

CORNERSTONE BIBLE CHURCH

CONSTITUTION



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CORNERSTONE BIBLE CHURCH CONSTITUTION

Preamble

We, the members of Cornerstone Bible Church, do ordain and establish the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

Article I – Name

The name of this organization shall be The Cornerstone Bible Church of Greencastle, PA.

Article II – Purpose

The purpose of this church is guiding believers on the journey toward spiritual maturity through biblical teaching (Walking in the Word), discipleship (Walking in Relationship with Others), prayer (Walking in Dependence upon God), worship (Walking in Obedience to God), and service (Walking in Service for God).

Article III – Doctrine

The Scriptures: We believe that the sixty six books of the Bible are all given by the inspiration of God in the sense that the Holy Spirit guided holy men of old (2 Peter 1:20-21) in their choice of the very words of the sacred writings (verbal plenary); and that His divine inspiration is not in different degrees, but extends equally and fully to all parts of these writings, historical, poetical, doctrinal, and prophetic, and to the smallest word, provided such word was present in the original manuscripts. We believe, therefore, that the whole Bible in the originals is without error and is the only authority for faith and practice. We believe all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness: That the man of God may be adequate, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

God: We believe that there is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4), eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19), who are co-equal in their essential nature, attributes, and perfection; and each of whom is to be honored and worshiped as God. (John 1:1-4; 14:7-21; 17:3; Hebrews 1:1-3)

Jesus Christ in His Person: We believe that Jesus Christ is God the Son (John 1:1-3, 14, 5:18, 8:58; Colossians 2:9), the promised Messiah, conceived in the flesh by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:34-35), born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14), true God and true man (Philippians 2:5-11), without sin, and the only mediator between God and Man. (I Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 1:2-9, 2:14-15; 4:15)

Jesus Christ in His Work: We believe that Jesus Christ, through His death on the cross, paid for all sin (Isaiah 53:5-6), completely satisfied the righteous wrath of God against sin (Romans 3:21-26), and provided redemption and forgiveness for all who believe (Colossians 1:13-14). After His death, Jesus Christ was raised bodily from the dead in victory over sin (1 Corinthians 15:3-4), was seen by many during a period of forty days (Luke 24:36-43; 1 Corinthians 15:5-8), and then ascended into Heaven (Acts 1:6-11) where He is seated at the right hand of God as our Advocate (1 John 2:1-2) and High Priest (Hebrews 4:15), from which place He will some day return to establish His Kingdom on earth. (John 3:16; 1 Peter 1:18-19, 2:24; Revelation 20:6)

The Holy Spirit in His Person: We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, eternal, underived, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity. In all the divine attributes He is equal with and of the same essence and nature (coequal and consubstantial) with the Father and the Son. (Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

The Holy Spirit in His Work: We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment (John 16:7-11) and regenerates the sinner upon belief in Christ (Titus 3:5), baptizing the believer into one body (1 Corinthians 12:13), of which Christ is the head (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18). The Holy Spirit indwells (1 Corinthians 3:16), guides (Mark 13:11), instructs (John 14:26), fills (Ephesians 5:18), comforts (John 14:16), and empowers (Ephesians 3:16) the believer for godly living. We believe that the Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to every believer for the purpose of building up the body (the Church). (Romans 5:5; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Ephesians 4:7-12)

Man: We believe that man was created by God (Genesis 2:7, 18-24) in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-28; 9:6) and is not the product of evolution. The first man (Adam) fell from his sinless state through personal disobedience to the revealed will of God (Genesis 3:1-24), and as a result, all mankind is sinful in nature and practice (Romans 5:12), is unable to save himself (Romans 3:10-12, 23), and faces eternal separation from God. (Romans 1:18; 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-3)

Salvation: We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for the sins of all humanity according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:2-4), as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice (Romans 5:8-9; 2 Corinthians 5:21). We believe that each person who by faith believes on Him as personal Savior is justified on the basis of Jesus Christ's shed blood on Calvary. This salvation is by faith in Christ alone and not received by, nor based upon, any sacrament, merit, or good work on our part (Ephesians 2:8-9). Each person who believes on Christ as personal Savior is born again of the Holy Spirit (John 3:1-9) and nothing shall be able to separate him or her from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:37-39). We believe the Holy Spirit baptizes each believing person into the body of Christ and indwells them at the moment of salvation. (Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:13)

The Church: We believe that upon accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, a believer becomes part of His body, the church, of which Christ is the head (Ephesians 1:22; 5:23; Colossians 1:18). There is one church universal, composed of all those throughout the world

who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. We believe that the New Testament teaches the establishment and continuance of a local body of believers known as the local assembly or local church of born again believers. The Scriptures command believers to gather in order to devote themselves to worship, prayer, teaching of the Word, observance of the ordinances, fellowship, service to the body through the development and use of talents and gifts (Acts 2:42-47), and outreach to the world in fulfillment of the command of Christ to make disciples of all believers (Matthew 28:18-20). Wherever God's people meet regularly in obedience to this command, there is the local expression of the church under the oversight of elders and other supportive leadership (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9). The church's members are to work together in love and unity, intent on the ultimate purpose of glorifying Christ. (Ephesians 4:16)

Holy Angels: We believe that an innumerable company of sinless angels were created by God, and are therefore not to be worshipped (Revelation 19:10; 22:9). Although they are a higher order of creation than man, they were created by God, to worship Him and act as servants and messengers on God's behalf. (Luke 2:9-14; Hebrews 1:6-7, 14; 2:6-7; Revelation 5:11-14)

Fallen Angels: We believe that "Lucifer, Son of the morning" – the highest in rank of the angels, sinned through pride, thereby becoming Satan (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19). He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator. In his rebellion he took numerous angels with him in his fall (these are referred to as fallen angels or demons) (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:1-14), and introduced sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve (Genesis 3:1-15). We believe that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Isaiah 14:13-14; Matthew 4:1-11; Revelation 12:9-10); that he is the prince of this world (John 12:31; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2), who has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 16:20); and that he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:10)

Article IV – Positional Statement

The Distinction between the Church & Israel and Future Things (Premillennial Pre-Tribulational View): We teach that prior to the second coming of Christ, the world is ripening daily for judgment culminating in the end of an age marked by extreme apostasy (1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-5).

We teach in accordance with a literal method of interpretation of the Word of God and recognizing a distinction between God's program for Israel and His program for the church, that the next prophetic event in the progression of Biblical prophecy will be the coming of the Lord in the air, theologically referred to as the rapture or translation of the church. At this time He will receive unto Himself into heaven both those believers who are alive as well as those who have died in Christ (1 Cor. 15:20-24, 35-50; 1 Thess. 4:13-18). Basic to this view is the imminent return of Christ, and that no prophecies await fulfillment prior to this event. This is established in Scripture as the blessed hope (Titus 2:11-14), and becomes an event for which we should be constantly looking (Matt. 24: 36, 42; 25:1-13).

A period of unparalleled tribulation will follow this translation of the church, in fulfillment of Israel's seventieth week (Dan. 9:27; Rev. 6:1-19:21). The whole period of Israel's seventieth week will last 7 years, being a time of judgment upon the entire earth. The last half of this period will fulfill the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7), which our Lord called the great tribulation (Matt. 24:15-21).

Following the rapture, the church, the body of Christ, will be in heaven (John 14:1-3; Phil. 3:20). During this time, believers in Christ will appear before the judgment seat (bema) of Christ (1 Cor. 3:12-15) and participate in the marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7).

Climaxing this period of tribulation will be the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:14, 16) and the return of the Lord Jesus Christ (2nd Advent) to the earth in the same manner as He went, in person on the clouds of heaven (Acts 1:11), and with great power and glory (Romans 8:19-23; 11:25-27). He will return with His bride (Rev. 19:11-16). This will be the introduction of the millennial age (Rev. 20:1-6). Israel will be regathered, restored to the land as realization of God's covenantal promise (Deut. 30:1-10; Ezek. 37:21-28) and judged (Matt. 24:37-25:46). The Gentile nations will also be judged (Matt. 25:31-46). He will bring the whole world to the knowledge of God (Isa. 11:9; Acts 15:16-17).

During the millennial reign Satan is bound and located in the abyss. Following the millennial reign Satan will be loosed for a season (Rev. 20:1, 7). He will deceive the people, lead a revolt against God, be defeated by Christ, and then be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:8-10). At this time, the unsaved of all ages participate in the great white throne judgment, and as a result are also condemned to the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15).

Following the Millennium, the heavens and the earth are judged (2 Pet. 3:10) because they were the domain of Satan's rebellion against God and a new heaven and new earth will be created (Rev. 21:1). Then the eternal kingdom, the abode of all redeemed (Heb. 12:22-24) will be ushered in (Rev. 21-22).

Eternal Security: We teach that everyone who is born again by the Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ is eternally secured in their salvation from the moment of conversion (Romans 8:1, 31-39). This security relies on God's decisive grace rather than on the works of the Christian (Ephesians 2:8-9). Obedience, good works, and fruit-bearing do not earn or retain the believer's salvation but indicate the reality of the person's love for Christ and profession of genuine faith (John 14:21; James 2:17-18).

Eternal security in salvation is based upon the Lord's guarantee of each believer's adoption as His son or daughter (Galatians 4:4-7), His seal of the believer by the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30), and the conviction that God gives the Holy Spirit to each believer as a down payment toward future bliss in heaven (2 Corinthians 1:21-22). A person who professes genuine faith in Christ immediately becomes His possession (Luke 23:42-43; Acts 2:40-41; Acts 16: 30-34), and nothing can snatch that person out of His hands (John 10:27-29). Having been bought with the price of Jesus Christ's crucifixion as complete payment for sin, Christians are not their own, but are Christ's possession (1

Corinthians 6:19-20). This security is absolutely certain, reserved in heaven, protected by God's unlimited power (1 Peter 1:4-5).

The Process of Salvation: We teach that salvation is a process of three steps: Justification (Past), Sanctification (Present) and Glorification (Future).

Justification is a legal act in which the sinner is declared righteous by God (Rom. 5:1). It consists of two aspects, the pardon and removal of the believer's sins (Rom. 4:6-7; 5:9-11; Acts 13:38-39) and the bestowal of Christ's righteousness upon the believer (Rom 3:21-24). It is a gift of God given through the grace of God (Rom. 3:24) and takes place the moment the individual has faith in Christ alone (Acts 16:31; Rom. 5:1). The ground for justification is the death of Christ (Rom. 5:9-10) apart from any works (Rom 4:5; Eph. 2:8-9). The means of justification is faith alone (Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16). By receiving the righteousness of God (imputation), fellowship between man and God is restored (Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18).

Sanctification is the continuing work of God in the life of the believer whereby the believer grows in daily spiritual experience. While the standing of the believer in Christ is perfect by justification (Heb. 10:10), yet we retain our sin nature that cannot be eradicated in this life. Therefore we are in the process of becoming in practice what we are already in position. Consequently, the Christian is to "grow in grace" and be changed by the unhindered power of the Spirit. The divine aim is conforming the believer into the likeness to Christ Himself (Rom. 8:29) therefore we are commanded to be holy (1 Pet 1:13-16). The result is an actual transformation of the character and the condition of the person. Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:4, 9-13; Gal. 5:16) manifesting itself in a group of qualities designated the "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal 5:22-23). While sanctification is exclusively of God resting upon the power of His holiness, the believer is constantly exhorted to work and to grow in matters pertaining to salvation (Phil. 2:12-13; Rom. 12:9-21). We are to put to death the works of the body (Rom. 8:13) and present our bodies as a living sacrifice (Rom.12:1-2). Growth in the sanctification process occurs as the believer dedicates his life to God (Rom. 6:13; 12:1-2) and is nourished by the Word of God (Ps. 119:9-16).

Glorification (Rom. 8:29-30) is the culmination of the salvation process where the final transformation of the believer into the likeness of Christ is completed (Phil 1:6). It looks beyond this life and to the world to come and takes place at death, when the Christian passes into the presence of the Lord. At that time all believers will be presented to the Lord without any blemish (Eph. 5:26-27; Col 1:22). It also involves the perfecting of the bodies of all believers (Phil. 3:20-21), which will occur at the time of the resurrection in the connection with the second coming of Christ (1 Cor. 15:51-57; 1 Pet. 1:5).

Miraculous Gifts: We teach that the spiritual gifts of tongues, miracles, and healing were sign gifts in the apostolic period and used to authenticate the ministry and message of Christ's apostles (2 Corinthians 12:12). It is our understanding that these sign gifts have ceased in the individual lives of believers today (1 Cor. 13:8). We do believe that the Christian life is supernatural and that the Lord continues to perform miracles today through the prayers of his people (James 5:16).

As an evangelical, bible-believing church we welcome all who know Jesus Christ as their Savior and all who are seeking Him. Those who claim to possess the gift of tongues and other sign gifts are welcome to worship and fellowship with us if they are willing to be a source of unity rather than division within our church body. We believe that many of the current displays of the gift of tongues distract from the main task of the local church, which is to glorify God through the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).

Some of the current divisive displays of the gift of tongues:

- Give unwarranted prominence to the gift, which is described in the New Testament as being only one of many spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12).
- Emphasize speaking in tongues as the primary manifestation of the Spirit's work in a person's life, while minimizing the Spirit's work in producing a holy life, and a life that displays the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).
- Often suggest that speaking in tongues is a required proof of being Spirit-filled or of possessing salvation in Christ, even though the Scriptures do not teach this.
- Violate the clear mandates of how to exercise the gift in the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 14:26-40).

Although we do not control personal, individual interactions with the Lord, any public expression of the sign gifts at meetings that are under the organization and authority of Cornerstone Bible Church must be carefully exercised biblically, properly and in an orderly manner (1 Corinthians 14:40).

The Ordinances: We teach that baptism and communion are the two ordinances that are to be observed by the church. Baptism is an ordinance that is to be observed one time for the believer, as a public profession of faith at the beginning of the Christian life. Communion is an ordinance that is to be observed continually throughout the believer's life, as a sign of the ongoing relationship with Christ.

Christian baptism is a public identification with Jesus Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Baptism is not a means of salvation, nor a guarantee that a person will experience conversion, but an act of obedience to Christ after conversion in response to the scriptural command (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41; 18:8). Christian baptism by immersion (Acts 8:36-39) is a beautiful testimony of a believer demonstrating faith in Christ and the union with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection to new life (Colossians 2:12; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:1-11). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the Body of Christ (Acts 2:41-42).

Communion, or the Lord's Supper, is a memorial ceremony in which believers commemorate and proclaim the death of Christ until He comes. This ceremony should be preceded by solemn self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:28-32). We teach that the elements of Communion are merely representations of the body and blood of Christ and therefore reject the doctrine known as transubstantiation, which teaches that an actual metaphysical change takes place in the elements when they are consecrated. We also reject the doctrine known as

consubstantiation, which teaches that the body and blood of Christ are present "in, with, and under" the bread and wine.

Article V – Organization and Government

The purpose statement of Cornerstone Bible Church shall be carried out through the servant leadership of the Elders, hereafter referred to as the Official Board with the affirmation of the membership of the church in accordance with the principles found in 1 Peter 5:1-5. The Official Board shall be made up of qualified men who have demonstrated a God-given desire to serve the body of Christ.

Section One: Official Board Members

The Official Board at Cornerstone Bible Church shall be comprised of the Elders.

Elders: We believe that God's plan for His church, of which we are a local expression, is to function as a body (1Cor. 12:12-31) and a family (1 Tim. 3:15). Christ is the Head of the church (Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18) and has ordained that the oversight of each local church (Tit. 1:5) is to be a pastoral and familial style of leadership with shepherds (elders) caring for the flock (1 Pet. 5:1-4). This is a spiritual ministry that is to be shared among a plurality of elders (Acts 14:23; 20:17), in which they function as equals (Acts 15). As each elder serves within his giftedness the elder team is strengthened and the local church is built up (Eph. 4:16).

The Qualifications for Spiritual Leadership: Elders are to be men who meet the spiritual qualifications that are outlined in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Tit. 1:5-9.

The Responsibilities of Spiritual Leadership: Elders are under shepherds of God's flock and are therefore responsible to protect (Tit. 1:9-11), feed (1 Tim. 3:2; 4:13), lead (1 Pet. 5:2-3), and care for the practical needs of people (Acts 6:1-6; Jam. 5:14). Elders are responsible before God for their leadership and will give an account before God (Heb. 13:17).

- The elders shall administrate the affairs of the church (i.e. ministries, finances, governance etc.).
- The elders shall serve as the reviewing committee for potential board members. The membership will nominate candidates to the board via a board nomination form.
- The elders shall evaluate individuals for membership based upon stated qualifications for membership.
- The elders shall evaluate and expand the constitution as needed. Any such changes shall be approved by the membership of the church.
- The elders shall implement and oversee leadership development in order to continue to disciple godly men for leadership.

The Manner in Spiritual Leadership: Elders are to be gentle, humble, servants of all (Mk. 10:42-45; 1 Pet. 5:1-4). These qualities are to be lived out in all relationships (one with another, toward those under their care, and to the world at large). Servant leadership implies two things: Leadership – Elders are given authority and responsibility to function as “God’s stewards” (Tit. 1:7), “overseers” (Acts 20:28), “shepherds” (1 Pet. 5:2), and “leaders” (1 Tim. 5:17). Servant – Elders are to lead with a servant attitude rather than an authoritarian attitude (Mk. 10:42-45; 1 Pet. 5:1-4). Elders are to direct, not dictate.

The Priority of First among Equals: There will be some who will stand out because of their gifts as “first among equals” or “leaders of the leaders” such as Peter among the apostles or Paul in the early spread of the gospel in the New Testament. This (these) first(s) among equals has (have) no more authority than any of the other elders.

The Appointment Process:

- **Nomination:** Any member of the church may nominate a male member of the church for the role of elder by filling out a board nomination form and turning it in to the elders.
- **Evaluation:** The elders will evaluate the nominations based upon the qualifications specified in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Tit. 1:5-9. If the board feels that an individual needs more training before being placed in a leadership role he will be paired with a board member for personal discipleship and leadership training.
- **Recommendation:** The elders will recommend those men found to be qualified to the membership for public examination.
- **Examination:** Any member of the church shall bring any legitimate concerns to the attention of the elders. The elders will then look into these concerns to determine the validity and address them as Shepherds. Once these concerns have been adequately addressed those individuals deemed qualified as a result of this process will be brought before the membership for appointment.
- **Appointment:** Those men deemed qualified, after the proper examination process has taken place, will be brought before the congregation to be officially appointed through the laying on of hands and prayer. This appointment will be done by the other elders and/or members of the congregation.

Dismissal: If an Elder no longer meets the biblical qualifications by the testimony of two or more witnesses he shall be dismissed in accordance with the principals of 1 Timothy 5:19-21.

Term for Elders (unpaid): The elders shall serve for an indefinite term. An elder who has served for at least two years may request and receive a sabbatical leave of up to one year, after which he may resume his service with the board. It will be expected of an elder who has served for five consecutive years without a sabbatical to take a six month to one year

sabbatical, after which he may resume his service with the board. Elders on sabbatical will not be eligible to vote on board matters.

Interim Leadership: There shall be a minimum of at least three elders serving on the elder board. In the event that three biblically qualified men cannot be found, an interim leader(s) shall be selected from among those men in the congregation who most closely approximate the biblical qualifications for elder to serve as temporary leaders until such time as there are men duly qualified. These men shall be appointed by a majority vote of the congregation and shall relinquish their duties as soon as there are three elders appointed.

The Role of Teaching Elders (Preacher/Teacher): This role will be filled by an elder who has demonstrated the God-given desire to serve in this capacity as well as the spiritual gifts to preach and teach the Word of God. Typically, this individual will be financially supported by the church, therefore the following will apply:

Election and Dismissal: The Teaching Elder shall be elected or dismissed upon the recommendation of the Board at a congregational meeting for that purpose. Three-fourths of all votes cast by the membership shall be required for his election or dismissal. He shall serve so long as it is mutually agreeable to both him and the church. However, forty-five (45) days notice shall be necessary by either to terminate the agreement.

Responsibilities: The Teaching Elder shall oversee the worship, the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, the administration of the ordinances, and the spiritual oversight of the ministry together with the other Elders. He shall be the primary preacher/ teacher of the Word of God.

Section Two: Officers of the Board

The Officers of the Board shall be comprised of a Chairman and a Secretary.

Chairman:

Election: The Chairman shall be elected annually from the Official Board by a majority vote of the Official Board.

Responsibilities: The Chairman shall oversee the preparation of the agenda for the Board meetings. He shall serve as the Vice-Moderator of the church.

Secretary:

Election: The Secretary shall be elected annually from the Official Board by a majority vote of the Official Board.

Responsibilities: The Secretary shall be responsible to keep accurate minutes of the Board Meetings and shall file a copy of the minutes with the Chairman of the Board within two weeks of the meeting. He shall be responsible to appoint an ad hoc secretary in the case of his absence.

Section Three: Officers of the Church

The Officers of the Church shall be comprised of Officers for Education, Missions, Properties and Facilities, and Finance. All officers shall be active members of the church.

Deacons: We believe that in the New Testament we see two offices within the local church, those being the offices of elders (overseers) and deacons (Philippians 1:1). The New Testament scriptures teach that deacons were set apart by the church as servants to minister to the practical and material needs of the Body of Christ. This allowed the elders (overseers) to devote themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:1-7). This is a practical ministry that is to be shared among a plurality of deacons in which they function as equals (Proverbs 27:17).

The Qualifications for Spiritual Leadership: Deacons are to be men who meet the spiritual qualifications that are outlined in 1 Tim. 3:8-13.

The Responsibilities of Deacons: Deacons are primarily responsible to be ministers of mercy within the congregation of believers (Acts 6:3). As ministers of mercy, deacons have been given the authority and position to administer the church's practical care ministry.

The practical application of deacon ministry may include:

- Deacons should serve as an example of humble submission to the authority of the shepherd elders in the way they complement the elder's ministry.
- Deacons are to help care for the practical and material needs within the Cornerstone family based upon the example given to us in Acts 6 (i.e. handle the disbursement of benevolence funds to those who are in need, care for widows, visit the sick , etc.)
- Deacons shall carry out those necessary functions that enable the shepherd elders to fulfill their primary duty of spiritual leadership. Deacon responsibilities may include such things as administration, finances, ministry oversight, visitation, etc.

The Manner in Spiritual Leadership: Deacons are to be gentle, humble, servants of all in much the same way as elders are called to be (Mk. 10:42-45; 1 Pet. 5:1-4). These qualities are to be lived out in all relationships (one with another, toward those under their care, and to the world at large).

The Priority of First among Equals: There will be some who will stand out because of their gifts as "first among equals" or "leaders of the leaders" such as Peter among the apostles or Paul in the early spread of the gospel in the New Testament. This (these) first(s) among equals has (have) no more authority than any of the other deacons.

The Appointment Process:

- Nomination: Any member of the church may nominate a male member of the church for the role of deacon by filling out a deacon nomination form and turning it in to the elders.

- **Evaluation:** The elders and deacons will evaluate the nominee based upon the qualifications specified in 1 Tim. 3: 8-13.
- **Recommendation:** The elders will recommend those men found to be qualified to the membership for public examination over a one month time period.
- **Examination:** Any member of the church shall bring any legitimate concerns to the attention of the elders. The elders, as shepherds will then examine these concerns to determine if they are valid and address them with the nominee. Once these concerns have been adequately addressed, those individuals whom the elders determine to be qualified as a result of this process will be brought before the membership for appointment.
- **Appointment:** The qualified men will be brought before the congregation to be officially appointed through the laying on of hands and prayer. This appointment will be done by the elders.

Dismissal: If the elders determine that a deacon no longer meets the biblical qualifications by the testimony of two or more witnesses he shall be dismissed in accordance with the principals of 1 Timothy 5:19-21.

Term for Deacons: The deacons shall serve for an indefinite term. A deacon who has served for at least two years may request and receive a sabbatical leave of up to one year, after which he may resume his service with the board. It will be expected of a deacon who has served for five consecutive years without a sabbatical to take a six month to one year sabbatical, after which he may resume his service with the board.

Education Officer: (TBD)

Missions Officer: (TBD)

Properties and Facilities Officer: (TBD)

Financial Officer:

Election and Dismissal: The Financial Officer shall be elected annually from the board by a majority vote of the board. He shall be dismissed by a majority vote of the board.

Responsibilities: He shall oversee the financial matters of the church to include the preparation of an annual budget for review by the Board. He shall be assisted by a Treasurer and Financial Secretary. He shall oversee the writing of all checks. He will also ensure that all necessary quarterly and annual forms are filed in accordance with federal, state, and local guidelines.

Treasurer:

Election and Dismissal: The Treasurer shall be appointed by the Financial Officer from the membership of the congregation with the approval of the board. The dismissal of the Treasurer shall be by a majority vote of the board.

Responsibilities: The Treasurer shall be responsible for paying all bills, salaries, reimbursements and taxes. A check shall not be valid unless signed by two members of the finance committee. He or She is responsible for keeping a record of all church finances and shall give a quarterly report to the Financial Officer. He or she shall give a yearly report to the Financial Officer for the annual congregational meeting. The Treasurer will work together with the Financial Officer to ensure that all necessary quarterly and annual forms are filed in accordance with federal, state, and local guidelines.

Financial Secretary:

Election and Dismissal: The Financial Secretary shall be appointed by the Financial Officer from the membership of the congregation with the approval of the board. An individual may serve as both treasurer and financial secretary at the same time. The dismissal of the Financial Secretary shall be by a majority vote of the board.

Responsibilities: The Financial Secretary shall oversee the receiving and depositing of all funds of the church in a bank selected by the board. All offerings will be counted by at least two individuals (members of the financial committee or the board). An official form will be completed and signed listing the amount to be deposited, and will be kept on file. He or she shall keep both an electronic record and hard copy of all individual giving to the church and shall be responsible for issuing financial statements to each individual or family at the end of the year in accordance with IRS guidelines.

Section Four: Congregational Meetings

Purpose: The purpose of Congregational Meetings is to provide information and to vote on issues such as finances, election of officers, legal matters, constitutional amendments, or to elect or dismiss a paid elder.

Times: The annual meeting of the church shall be held during the last quarter of the fiscal year, the exact date to be determined by the board. Special meetings may be called by the board to address specific items or to respond to special concerns of the congregation.

Announcement: Congregational Meetings shall be announced at least two weeks prior to the meeting. Every attempt will be made to distribute documentation to the congregation prior to the congregational meeting. ***Voting:*** Any active member of the church shall be eligible to vote.

Quorum: There must be a quorum of the membership in order for an official vote to take place. A quorum shall consist of 50% of the active membership.

Moderator: A board member shall moderate all congregational meetings.

Section Five: Church Membership

Purpose: Membership in the Cornerstone Bible Church shall be established so as to maintain our commitment to carry out the purpose statement of the church.

Requirements: Any person age 16 or older, who has confessed Jesus Christ as personal Savior, is in essential agreement with the Doctrinal statement, in harmonious agreement with the positional statement and willingly agrees with the Constitution and Covenant is eligible for membership.

Procedure:

- Any person who desires to be a member of Cornerstone Bible Church shall make application to the board on the “Application for Membership” form.
- All applicants will be reviewed by the board, and if deemed necessary, the applicants will be interviewed individually.
- If the applicants are approved by the board, they will be recommended to the Church for membership and their names posted for one month. During that month, any concerns should be brought to the attention of the board. If a concern is voiced, the board will examine the concern as Shepherds and determine whether to proceed with membership or not.
- If no concern is voiced, the applicant will be considered a member when he or she is publicly introduced as a new member to the congregation.

Privileges:

- Any member has the freedom and responsibility to bring their concerns to the appropriate individuals responsible. (Matthew 18:15-17)
- All active members (those participating regularly in the ministry of the church) are eligible to vote in all Congregational Meetings of the Church. Members must be 18 years of age or older to vote on dismissal of a Pastor or on the purchase or sale of property.
- Members can nominate candidates for the board via a board nomination form.
- Faithful members, who are qualified, shall be eligible to serve as teachers or elected officers.

Discipline:

- Discipline should always be done with the objective of bringing about growth in the believer’s life, restoration of fellowship between a member of the body and Christ, the Head of the body, and to restore fellowship and unity within the body (among the church members) following the model seen in Matthew 18:15-17 and Gal. 6:1-2.

- Any member guilty of serious offense against the standards set forth in these Articles, who neglects or refuses to remedy such offense after being counseled with by the board, shall be liable to suspension from membership privileges, or removed from membership.
- A majority vote of the board shall be necessary for removal from membership once Matthew 18:15-17 has been followed. The congregation will be informed of such action so that they may pray and admonish the individual according to Scripture with a goal of repentance and reconciliation.

Termination: Membership may be terminated by death, by letter of request, or by disciplinary removal.

Section Six: Finances

Offerings: Financial offerings will be taken up weekly in order to give believers the opportunity to participate in the funding of God's mission through Cornerstone Bible Church.

Finance committee: The Finance Committee shall be composed of the Financial Officer, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and any other Cornerstone Bible Church members deemed necessary by the Board in order to fulfill the financial responsibilities of the church. These members shall be appointed by the Financial Officer with the approval of the board. The dismissal of these members shall be by a majority vote of the board.

Budget:

- A budget shall be prepared by the Financial Officer and after approval by the Board, will be presented to the congregation at the Annual Congregational Meeting for acceptance by a majority vote.
- The Board will have authority to operate the ministry of the Church within the budget. Any main budget category exceeding 15% of the budgeted amount for that category must have approval of the congregation.

Tax-Exemption Requirement: Any surplus funds of Cornerstone Bible Church shall at no time during the existence of the organization be used for private inurement to any person. Upon the sale or dissolution of Cornerstone Bible Church, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code and shall not be used for private inurement to any person.

Section Seven: Employees

Those serving as employees of the church shall be exempt from making decisions regarding their own employment and/or financial compensation.

Article VI – Covenant

The following is The Cornerstone Bible Church Covenant of membership and is read at each reception of new members:

We, the members of The Cornerstone Bible Church, do join together in the fellowship of the Gospel. We covenant together, God helping us that we will love one another, pray for one another, and seek to help one another grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We will be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace and to resolve our differences by putting away from us all bitterness, wrath, anger, and evil speaking; and we will be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us.

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together for worship and service, but will honor the Word of God and will seek to follow those who have the spiritual rule over us. We will be good stewards of all that God has given us, and will give as God has prospered us, not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver.

We will seek to win others to Christ by sharing the Gospel in word and deed. As we have the opportunity, we will do good to all men, especially those who are of the household of faith. We will strive to carry out His commission to spread the Gospel throughout the whole world.

Article VII – Amendments

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at any regular or special business meeting, providing the proposed amendment has been announced to the congregation in at least two Sunday morning services previous to the meeting.