18; 17:14; 20:3; Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13; 1 Peter 4:8). (2) If the offence is too serious to overlook, the offended person shall go, repeatedly if necessary, and talk to the offender in an effort to resolve the matter personally and privately, having first confessed his own

wrongdoing (Matthew 18:15). (3) If the offender will not listen and if the problem is too serious to overlook, the offended or concerned person shall return with one or two other people who will attempt to help the parties resolve their differences (Matthew 18:16); these other people may be members or officers of the church, other respected Christians in the community, or trained mediators or arbitrators (conciliators) from a Christian conciliation ministry. At the request of either party to the dispute, the church shall make every effort to assist the parties in resolving their differences and being reconciled.

- c. Conflicts involving doctrine or church discipline shall be resolved according to the procedures set forth in the Church Constitution and these Bylaws on church discipline, and in the Rules of Procedure of the Institute for Christian Conciliation (ver. 4.3, 10/01), a division of Peacemaker ® Ministries. The Institute for Christian Conciliation is a non-ecclesiastical body, and cannot hold The Bible Church accountable or under its supervision in accordance with the Church Constitution (Article II, Section 1).
- d. Employment disputes shall be resolved according to the procedure set forth in the Personnel Policy Manual of this church, if the church has adopted such a policy. If no such policy has been adopted, then all disputes shall be resolved in accordance with the conflict resolution provision set forth in the Church Constitution and in these Bylaws.
- e. If a dispute arises between a member and the church, and cannot be resolved through the internal procedures described above, it shall be resolved as follows:
 - (1) The dispute shall be submitted to mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration in accordance with the Rules of Procedures of the Institute for Christian Conciliation (ver. 4.3, 10/01), and judgment upon an arbitration award may be entered in any court otherwise having jurisdiction.
 - (2) All mediators and arbitrators shall be in agreement with the statement of faith of this church, and the church's basic form of government, unless this requirement is modified or waived by all parties to the dispute. If a dispute involves an attempted revision of the statement of faith, or the church's form of government, the mediators and arbitrators shall be in agreement with those documents, as they existed prior to the attempted revision.
 - (3) If a dispute submitted to arbitration pursuant to these Bylaws involves a decision reached by the Board of Elders of this church, the arbitrators shall uphold and shall be bound by the decisions of the Board of Elders on matters of doctrine and church discipline.
 - (4) This section covers the church as a corporate entity and its agents, including its pastors, officers, staff, and volunteers with regard to any actions they may take in their official capacities on behalf of the church.
 - (5) This section covers any and all disputes or claims arising from or related to church membership, doctrine, policy, practice, counseling, discipline, decisions,

- actions, or failures to act, including claims based on civil statute or for personal injury, except as otherwise may be provided by law.
- (6) By joining this church, all members agree that these methods shall provide the sole remedy for any dispute arising against the church and its agents, and they waive their right to file any legal action against the church in a civil court or agency, except to enforce an arbitration decision.
- (7) If a dispute or claim involves an alleged injury or damage to which the church's insurance applies, and if the church's insurer refuses to submit to mediation or arbitration as described in this section, either the church or the member alleging the injury or damage may declare that this section is no longer binding with regard to that part of the dispute or claim which the church's insurance applies.
- f. If possible, the church shall seek to include a conciliation clause in contracts by using the following or substantially similar language:

Any claim or dispute arising from or related to this agreement shall be settled by biblically based mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration in accordance with the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation of the Institute for Christian Conciliation (ver. 4.3, 10/01), a division of Peacemaker ® Ministries. Judgment upon an arbitration decision may be entered in any court otherwise having jurisdiction. The parties understand that these methods shall be the sole remedy for any controversy or claim arising out of this agreement and expressly waive their right to file a lawsuit in any civil court against one another for such disputes, except to enforce an arbitration decision. THIS CONTRACT IS SUBJECT TO ARBITRATION UNDER THE ARKANSAS ARBITRATION ACT.

ARTICLE XVI

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Church discipline shall be carried out as set forth in the Guidelines for Church Discipline developed by the Board of Elders and set forth as Bylaws herein in Appendix A, and according to the Rules of Procedure of the Institute for Christian Conciliation (ver. 4.3, 10/01), a division of Peacemakers ® Ministries.

ARTICLE XVII

OWNERSHIP AND DISTRIBUTION OF PROPERTY

- a. The church shall hold, own, and enjoy its own personal and real property, without any right of reversion to another entity, except as provided in these Bylaws.
- b. "Dissolution" means the complete disbanding of the church so that it no longer functions as a congregation or as a corporate entity. Upon the dissolution of the church, its property shall be applied and distributed as follows: (1) all liabilities and obligations of the church shall be paid and discharged or adequate provision

shall be made therefore; (2) assets held by the church upon condition requiring return, transfer or conveyance, which condition occurs by reason of the dissolution, shall be returned, transferred, or conveyed in accordance with such requirements; (3) assets received and not held upon a condition requiring return, transfer, or conveyance by reason of the dissolution, shall be transferred or conveyed to one or more domestic or foreign corporations, societies, or organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), and are engaged in activities substantially similar to those of the church corporation; this distribution shall be done pursuant to a plan by the Board of Elders, and (4) any assets not otherwise disposed of shall be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the corporation is then located, for such organizations as are engaged in activities substantially similar to those of the church corporation, and are substantially in agreement with the doctrinal statement of the church.

ARTICLE XVIII **INDEMNIFICATION OF OFFICERS**

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

ARTICLE XIX **AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS**

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

ARTICLE XX

MARRIAGE, GENDER AND HUMAN SEXUALITY

PREAMBLE

- We believe that all matters of faith and conduct must be evaluated on the basis of Holy Scripture, which is our inerrant and infallible guide (2 Timothy 3:16–17). Since the Holy Bible does speak to the nature of human beings, their gender and sexuality, it is imperative that we correctly understand and articulate what the Bible teaches concerning these matters.
- We are committed to the biblical standard of personal holiness in the lives of the individual, the home, and family as set forth in Holy Scripture. We believe God has ordained and created marriage to exist between one man and one woman, with absolute marital fidelity. The Bible sets forth specific directives to the individual, home, and family, which include the distinct roles of husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, and children. It is our firm conviction that we uphold the dignity of each individual as we embrace the unchanging and longstanding principles of Scriptural truth.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Based upon Holy Scripture and in agreement with the historic, moral teaching of the universal Church, we believe:

- **Marriage** — The Bible Church of Little Rock defines marriage as the permanent, exclusive, comprehensive, and conjugal “one flesh” covenant union of one biological man and one biological woman from birth, intrinsically ordered to procreation and biological family, and in furtherance of the moral, spiritual, and public good of binding father, mother, and child (Genesis 1:27-28, Genesis 2:18-24, Matthew 19:4-9, Mark 10:5-9, Ephesians 5:31-33).
- **Sexual Immorality** — The Bible Church of Little Rock believes that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between one man and one woman in the context of the marriage covenant. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. Such sexual acts are sinful and offensive to God. Consequently, members of the Bible Church of Little Rock must resist and refrain from any and all sexual acts outside marriage — including but not limited to adultery, fornication, incest, zoophilia, pornography, prostitution, masturbation, voyeurism, pedophilia, exhibitionism, sodomy, polygamy, polyamory, sologamy, or same-sex sexual acts (Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:7-23; Leviticus 20:10-21; Deuteronomy 5:18; Matthew 5:27-28; Matthew 15:18-20; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-18; 1 Corinthians 7:2-5; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 4:17-19; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Hebrews 13:4).

- **Celibacy** — The Bible Church of Little Rock believes that Holy Scripture prescribes two life-enhancing options for human sexual behavior: (1) the conjugal “one flesh” marital union of one man and one woman, and (2) celibacy, which is abstaining from sexual activity outside of marriage. Either is a gift from God, given as He wills for His glory and the good of those who receive and rejoice in His gift to them. Celibacy and a chaste, faithful singleness is to be celebrated and affirmed within the Bible Church of Little Rock (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:18, 21-24; Matthew 19:4-6; Matthew 19:12; Mark 10:5-8; Romans 12:10; 1 Corinthians 7:1-8; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; 1 Timothy 5:1-2; Hebrews 13:4).

- **Sexual Identity** — The Bible Church of Little Rock believes that God wonderfully and immutably created mankind in His image: male (man) and female (woman), sexually distinct but with equal personal dignity. Rejection of one’s biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person. Consequently, each member of the Bible Church of Little Rock affirms his or her biological sex and refrains from any and all attempts to physically change, alter, or disagree with their predominant biological sex — including but not limited to elective sex-reassignment, transvestite, transgender, or non-binary “genderqueer” acts or conduct (Genesis 1:26-28; Romans 1:26-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

- **Sexual Orientation** — The Bible Church of Little Rock believes that God created and ordered human sexuality to the permanent, exclusive, comprehensive, and conjugal “one flesh” union of man and woman, intrinsically ordered to procreation and biological family, and in furtherance of the moral, spiritual, and public good of binding father, mother, and child. Consequently, the Bible Church of Little Rock members must affirm the sexual complementarity of man and woman and resist any and all same-sex sexual attractions and refrain from any and all same-sex sexual acts or conduct, which are intrinsically disordered (Genesis 1:27; Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:5-9; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:25-27; Revelation 19:7-9; Revelation 21:2).

- **Sexual Redemption** — The Bible Church of Little Rock believes that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who repent, confessing and forsaking their sin, and seek His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Consequently, we believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, and kindness (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Members of the Bible Church of Little Rock should, therefore, welcome and treat with grace and forgiveness those who experience same-sex attractions or confess sexually immoral acts but are committed to a lifestyle in keeping with repentance that would be marked by a commitment to resist sexual temptation, refraining from sexual immorality, and conforming their behavior to the authority of Scripture and the Bible Church of Little Rock’s Statement of Faith (Matthew 11:28-30; Acts 3:19-21; Romans 3:23; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Ephesians 2:1-10; Hebrews 2:17-18; Hebrews 4:14-16).

Marriage, Gender and Human Sexuality

- Genesis 1:26-28
- Genesis 2:18-24
- Genesis 19:5-10
- Exodus 20:14
- Leviticus 18:7-23
- Leviticus 20:10-21
- Deuteronomy 5:18
- Judges 19:22-24
- Matthew 5:27-28
- Matthew 15:19
- Matthew 19:4-9
- Mark 10:5-9
- Romans 1:26-27
- 1 Corinthians 6:9-13
- 2 Corinthians 5:21
- Galatians 5:19
- Ephesians 4:17-19
- Ephesians 5:25-27
- Ephesians 5:31
- Colossians 3:5
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3
- 1 Timothy 1:8-10
- Hebrews 13:4
- Jude 1:7
- Revelation 19:7-9
- Revelation 21:2

Pastoral Care

- Matthew 11:28-30
- Romans 3:23
- Ephesians 2:1-10
- 1 Corinthians 10:13
- Hebrews 2:17-18
- Hebrews 4:14-16

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the Bible Church of Little Rock as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to its members as well as the community, all members, employees, and volunteers of the Bible Church of Little Rock must affirm and abide by this Doctrinal and Religious Absolute statement on Marriage, Gender, and Human Sexuality in order to qualify for involvement with the ministry. This is necessary to accomplish our biblical mission, goals and purpose. Behavior or counter-witnessing that does otherwise will impede and burden our integrity and religious mission. (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22)

Authority

The Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God, acting as the source of authority over morality, our beliefs, Christian lifestyle and conduct. The board of elders of the Bible Church of Little Rock is charged with the ministerial responsibility of biblical interpretation and promulgating religious policy. The board of elders of the Bible Church of Little Rock will determine life application as well as final matters relating to church

theology, philosophy, Christian practice, faith, divine truth, morality, and theological and doctrinal resolutions.

APPENDIX A

Introduction to Guidelines for Church Discipline

We believe that loving church discipline is one of the great blessings and privileges of belonging to a Christian church. The following guidelines were developed to provide a clear biblical framework for carrying out church discipline. As you read these Guidelines, you will notice that we have gone into considerable detail on how discipline should be carried out. This detail is provided so that people may fully understand our disciplinary procedures before they decide to join our church, which should help to prevent later misunderstandings or disappointed expectations. We believe that these Guidelines are biblical and provide the greatest opportunity to glorify God in the midst of conflict. They are established to provide a loving, biblical framework within which we hope to remain faithful to God and His Word while at the same time lovingly confront those who may be overtaken in a trespass (Galatians 6:1-2).

Another important reason for spelling out the disciplinary process in such careful detail is to provide due process (fundamental fairness in the process of church discipline, which is notice of what is at issue and the opportunity to be fully heard), which prevents the church from misusing its authority and insures that a person who has been accused of wrongdoing will be treated fairly. For example, under these Guidelines, a person accused of an offence has the right to be accompanied by an advisor or counsel at all hearings, as well as the right to have his or her own witnesses testify at hearings. These rights serve to protect every person in the church from arbitrary actions and help to provide a process that will be just, constructive, and honoring to God.

It is also helpful to realize that these Guidelines apply to church leaders just as they do to other members of the church. If a leader falls into sin, it is the responsibility and right of other members to lovingly confront him and, if he refuses to repent, to initiate whatever disciplinary action is needed to move him toward repentance and protect others in the church from his wrongful actions. No one is above these disciplinary Guidelines, and everyone can benefit from them.

As you read these Guidelines, we encourage you to look up and study the Bible passages that are cited next to particular provisions. For more background, we encourage you to read Handbook on Church Discipline by Jay Adams, which is available in the church office and library. If such study does not answer your questions and concerns about our disciplinary policies, please do not hesitate to approach one of our Elders, who will be happy to talk with you about these matters.

Guidelines for Church Discipline

1. Church discipline shall be instituted according to the Bylaws of this church, and according to the Rules of Procedure of the Institute for Christian Conciliation (ver. 4.3 10/01), a division of Peacemakers ® Ministries. These Guidelines for Church Discipline shall be considered as essential components of the Bylaws of this church.
2. Mutual accountability and discipline within the church is commanded by God in Scripture and is one of the most important responsibilities of a true church of Jesus Christ (see Matthew 18:12-20; Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Galatians 2:11-14; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 1:20; 5:19-20; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; Titus 3:10; 2 John 7-11; Revelation 3:19).
3. Church discipline is the exercise of that authority which the Lord Jesus Christ has committed to the visible church for the preservation of its purity, peace, and good order. All members of the church are under the care of and subject to the discipline of the church. The ultimate goal of all discipline is to train Christians to be self-disciplined so that they may share in the holiness of God (Hebrews 12:7-13).
4. Church discipline is concerned with the prevention and correction of offenses, an offense being defined as anything in the doctrine or practice of a member that is contrary to the Word of God. The purpose of discipline is: (1) to guard and preserve the honor of God (Romans 2:24; 1 Corinthians 10:31); (2) to protect the purity of the church and to guard other Christians from being tempted, misled, divided, or otherwise harmed (see 1 Corinthians 5:6); and (3) to restore fallen Christians to usefulness to God and fellowship with His church (see Matthew 18:12-14; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11; 7:8-10; Galatians 6:1-2).
5. According to Matthew 18:15-20, discipline involves four components or phases: (1) Each believer has the responsibility to confront privately other believers who have sinned. The individual who is aware of the violation should arrange a private meeting with the offender. The objectives are to guard that precautions have been taken to assure accuracy of perception of conduct, to clarify the biblical basis of concern, and, if he repents, to forgive the person. If the sinning believer acknowledges his sin and repents, the confronting believer has won him to a place of restoration (Galatians 6:1-2). This first step is where most discipline begins and ends. (2) However, if the sinning believer does not repent, step two demands that the confronting believer bring other brothers and sisters in Christ to lovingly confront, counsel, and encourage him toward repentance. This may be done repeatedly. The intent of others being involved is to guarantee clear communication, and to provide witnesses should the matter later be taken to a public level. (3) If the previous efforts do not correct an offense, the unrepentant person may be mentioned before the church (Matthew 18:17). This shall be done in the following manner:

- a) The Board of Elders, if not already involved, shall be informed of the matter in writing.
- b) A person accused of persistent, unrepentant sin shall be given a written notice to appear before the Board of Elders at a specific time and place. The notice may, but need not, specify the sins and specifications that have been brought against the accused. Ordinarily all notices shall be served in person, but in case that is not possible, notices shall be sent by certified mail to the person cited.
- c) At the first meeting of the Board of Elders addressing this matter, only these actions may be taken: (i.) the charges and specifications shall be read and formally presented to the accused together with the names of any witnesses and copies of any documents that may be presented against him; (ii.) the Elders shall fix the time, date, and place for a second meeting, and shall issue notices directing all persons to appear at that time whose presence it may deem necessary; and (iii.) the accused shall be granted notices in which he may insert the names of the witnesses whom he wishes the Elders to summon.
- d) If an accused refuses or fails to appear without satisfactory reason for his absence at the time appointed for a hearing of the matter, he shall again be cited, with the warning that, if he does not appear, the Board of Elders will proceed with the matter in his absence. The time allowed for the appearance on notice shall be determined by the Elders with due consideration of the circumstances. If the accused still refuses or fails to appear, the matter may proceed in his absence.
- e) If unusual circumstances require it, the Board of Elders may deny an accused person the right of participating in the Lord's Supper, or of performing the functions of his office or ministry, until the matter is concluded.
- f) If the accused appears at the second meeting of the Elders, he shall be asked whether or not he is guilty of the accusation. If he pleads that he is not guilty of the accusation, the Elders shall proceed to receive evidence. No person shall be deprived of the right to set forth, or offer into evidence the provisions of the Word of God. If subsequent meetings of the Board of Elders are required, the accused and all witnesses shall be called to appear as provided above.
- g) Evidence must be factual in nature. It may be direct or circumstantial. Caution should be exercised in giving weight to evidence that is purely circumstantial. The accused may object to the competency of any witness and to the authenticity, admissibility, and relevancy of any testimony or evidence produced in support of the accusation and specifications. The Elders shall decide on all such objections after allowing the accused to be heard in support thereof. The testimony of one witness shall be insufficient to establish the truth of any specifications without corroborating evidence (see 2 Corinthians 13:1). If the accused so requests, no witness, unless a member of the Board of Elders, shall testify in the presence of another witness who is to testify concerning the same specification.
- h) Nothing in the above precludes the Board of Elders from taking additional actions which it deems appropriate.
- i) At the conclusion of the matter, the Board of Elders, after deliberation, shall come to a unanimous decision about the guilt or innocence of the accused. If the offended after tender exhortation, solemn rebuke and warning does not

- repent, then the Elders shall proceed to determine an appropriate time and occasion to inform the church about the unrepentant person.
- j) When the unrepentant person is mentioned before the church, the congregation shall be instructed to pray for him, and to pursue him for the purpose of restoration, which is the ultimate goal of all church discipline.

After a sufficient time determined by the Elders, the sinning member either repents or refuses to do so. If he refuses then by virtue of Jesus' own pronouncement in Matthew 18:18-20, step four shall be enacted. (4) The fourth step of church discipline is public dismissal, or disfellowshipping from the congregation. The public announcement of discipline shall always be accompanied by prayer that God will graciously use the discipline for His own glory, the restoration of the offender, and the edification of the church. This announcement may be made during a regular worship service, at a special meeting of the congregation, or by letter. Public dismissal precludes his attendance at all public meetings in keeping with the Apostle Paul's instruction in 1 Corinthians 5:9-13. He is to be treated as one who rejects the gospel of Christ, warned of the consequences of his sin, and exhorted to come to a saving relationship with the Christ he once confessed. The church should continue to pray for the individual imploring God to bring about repentance.

6. If an accused leaves the church during the disciplinary process or after having been disfellowshipped, and if the Board of Elders learns that he is attending another church, the Board of Elders may inform that church that the person is currently under church discipline. The Board of Elders may ask that church to encourage the accused to repent of his sin and to be restored to the Lord and to any people whom he has offended. Such communications enhance the possibility that a person may finally repent of his sin, and at the same time, serve to warn the other church to be on guard against the harm that the accused might do to its members (see Matthew 18:12-14; Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-14; 2 Timothy 1:15; 2:16-18; 4:9, 14-15; 3 John 9-10).
7. Just as a good shepherd will go after a sheep that has wandered from the flock (Matthew 18:12-14; Ezekiel 34:4, 8, 16), so should the Elders and members of this church seek to restore a wandering member to the Lord through biblical discipline. Therefore, discipline may be instituted or continued either before or after a member seeks to withdraw from membership if the Board of Elders determines that such discipline may serve to guard and preserve the honor of God, protect the purity of the church, or restore the wandering member to the Lord. While the church cannot force a withdrawing person to remain in this congregation, the church has the right and the responsibility to encourage restoration, to bring the disciplinary process to an orderly conclusion, and to make a final determination as to the person's membership status at the time withdrawal is sought or acknowledged. In doing so, the Board of Elders, at its discretion, may temporarily suspend further disciplinary proceedings, dismiss any or all accusations against the accused, or proceed with discipline and pronounce an appropriate disciplinary action.

8. If a person who has been disfellowshipped comes to repentance, the church shall warmly and lovingly restore him to fellowship within the Body (see Matthew 18:13; Luke 15:11-32). Once the Board of Elders is persuaded that the person has sincerely confessed his wrongs and sought forgiveness from God and the person or persons he offended, his restoration shall be announced. The announcement shall be accompanied by a solemn admonition to the congregation that the restored person's offenses have been forgiven and are not to be held against him or otherwise hinder his fellowship within the church (see 2 Corinthians 2:5-11). When deemed appropriate by the Board of Elders, however, the restored person may be restricted from certain responsibilities within the church until he has demonstrated the requisite qualities for those responsibilities (see Philippians 1:10; 2:12-14; Colossians 1:22; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6; 1 Peter 2:11-12).