

CONSTITUTION OF BURLESON BIBLE CHURCH

PREAMBLE

Being led as we believe, by God's Holy Spirit, and realizing that we as individual believers in God's Son constitute His body, the church, we therefore have united together in Burleson, Texas, as a congregation of believing members of that church and do establish these following articles to which we voluntarily submit ourselves:

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this church shall be Burleson Bible Church.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The primary purposes for which this church is formed are:

1. To proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and make disciples at home and abroad.
2. To provide the opportunity for worship, fellowship, instruction, service, and prayer.
3. To administer the ordinances of baptism and communion.

ARTICLE III: DOCTRINE

1. **The Bible.** We believe the Bible is the verbally inspired word of God without error in the original writings and of supreme and final authority in faith and life (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21).
2. **The Godhead.** We believe in one God, eternally existing in three different but equal persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14).
3. **The Holy Spirit.** We believe the person of the Holy Spirit existed eternally with the Father and the Son (John 15:26; Heb. 9:14) and during this present age regenerates those who believe, baptizes them into the body of Christ, and indwells them permanently (Titus 3:5; 1 Cor. 12:13).
4. **The Person of Christ.** We believe Jesus Christ existed eternally with the Father and is wholly God (John 1 :1-3; 10:30), was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and is also wholly man (Matt. 1 :20-23; 1 John 4:2).
5. **Creation.** We believe that God created the heavens and earth (Gen. 1:1, Isa. 43:18, Col. 1:16, Rev. 4:11), through multiple acts of creation (Gen. 1:1-31), culminating in the creation of man. We believe Adam existed as a literal, real, historical person, that both he, the first man, and Eve, the first woman, were specially and uniquely created by God in God's image (Gen. 1:26-27, 5:1-2, Rom. 5:14-15, James 3:9). We believe that neither materialistic evolution nor theistic evolution fit the evidence of Scripture concerning creation.
6. **The Saving Work of Christ.** We believe Jesus Christ died on the cross for the sins of all people as a substitutionary sacrifice, and that He arose bodily from the grave, ascended into Heaven, and presently ministers as High Priest for those who have trusted in Him (1 Cor. 15:3-4; Heb. 4:14).
7. **The Condition for Salvation.** We believe that all human beings are sinners and, as such, are separated from God and in need of salvation (Rom. 3:23; 5:12). We believe salvation is a free gift of God's grace provided for all in the saving work of Jesus Christ (John 3:16; 1 John 2:2), and that any who simply and only believe in His saving work, not in their own good works, effort, or merit, will receive the gift of eternal life (Rom. 4:5; Eph.2:8-9).

8. **The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers.** We believe that all believers are kept eternally secure by God's power (John 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1, 29-29), and that every believer can have absolute assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word (John 5:24; 1 John 5:11-13) which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as a basis for sinful behavior (Rom. 6:1-2; Gal. 5:13).
9. **The Return of Christ.** We believe in the imminent, personal, pretribulational return of Christ to rapture out His church (1 Thes. 4:14-18; 5:9) and the premillennial return of Christ with His church to earth to establish His kingdom (Rev. 19: 11-16; 20:4-6).
10. **The Angelic Realm.** We believe God created angels originally holy (Ps. 148:2-5); but, under the leadership of the person of Satan (1 Pet. 5:8), some now exist in a fallen state as demons (Jude 6).
11. **The Spiritual Gifts.** We believe that God sovereignly bestows spiritual gifts as He pleases (1 Cor. 12:4-11; Eph. 4:7-11) and that some, such as speaking in tongues, functioned as apostolic sign gifts and are no longer normative today, having fulfilled their intended purpose (1 Cor. 13:8; 14:22; 2 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 2:20; Heb. 2:3-4). We believe that God, according to His sovereign will does hear and answer the prayer of faith for the sick and afflicted (John 15:7; Jms. 5:14-15; 1 John 5:14-15).
12. **The Nature of the Church.** We believe that all believers in this present age are united with the invisible universal Church, the body of Christ, through faith in Him as Savior (Eph. 1 :22-23; Col. 1:18), having been placed into the body through the baptism of the Spirit (Rom 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-27).
13. **The Ordinances of the Church.** We believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two ordinances of the church to be observed by all believers.
 - a. We believe that those who have believed in Jesus Christ as Savior should be baptized by immersion (Acts 8:36-38) as a public identification with Christ and a testimony of the believer's spiritual new-birth (Matt. 28:19; Acts 16:31-33).
 - b. We believe the Lord's Supper is a symbolic remembrance of the death and resurrection of Christ which should be observed regularly by all believers who are walking in fellowship with Him (Luke 22:14-23; 1 Cor. 11 :23-29).
13. **The Eternal State.** We believe that, at death, the souls of those who have trusted in Christ as Savior immediately pass into His presence (2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1 :23) and remain in conscious bliss until they are joined again with their bodies in resurrection, after which they shall be with the Lord forever (1 Cor. 15:50-53; 1 Thes. 4:16-17), and that the souls of unbelievers, at death, pass into conscious misery until the final judgment when they shall be rejoined with their bodies and cast into the lake of fire to be punished forever (Luke 16:19-28; 2 Thes. 1 :8-9; Jude 6-7; Rev. 20:11-15).

ARTICLE IV: COMMITMENT TO THE CHURCH

In order to identify with, minister through, and be held accountable by this church, a person may commit to the church at various levels.

1. **Commitment to the Congregation.** This commitment allows a person to maintain membership at another church or investigate his/her desire to commit further to this church. Persons making this commitment must profess faith in Jesus Christ. Upon indicating a desire to identify with the congregation of this church and approval of any board member, the person may participate in all church activities with the exception of voting, disciplinary procedures, and certain leadership positions.

2. **Commitment to the Community.** This commitment represents a full agreement to identify with, minister through, and be held accountable by this church. Persons making this commitment must be at least 18 years old, have trusted in Jesus Christ as Savior, agree to fully support the doctrinal statement, Constitution, By-laws, and Philosophy of Ministry of the church, and be approved by the board. The procedure of induction shall be set by the By-laws. They shall have full voting privileges and access to many leadership positions. Believer's baptism is encouraged for this level of commitment.
3. **Commitment to the Leadership Core.** This commitment represents a desire to lead others in ministry with the greatest degree of accountability, training, and adherence to the beliefs, vision, and mission of the church. Leadership positions requiring this commitment include deacon, elder, and any other position decided by the board. The board may define the qualifications and responsibilities for this commitment as required by the position. Persons making this commitment must first meet the requirements of Commitment to the Community and be approved by the board as stipulated in the Bylaws. They shall have all the privileges of those committed to the Community. Believer's baptism is necessary for this level of commitment.
4. **Termination of Commitment.**
 - a. A person may terminate his/her commitment to the church by request.
 - b. A person's commitment may be terminated or down-graded by the board if the board decides the person is not keeping his/her commitment made to the church, or there is prolonged absence, disinterest, or failure to respond to church discipline.

ARTICLE V: CHURCH DISCIPLINE

It is the biblical right of this church to terminate, nullify, demote, or remove the privileges of any person related to this church for reasons of false or heretical doctrine, disobedience disorderliness, rebellion or sin in attitude or action. Such a person will be approached in accordance with the relevant biblical directives found in Matthew 18: 15-22; 1 Corinthians 5: 11-13; and 2 Thessalonians 3:11. If the person does not repent or continues to follow his/her detrimental behavior, the board may revoke the person's privileges of identifying formally with the church, voting, ministry, and leadership.

ARTICLE VI: GOVERNMENT AND OFFICERS

1. **The Board.** The church shall be led by the Lord Jesus Christ through the authority vested in an official board of elders and deacons, the elders providing leadership to the board. On important matters, the board will seek the input of the voting community. A plurality of three or more elders has the prerogative to function as the board apart from the deacons in specific sensitive or spiritual matters.
2. **Officers.** Church officers shall be the senior pastor, some pastoral staff, elder, and deacon.
 - a. **Senior Pastor.** The Senior Pastor shall be considered an elder and will fulfill the role of elder while providing primary leadership, discipleship, and care to the church.
 - b. **Pastoral Staff.** Associate pastoral staff will be considered as elder or deacon at the discretion of the board and will assist the Senior Pastor in providing leadership, discipleship and care to the church.

- c. **Elder.** An elder is a man who serves the church by directing, leading, teaching, discipling, correcting, overseeing, and protecting the church. His authority is to be exercised through example and servant leadership. The general qualifications of elders will be according to 1 Timothy 3:1-12 and Titus 1:5-8.
 - d. **Deacon.** A deacon is a man who serves the church under the direction of the board by managing church business and functions. His ministry assists the elders and pastoral staff by enabling them to give priority to prayer and the ministry of the Word. The general qualifications of deacons will be according to 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
3. **Voting.** The board shall present to the voting community of the church for a vote important matters including the hiring of a pastor, pastoral staff, selection of elders and deacons, the annual budget, and changes in the Constitution and By-laws.
 4. **Procedures.** The By-laws will govern board procedures, selection and conduct of the offices of pastor, elder, and deacon, and voting procedures.

ARTICLE VII: AMENDMENTS AND REVISIONS

Review and improvement of the Constitution and Bylaws is encouraged. They may be amended or revised by an official vote of the Church Community providing the proposed amendment or revision has been approved by the official board and does not infringe upon the doctrinal principles of the church.

ARTICLE VIII: DISSOLUTION

In accordance with Article Six, Section 11, of the incorporation articles of this church, "Upon dissolution of the corporation or the winding up of its affairs, the assets of the corporation shall be distributed exclusively to charitable, religious, or educational organizations which would then qualify under the provisions of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code and its regulations as they now exist or as they may hereafter be amended." The recipient organization shall be determined by the official board of the church.

BY-LAWS OF BURLESON BIBLE CHURCH

FOR ARTICLE IV: COMMITMENT TO THE CHURCH

1. **Commitment to the Congregation.** Upon verbal or written request, any board member may approve of a person's desire to make this commitment.
2. **Commitment to the Community.**
 - a. Upon verbal or written request, an orientation meeting will be arranged between the person and two board members.
 - b. Upon recommendation by the two board members, the board may approve of a person's desire to make this commitment.
 - c. The person must sign the *Commitment to the Community* expressing full support and submission to the church Constitution, By-laws, Philosophy of Ministry, official leadership, and official disciplinary procedures. Any areas of question **or** disagreement must be discussed or dealt with by the board before final approval.
 - d. The person will be publicly presented to the church congregation.
3. **Commitment to the Leadership Core.**
 - a. Upon verbal or written request, or nomination by someone from the church Community or Leadership Core, one or more board members will meet with the person to explain the qualifications and responsibilities involved in the specific leadership position.
 - b. When the person agrees to accept the responsibilities and expectations of the specific position, the board will vote to approve his/her commitment.

FOR ARTICLE V: CHURCH DISCIPLINE

1. The procedure of Matthew 18:15-22 will be followed.
2. If a person does not repent after confronted by at least two persons, the board will consider the case.
3. The board has the right to temporarily suspend ministry and leadership privileges of any person whose case is being considered by the board until the issue is finally resolved.
4. If the person is deemed unrepentant by the board, the board may call a meeting of the voting Church Community to inform the Church Community and solicit prayer.
5. If the person remains unrepentant, the board, by a two-thirds majority, may elect to finally remove the person's privileges of identifying formally with the church, voting, ministry, and leadership.

FOR ARTICLE VII: GOVERNMENT AND OFFICERS

1. **The Board.** The board shall meet regularly as they determine.
2. **Officers.**
 - a. **Senior Pastor.**
 - 1) **Qualifications.** The senior pastor must meet all the qualifications of elder and deacon, agree with and support the Constitution, By-laws, and Philosophy of Ministry and evidence training, gift, calling, and experience adequate for the position.
 - 2) **Appointment.** The pastor shall be called by a vote of the Church Community after examination and approval by the board. A quorum of the voting Community must be present for this vote and an 80% majority vote of those attending is necessary to elect the pastor.
 - 3) **Term of Office.** The pastor shall continue in office as long as he and the membership agree to continue the relationship.
 - 4) **Dismissal or Removal.** Dismissal of the pastor shall be by a special meeting called by the board. Voting requirements shall be the same as for his appointment. In the event that one-half of the membership does not attend the appointment or dismissal meetings, a second meeting may be called at which continuation or dismissal may be determined by a 60% majority vote of those voters present.
 - b. **Pastoral Staff.**
 - 1) **Qualifications.** Pastoral staff must meet the qualifications of elder or deacon, whichever is determined by the board.
 - 2) **Appointment.** Same as for Senior Pastor.
 - 3) **Term of Office.** Same as for Senior Pastor.
 - 4) **Dismissal or Removal.** Same as for Senior Pastor.
 - c. **Elder.**
 - 1) **Qualifications.** In addition to the biblical qualifications, a man desiring to be an elder must agree with and support the Constitution, By-laws, and Philosophy of Ministry and evidence training, gift, calling, and experience adequate for the position. He must commit to the Leadership Core and evidence satisfactory leadership training as determined by the board.
 - 2) **Appointment.**
 - a) Annually, the board will examine a slate of all qualified men recommended by the voting Church Community.
 - b) After considering every name recommended, the board will determine a final list of men to be interviewed by the board.
 - c) After the board interviews, the board may present to the Church Community for a vote their final recommendations for elder.
 - d) After the presentation of final recommendations to the Church Community, there will be a two-week period before the vote during which time any objections may be raised about any of the names to the pastor or board.
 - e) Elders will be appointed to office by a two-thirds majority vote.

- 3) **Term of Office.** An elder shall be in active service four years, at the end of which time he will be required to take a year's hiatus for rest and reflection. During this year, he will keep the office of elder but may not vote on the board unless the board votes to allow him that privilege in special circumstances.
- 4) **Dismissal or Removal.**
 - a) An elder may resign by request.
 - b) An elder may take a leave of absence for any reason at any time. During his leave, he may not vote on the board unless the board allows him that privilege in special circumstances. He may resume his office upon approval of the board. Time absent will not be added to the four years of active service.
 - c) After following the guidelines of 1 Timothy 5:19, an elder may be removed from office for an ungodly or divisive attitude, disinterest, moral lapse, or any other significant defection from church expectations. Removal will be by a two-thirds majority vote of the board.

d. Deacon.

- 1) **Qualifications.** Same as for Elder, but with appropriate biblical qualifications.
- 2) **Appointment.** Same as for Elder.
- 3) **Term of Office.** A deacon shall be in active service for two years, at the end of which time he will be required to repeat the appointment procedure if he desires a second term. After any two consecutive terms, he will be required to take one year off from serving as deacon. The board may vote to extend any term by one year to prevent a shortage of deacons.
- 4) **Dismissal or Removal.**
 - a) A deacon may resign by request.
 - b) A deacon may take a leave of absence for any reason at any time. During his leave, he may not vote on the board. He may resume his office upon approval of the Board. Time absent will not be added to the two years of active service.
 - c) A deacon may be removed from office for an ungodly or divisive attitude, disinterest, moral lapse, or any other significant defection from church expectations. Removal will be by a two-thirds majority vote of the board.

3. Voting.

a. Board.

- 1) The board will seek to work toward a consensus.
- 2) A quorum of over 50% must be present for an official vote.
- 3) Each elder and deacon will have one vote.
- 4) A simple majority of over 50% of the vote will carry the vote unless stipulated otherwise in the By-laws or opposed by a consensus of the elders.
- 5) A board member may vote in absentia if his vote is written and signed. The absent member does not count toward establishing a quorum.

b. Church Community_

- 1) The Church Community will seek to work towards a consensus.
- 2) A quorum of over 50% must be present for an official vote.
- 3) A simple majority of over 50% of the vote will carry the vote unless stipulated otherwise in the By-laws.
- 4) A person may vote in absentia if his/here vote is written and signed. The absent person does not count toward establishing a quorum.

FOR ARTICLE VII: AMENDMENTS AND REVISIONS

1. Proposed amendments or revisions must be discussed and approved by the board.
2. The voting Church Community must be notified of the vote to amend or revise at least two weeks before the vote.
3. The amendment or revision will pass with a two-thirds majority of the vote.