

BEREAN FELLOWSHIP CONSTITUTION & CONSTRUCTION

Recitals

We, the members of the Berean Fundamental Church, do ordain and establish the following Constitution, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

Name

- A. The legal name of this organization shall be the Berean Fundamental Church.
- B. Churches may use a local name that has been approved by their District Council and reported to the Board of Directors.

Affiliation

A. Organizational

This church shall be affiliated with other Berean Fundamental Churches through membership in the representative bodies known as the District Council and the General Council. The whole of this affiliation shall be called the Berean Fundamental Church Council, Inc.

Purpose and Doctrine

- A. The purpose of this organization is to establish a church fellowship in which Christians through united effort will
 1. Preach Jesus Christ.
 2. Support Bible-based ministries and missions.
 3. Promote healthy relationships among Christians.
 4. Obey the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

B. Doctrine

See "Articles of Faith" above

Membership

A. Qualifications

The membership of this organization shall consist of those who give clear evidence of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and a sincere desire to live a godly life.

B. Procedure

1. Those desiring to unite with this church will read its constitution and agree to live under its authority.
2. Each person will then be examined, and upon approval by the official church board, will be received into the membership of this church.

C. Privileges and Duties

1. Members shall have voting privileges for specific provisions made in this constitution.
2. It is the duty of members to make progress in their daily relationship with Christ, to keep growing in their scriptural knowledge, to be consistent in their conduct, and to be faithful in church attendance. (Hebrews 10:24,25)
3. It is the duty of members to honor, love, and pray for their pastor and other spiritual leaders. They are to manifest a tender regard for their reputations and support them in the scriptural exercise of their authority and ministry. (Hebrews 13:7)
4. It is the duty of each member to meet all personal obligations, to live in a peaceful manner, to respect the biblical liberty of others, and to witness faithfully. (Titus 2:11-14)
5. It is the duty of all members to support the ministries of their local church and the Berean Fellowship of Churches while at the same time understanding their great responsibility to the universal church to which all genuine believers belong. (1 Corinthians 12:26,27)

D. Auxiliary Memberships

The official board may develop auxiliary, non-voting memberships for such groups as missionaries, military personnel, college students, and those who have differing opinions on matters of belief but understand the value of being under the authority of a local church.

E. Membership Covenant

When joining the church, the members agree to the following covenant:

"As members of a Berean Church, we covenant together that as we have opportunity we will do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith, that we will submit to God and resist Satan, and that we will abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. As long as we continue in the membership of this church we will gladly cooperate, making its testimony honoring to Christ. We will pray for one another and refuse to participate in gossip. We will assist those who have authority over us and who preach the Word of God. We will give, as God prospers, to the work of our church, realizing its needs first and the needs of other Christian works subsequently. Finally, confident that we have been led of God, we wholeheartedly affirm our commitment to this fellowship and submit to its constitutions and biblical authority."

F. Transfer and Removal of Membership

1. Any member in good standing desiring to withdraw from the membership of this church will be granted a letter of recommendation upon request.
2. Those uniting with another church may be dropped from the membership of this church.
3. Members who develop irreconcilable differences with the doctrinal position or policies contained in this Constitution shall quietly resign their membership without attempting to cause any trouble.
4. Those absent from church services for six months without a satisfactory reason may be removed from membership.
5. Disciplined members may have their membership terminated at the discretion of the official board.

Church Discipline

The purpose of church discipline is the restoration of the sinning member to Christ and the church body.

A. Discipline of Members

1. Biblically, believers are responsible before God to examine themselves. (1 Corinthians 11:31)
2. If they fail to examine themselves, the local church has this responsibility. (1 Corinthians 11:32)
3. In disciplinary actions it is imperative that we be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading and follow scriptural guidelines.
4. Church discipline is for specific sins, not for differences in opinion. (1 Corinthians 5:1; 11-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:13-14; 1 Timothy 5:19-21)

B. Restoration

1. The one who is aware of the offense is to be the first one to prayerfully confront the sinning member.
2. If the sinning member refuses to repent, the first person is to take one or two witnesses for a second meeting.
3. If the matter remains unresolved, it is to be brought to the official church board.
4. If the errant members still refuses to repent, the official church board may bring the matter to the attention of the members of the church.
5. The specific sin does not need to be mentioned unless decided otherwise by the official board.
6. At any time when a sinning member repents, he should immediately be restored to fellowship and lovingly affirmed by those involved.

C. Discipline of Non-Members

1. Non-members are those, other than members, who by attendance or participation identify themselves with the ministries of a Berean Fundamental Church.
2. They may be disciplined for specific violations of Scriptural conduct that are considered by the official board to be disruptive to the harmonious and effective function of the church. (Matthew 18:15-20)
3. The same steps will be taken as in the preceding policy for members.

Senior Pastor

A. Calling a Senior Pastor

1. The official church board shall appoint a search committee consisting of three to five members that may include both men and women.
2. The search committee shall secure the names of prospects with the assistance of their District Leader.
3. The search committee shall send a copies of the Berean Fundamental Church and the Berean Fundamental Council Constitutions and a request for a resume to the prospect.
4. The committee shall review the resumes with the assistance of the District Leader and make recommendations to the official church board.
5. The official church board shall extend to the prospect an invitation to visit the church, meet with the official church board, and preach.
6. If the official church board has a favorable response to his ministry, it will set up a time with their District Leader for the district to examine the prospect.
7. The District Council will be provided with the prospect's resume and credentials.
8. The district will examine the prospect concerning his life, doctrine, experience, and agreement with the Berean Fundamental Church and the Berean Fundamental Council Constitutions.
9. The District Council will give a recommendation concerning the prospect to the official church board. Without a favorable recommendation, the church may not proceed with the prospect.
10. Upon an affirmative vote of at least three-fourths of the official church board members, the candidate shall be presented to the congregation for a vote.
11. Upon an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the church members present at a specially called meeting, a call shall be extended to the candidate.

B. Licensure

Any pastor not ordained shall be licensed as set forth in the Berean Fundamental Church, Inc. Constitution.

C. Duties

1. The Senior Pastor shall provide spiritual leadership to the church and shall perform all duties usually associated with that office.
2. The Senior Pastor is a voting member of the official church board.
3. He shall be the chairman of the official church board, or he may delegate this responsibility to a current church board member.
4. He shall be an ex-officio member of all committees and other organized groups within the church.
5. He shall attend the District Council meetings and the annual General Council meetings.

D. Pastor's Covenant

When accepting a call, the pastor agrees to the following covenant:

"As a pastor of a Berean Fundamental Church, I will strive to exercise the duties of my office in such a way as to have a clear conscience before God and man. Being in a position of spiritual leadership, I will prayerfully seek to maintain the qualifications as given in 1 Timothy 3. I will strive to lead the flock of God in a balanced ministry of shepherding, teaching and evangelizing. I will maintain a wholesome relationship with the Berean Fellowship and keep the local church informed of its activities. Furthermore, I will seek above all things to promote the unity of the Spirit, being ready always for suggestions when given for the glory of God and the furtherance of His work. I will seek to be sensitive to God's leading to know when my present ministry is completed and will graciously resign. If at any time I am unwilling to submit to the authority of the official board or the Berean Church Constitution, I want the official board to call it to my attention. If I fail to be reconciled, I will resign immediately, and will quickly and quietly leave the field, causing no trouble which would damage the church."

E. Term

A pastor shall serve as long as mutually agreeable with him and the church, provided that he can continue to affirm the Pastor's Covenant.

F. An interim pastor has the same duties and covenant as a Senior Pastor and must be chosen by vote of the official board and the approval of the District Council.

Additional Staff

A. Associate pastors, assistant pastors, youth pastors, secretarial staff, custodians, etc. can be added at the discretion of the local church.

B. All staff shall agree to work under the authority of both the Berean Fundamental Church Council, Inc. and the Berean Fundamental Church Constitutions and agree to quietly resign if they are unwilling to submit to its authority or the authority of the official church board.

Official Board

A. The official board shall be the Board of Directors for each local church.

B. Mission churches

1. The preliminary official board of a mission church will consist of at least three individuals from the membership of the District Council of the Berean Fundamental Church Council in which it is associated.
2. The District Leader of that district shall appoint the members of the preliminary official board and report these appointments to the Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Berean Fundamental Church Council.
3. The District Leader shall make timely appointments to fill any vacancies in the preliminary official board and report changes in the membership to the Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Berean Fundamental Church Council.
4. The preliminary official board shall serve until the District Council shall appoint the initial official board of the church.
5. The preliminary official board shall annually appoint from its membership a President, Vice-President, and Secretary.
6. The preliminary official board will provide spiritual leadership and conduct the business affairs of the church. All other organizations and committees of the church are accountable to this board.
7. This preliminary official board shall meet monthly unless otherwise decided.
8. A quorum shall exist when two-thirds of the members of the preliminary official board are present.
9. Decisions will be by majority vote of those present unless previously stipulated by the preliminary official board. Each member has one vote.
10. A preliminary official board member shall serve until his death, resignation, or removal by the District Council in the event of heresy, immorality, misconduct, incompetence, or failure to maintain a good testimony.
11. A committee consisting of the pastor as chairman and at least two male church members will conduct all routine business of the local church and be accountable to the preliminary official board.
12. This committee should meet monthly and report regularly to the preliminary official board concerning its present progress and future plans.

C. Organized churches (1Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9)

1. An organized church is one that has an official board from the membership of the local assembly.
2. An official board is composed of at least three male members of the local church in addition to the pastor.
3. Board members must be biblically qualified as either elders or deacons.
4. The official board will provide spiritual leadership and conduct the business affairs of the church. All other organizations and committees of the church are accountable to this board.
5. This official board shall meet monthly unless it is otherwise decided.
6. A quorum shall exist when two-thirds of the members of the official board are present.

7. Decisions will be by the majority vote of those present unless previously stipulated by the official board. Each member has one vote.
 8. An official board shall be established as soon as practical after the incorporation of a local church.
 9. The District Council will appoint the initial official board based on the recommendation of the pastor of the local church.
 10. The first official board shall be established as a self-perpetuating board. Existing official boards have the option of choosing a rotating system of membership.
 11. An official board member shall serve until his death, resignation, end of his term, or removal by the official board in the event of heresy, immorality, misconduct, incompetence, or failure to maintain a good testimony.
 12. The official board shall choose additional board members from the membership of the church to fill vacancies or enlarge the board.
 13. When the number of official board members becomes fewer than three (not including the pastor), the church shall revert to a mission church status, and the District Council shall become the official board of the church.
- D. Official Board Member's Covenant

When joining the official board, the board members agrees to the following covenant:

"As a board member of a Berean Fundamental Church, I realize that the office is a governing position in the church and that an officer must first comply with the government before he can lead others into willing submission. I intelligently covenant to defend the faith and to gladly accept as the standard of my conduct the letter and spirit of this constitution. Being in a position of spiritual leadership, I will prayerfully seek to maintain the qualifications as given in 1Timothy 3. I will seek to be faithful in my family relationships, my witness, my giving, my conduct, and in my ministry with the pastor in any work consistent with this constitution. If at any time I am out of harmony with the official board or the Berean Constitution, and if we cannot be reconciled, I will resign from the board immediately, causing no trouble that would damage the church."

Corporate Church Officers

- A. A president, vice-president, and secretary will be appointed annually from the membership of the official board.
- B. The secretary of the corporation shall be the church clerk. He shall keep a record of all church business and any official board or church meetings. He shall be responsible for any correspondence associated with his office.
- C. Treasurer(s)
 1. The treasurer(s) shall be appointed annually from the membership of the official board to oversee the disbursement of funds for regular church expenses. The official board shall approve major expenditures.
 2. The treasurer(s) will keep the official board acquainted with financial records of the church and be prepared for an audit when requested by the board.
 3. The treasurer(s) shall annually see that a report is prepared for the General Council as directed by the Board of Directors.
- D. The official board will annually appoint church officers for each calendar year.
- E. An officer shall serve until his appointment is completed, resignation, or removal by the official board in the event of heresy, immorality, misconduct, incompetence, or failure to maintain a good testimony.
- F. In the event of a vacancy the official board will appoint a replacement to complete the remainder of term for that calendar year.

Officers, Boards, Committees, Department, and Bylaws

A. Elders, deacons, and deaconesses

Churches may further distinguish these offices.

B. Other officers, boards, committees, departments, and bylaws may be developed as needed by the local church.

Church Property

A. Use

1. All church properties are to be held by the local incorporated body in accordance with laws of the state in which the property is held.

2. Property held by the local incorporated church shall be for the use of church ministry consistent with the doctrine, practice, and ministry contained within the Berean Fundamental Church and the Berean Fundamental Church Council Constitutions and the Articles of Faith.

B. Titles

All titles to church property, real or personal, shall be held by the local incorporated church, subject to the Berean Fundamental Church and Berean Fundamental Church Council Constitutions and the Articles of Faith in their present forms and as they may be amended.

C. Dissolution

1. Of church plants: In the event of an unsuccessful church plant, all properties, real and personal, shall revert to the Berean Fundamental

Church Council, Inc.

2. Of existing churches: If at any time there are insufficient members to continue a viable work in a community and a decision is taken to close the church, the church property, real and personal, shall revert to the Berean Fundamental Church Council, Inc.

D. Disaffiliation

If a church votes to disaffiliate from the Berean Fundamental Church Council, as provided in Article V,C of SECTION THREE, the Constitution of the Berean Fundamental Church Council, the church may leave the Fellowship with the continued ownership of its church property, real and personal.

Annual Meeting of Members

A. Purpose

An annual church meeting will be held that includes reports considered necessary by the church board.

B. Notice

Notice of the date of the annual meeting shall be given in the church bulletin at least two Sundays prior to the meeting.

Interpretation

A. Matters of clarification and interpretation of this constitution shall be done by the Board of Directors of the Berean Fundamental Church Council, Inc.

B. All interpretations shall be recorded in the official minutes of the Board of Directors Berean Detail, which is maintained at the home office of the Fellowship.

Amendments

A. This constitution may be amended upon three-fourths vote of the General Council at which a quorum is present. (See SECTION THREE, the Berean Fundamental Church Council Constitution, Article III, 5, h.)

B. Recommendations for proposed amendments to this constitution may originate from the local church or departments and shall be submitted to their District Council for action and presentation to the Board of Directors.

C. Upon approval, the Board of Directors will present the recommendation at the next convening or specially called General Council meeting.

D. Written notice of the proposed amendment shall be mailed to all General Council members at least thirty days prior to the meeting of the General Council at which the amendment is to be considered.

Prior Constitutions

This Constitution of the Berean Fundamental Church supersedes and replaces all prior constitutions.