

SUGGESTED BY-LAWS FOR A FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH

1. GENERAL PROCEDURE

In regulating its spiritual affairs and business the _____ Church in the _____ of _____ shall be governed (in all areas as each may apply) by the teachings and examples of the Scriptures, its Statement of Faith, and Religious Institutions Act of the Province of _____ and the By-Laws which the church shall from time to time adopt. The church shall have the power to make, alter, amend or discard any By-Laws at a regular or special business meeting, provided notice of such intended action is given at the time that the meeting is announced to the membership.

2. STATEMENT OF FAITH (enclosed)

The Statement of Faith as adopted by The Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada shall be used as the Statement of Faith of _____

3. RECEPTION AND DISMISSAL OF MEMBERS

- (a) Members, the qualifications of whom are set forth in the New Testament and in our Statement of Faith, may be received into the fellowship of the church or may be granted letters of introduction to sister churches at any communion service, at regular worship services, at prayer meetings and at regular or special business meetings.
- (b) The name of a member may be dropped from the church roll or disciplinary action may be taken with respect to any members only at a regular or special business meeting of the church.

4. BUSINESS MEETINGS

- (a) The annual business meeting of the church shall be held as early as possible after the first of _____ (month)
- (b) Quarterly business meetings of the church shall be held as early as possible after the first of _____ (each quarter)
- (c) Special business meetings may be called when necessary by the Board or at the written request of any six members of the church in good standing.
- (d) A business meeting shall be announced from the pulpit not later than one Sunday before the meeting is to be held, except that in the calling of meetings for the election or dismissal of trustees, the requirements of the Religious Institutions Act shall be carried out.
- (e) Twenty per cent or ten of the voting members of the church (whichever is greater) shall constitute a quorum for any business meeting of the church.
- (f) A voting member is a member in good standing not under sixteen years of age.

5. OFFICERS

- (a) PASTOR. The Pastor shall be elected or called by not less than a two-third majority vote of the church at a regular or special business meeting. The Pastor acts as a moderator at all church business meetings, except when circumstances arise which make it necessary for the church to appoint another to act for him.
- (b) DEACONS. The church shall elect _____ deacons. They shall be elected for a two-year term. The term of office of one half of the deacons shall expire each year.
- (c) BOARD. The Pastor, Deacons, Treasurer and Sunday School Superintendent, (should either of the latter two not be deacons) shall constitute the board of the church.

- (d) CLERK. The clerk shall be elected annually by the church, shall be charged with the responsibility of preserving accurate records of the church business meetings and membership roll, and shall carry on official correspondence as instructed by the church.
- (e) TREASURER AND SIGNING OFFICERS.
 - (1) The treasurer shall be elected annually by the church. He shall disburse church funds only upon authority of the church or board. He shall keep an accurate accounting of all monies and shall present financial statements to the church or to the board as may be required.
 - (2) The board shall appoint two other signing officers who shall serve with the treasurer as a committee on finance. Two members of this committee shall sign all cheques. They shall attend to such other financial matters as may be referred to them by the board.
- (f) AUDITORS. Auditors shall be appointed annually by the church.
- (g) TRUSTEES. Three trustees shall be elected by the church as required.
- (h) SUNDAY SCHOOL OFFICERS. The Sunday School superintendent shall be elected annually by the church. He shall serve with the pastor as a nominating committee to present to the board nominations for the offices of Department Superintendents, the General Secretary and the Treasurer. The general superintendent, departmental superintendents, general secretary, treasurer and pastor shall constitute the Sunday School Executive.
- (i) Other officers and committees shall be elected by the church as required. A list of the required officers shall be prepared by the board and given to the nominating committee to direct them in their work.
- (j) CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS. Organizations operating within the church shall make reports to the Annual Business Meeting of the church. Such reports shall include their financial statements and the names of the officers elected for the next year.

SUGGESTED CONSTITUTION FOR A FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH

I. NAME

The name of this organization shall be the _____

II. OBJECT

The object of this church is set forth in its Covenant and Statement of Faith, namely: for worship, biblical instruction, the observance of the divinely instituted ordinances, the presentation of a corporate testimony to the power of the gospel and its constituency and such service as the one supreme Lord and Lawgiver and taking His Word as its only and sufficient rule of faith and practice.

III. COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now in the presence of God, angels and this assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit

1. To walk together in Christian love.
2. To strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and comfort.
3. To promote its prosperity and spirituality.
4. To sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines.
5. To contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of its ministry and general expenses, the relief of the poor and the spread of the Gospel among all nations.

We also engage:

1. To maintain family and secret devotions.
2. To religiously educate our children.
3. To seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintance.
4. To walk circumspectly in the world, to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements and exemplary in our deportment.
5. To avoid all tattling, backbiting and excessive anger.

We further engage:

1. To watch over one another in brotherly love.
2. To remember each other in prayer.
3. To aid each other in sickness and distress.
4. To cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech.
5. To be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Saviour to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

1. **Bible**
We believe the Bible to be the complete Word of God; that the sixty-six Books, as originally written, comprising the Old and New Testaments were verbally inspired by the Spirit of God and were entirely free from error; that the Bible is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice and the true basis of Christian union.
2. **God**
We believe in one God, Creator of all, holy, sovereign, eternal, existing in three equal Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
3. **Christ**
We believe in the absolute and essential deity of Jesus Christ, in His eternal existence with the Father in pre-incarnate glory, in His virgin birth, sinless life, substitutionary death, bodily resurrection, triumphant ascension, mediatorial ministry and personal return.
4. **The Holy Spirit**
We believe in the absolute and essential deity and personality of the Holy Spirit Who convicts of sin, of righteousness and of judgment; Who regenerates, sanctifies, illuminates and comforts those who believe in Jesus Christ.
5. **Satan**
We believe that Satan exists as an evil personality, the originator of sin, the arch-enemy of God and man.
6. **Man**
We believe that man was divinely created in the image of God; that he sinned, becoming guilty before God, resulting in total depravity, thereby incurring physical and spiritual death.
7. **Salvation**
We believe that salvation is by the sovereign, electing grace of God; that by the appointment of the Father, Christ voluntarily suffered a vicarious, expiatory and propitiatory death; that justification is by faith alone in the all sufficient sacrifice and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and that those whom God has effectually called shall be divinely preserved and finally perfected in the image of the Lord.
8. **Future Things**
We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ; in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust; in the eternal blessedness of the redeemed and in the judgment and conscious, eternal punishment of the wicked.
9. **The Local Church**
We believe that a church is a company of immersed believers, called out from the world, separated unto the Lord Jesus, voluntarily associated for the ministry of the Word, the mutual edification of its members, the propagation of the faith and the observance of the ordinances. We believe it is a sovereign, independent body, exercising its own divinely awarded gifts, precepts and privileges under the Lordship of Christ, the Great Head of the church. We believe that its officers are pastors and deacons.
10. **Ordinances**
We believe that there are only two ordinances for the church regularly observed in the New Testament in the following order:
 1. Baptism which is the immersion of the believer in water, whereby he obeys Christ's command and sets forth his identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection;

2. The Lord's Supper which is the memorial wherein the believer partakes of the two elements, bread and wine, which symbolize the Lord's body and shed blood, proclaiming His death until He come.
11. **The Church and State**
We believe in the entire separation of church and state.
12. **Religious Liberty**
We believe in religious liberty; that every man has the right to practice and propagate his beliefs.
13. **The Lord's Day**
We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day and that, in a special sense, it is the divinely appointed day for worship and spiritual exercise.
14. **Civil Government**
We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interest and good order of society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honoured and obeyed, except only in the things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the only Lord of the conscience and Prince of the kings of the earth.

V. MEMBERSHIP

1. Reception

- (1) New converts may be accepted by vote of the church for baptism and membership upon confession of their personal faith in Christ as their Saviour and Lord, to the deacons or the church as a whole or to a committee appointed for this purpose.
- (2) Immersed believers may be accepted for membership in the same manner as above.
- (3) Members from other evangelical Baptist churches may be received in the same manner as above with letters of commendation from churches of like faith and order.

2. Transfer

All members in good standing shall be eligible for letters of commendation to other evangelical Baptist churches. Letters of commendation shall be forwarded to the church and not given to the member being commended.

Should a member desire to unite with other than an evangelical Baptist church, a letter stating his standing to date will be granted and the membership terminated.

3. Discipline

Members failing to observe the basic principles of Christian faith and conduct as found in our covenant and statement of faith, and to such a degree as to bring reproach upon the name of the church and its ministry, shall be interviewed by the deacons, who in turn will make recommendation to the church as to what measures of discipline should be taken.

Members absenting themselves from the regular services of the church in general or from the communion of the Lord's Supper in particular for a period of one year without sufficient cause shall cease to remain as a member in good standing and upon vote of the church may be dismissed from the membership.

4. Voting Privileges

All members in good standing, sixteen years of age and over, may vote in any and all business matters of the church.

VI. OFFICERS

1. Pastors

- (1) The calling of a pastor shall be made upon a two-thirds vote of the members present at a duly called business meeting - the nature of the business having been clearly announced.
- (2) The dismissal of a pastor shall be upon the majority vote of the members present at a duly called business meeting - the nature of the said meeting having been clearly announced.
- (3) The duties of a pastor are primarily, to minister the Word to his flock, do the work of an evangelist among the unsaved, visit the homes and members of his congregation and to promote a spiritual atmosphere in the church as a whole.

2. Deacons

The deacons are recognized servants of the church, whose qualifications are clearly set forth in the Scriptures. They shall be elected annually or as the church may decide and always by a two-thirds vote. Such election shall be at the annual business meeting, except when the church shall otherwise approve. The number of deacons to be elected shall be determined by the two-thirds vote or upon the decision of the church to limit their number.

It shall be the duty of a deacon to assist the pastor in all matters pertaining to the spiritual welfare of the flock, as well as sitting with him in council concerning business matters of the church. His sphere of authority is limited to the voice of the church and recommendations from the deacons must be approved by the church. The church shall stipulate as to the amount of financial expenditures the deacons make without presenting the same to the church for its approval.

3. Church Clerk

The clerk shall keep an accurate membership roll in a proper book provided by the church. Records of all members, date of reception, by baptism, transfer or experience; a full record of all church meetings, motions, etc.; carry on all correspondence relative to the membership and such other matters as the church may direct.

4. Church Treasurer

The treasurer shall keep an accurate account of all monies received and disbursed. He shall carry on the banking business in the name of the church. He shall pay all the current accounts such as utilities, pastor's salary, fuel and taxes without a vote by the church. Other expenditures shall be approved by the church. He shall prepare quarterly statements for quarterly business meetings of the church or at such other times as the church may require. He shall supply the auditor, or auditors, with such records as may be required when auditing the church books.

5. Trustees

These shall be three in number, or more if the church shall so direct. They shall be elected by a majority vote at a duly called business meeting in accordance with the Religious Societies' Act of Ontario. Trustees shall remain in office until such time as they resign, decease or are dismissed by the church. The duties of a trustee shall be to sign legal documents on behalf of the church as the church may direct.

All legal and valuable items shall be deposited by them in a safe place for the church. They shall be expected to make recommendations to the church as to building repairs, renovations, fire insurance coverage, etc.

6. Presidents, Superintendents, etc.

The superintendent of the Sunday School, president of the young people's, president of the women's missionary society and heads of other departments or groups of the church and authorized by the church shall be elected by the church or be subject to ratification by the church.

The assistants, secretaries, treasurers and committees of these departments may be appointed by those working in these departments.

VII. GOVERNMENT

The government of this church and the administration of its affairs shall be by the church and such officers as it may direct.

There shall be regular quarterly meetings for business duly announced from the pulpit on the Sunday previous to such meetings. When the matter of electing trustees is to be dealt with, such announcement shall be from the pulpit two Sundays in advance of such a meeting.

When the nature and amount of business does not warrant a full evening, the same may be called during a regular midweek service.

There shall be an annual business meeting of the church when full reports from all departments of the church shall be given and accepted by the church.

Other meetings for business may be called from time to time by the pastor, deacons or by any five members of the church.

In defining a “duly called” business meeting, we mean one that has been properly announced at least one Sunday before the following Wednesday. Furthermore, it is understood should any reason, circumstance or condition prevail which makes it difficult for the membership in general to be acquainted with such announcement, it shall not be accepted as a “duly called” business meeting.

VIII. AMENDMENTS

The foregoing constitution may be amended upon a two-thirds vote taken at any duly called business meeting, providing such proposals are clearly stated in the announcement calling for the meeting.