

Constitution and Bylaws of Dayspring Fellowship

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this Church is Dayspring Fellowship, with its principal facilities located at 5500 Avenue G in Austin, TX.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The foundation of this Church is the Lord Jesus Christ and it is guided in all its affairs by the Word of God as recorded in the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments. (*1 Corinthians 3:11; Colossians 1:15-20*)

This Church exists by the grace of God and for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its activities. This Church glorifies the triune God by loving him and obeying his commands through

- worshipping him;
- equipping the saints through biblical instruction and study;
- proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching, personal evangelism, and other means consistent with the teachings of holy Scripture;
- encouraging, supporting, and participating in mission work, local, domestic and international;
- administering the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper;
- encouraging biblical fellowship among believers; and
- serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical, emotional, financial, and spiritual needs, in the name of Jesus Christ.

The ministry of this Church shall be evident by a devotion to a common faith, a common life, a common worship, and a common witness, as listed above. (*Matthew 28:19-20; Ephesians 4:11-16; Acts 2:42*)

ARTICLE III – STATEMENT OF FAITH

While a convenient summary of our beliefs may be found in the First London Baptist Confession of 1646, our ultimate authority in all matters of faith and practice is the holy Bible, the inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word of God.

ARTICLE IV – CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Section 1: General Statement

The purpose of Church government is to protect the Gospel and strive for spiritual maturity both individually and corporately as a New Testament Church. (*Ephesians 4:11-14*)

Section 2: Church Authority

Scripture teaches that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. Therefore, He is the ultimate and final authority in all things over His body, the Church. Jesus Christ has revealed His will for us, as the Church, through His Word, the Bible. (*Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18*)

Section 3: Church Polity

The authority and government of the Church is delegated by Christ to the Elders as further defined in this Constitution and Bylaws. Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church mediates His rule over the Church by calling and appointing Elders to shepherd, oversee, and lead the Church. These Elders are directly responsible to Jesus Christ for the governing of the Church according to his Word. The interpretation of God's Word in all matters of faith and practice shall lie with the Elders (*1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:17*).

This Church is subject to no other ecclesiastical body. Any voluntary associations with other bodies shall not infringe on the autonomy of this Church.

ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Qualifications

To qualify for membership in this Church, a person must be one who:

- Makes a public profession of their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior;
- Has been scripturally baptized in accordance with his or her own conscience;
- Is not currently under church discipline from a local Church; and
- Requests to be a member of this Church.

Each Member must agree to submit to the teaching of Scripture, to submit to the Elders as unto the Lord, and to maintain unity in this Church as far as it depends on him or her. The Elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith or such other evidence as the Elders deem appropriate.

Section 2: Admission of Members

To be admitted into membership, a person must be affirmed by the Elders and presented to the Church during a Sunday morning service, and shall at that point relinquish their membership in all other churches.

Section 3: Purpose and Privileges of Church Membership

Church membership is important in that it facilitates:

- The defining of who belongs to our local congregation (Philippians 2:2)
- The knowing of who should participate in the privileges and responsibilities of the Church (*1 Timothy 5:16; James 5:14*);
- The providing of adequate care, nurture, and protection for every individual that belongs to this Church (*Acts 6:1, 4*); and
- The exercising of authority and oversight in discipline and restoration of those members not maintaining a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (*1 Corinthians 5:1-5*).

Members shall be expected to participate actively in the life of the Church:

- by regularly attending its Lord's Day meetings;
- by faithfully observing the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper;

- by submitting to its discipline and instruction;
- by contributing to the ministry and life of the Church with the gifts, time, and material resources each person has received from God; and
- by attending its members' meetings.

A person who is not a member shall not be appointed or elected to lead any ministry or hold any office of the Church without exception.

Section 4: Termination of Membership

1. Membership may be terminated in the following ways:

- death;
- transfer to another Church of like faith;
- inactivity;
- church discipline; and
- erasure upon becoming affiliated with another Church or another faith.

The purpose of church discipline is to effect a return to a biblical standard of conduct and doctrine in a member who errs, to maintain purity in the local Church, and to deter sin (*Matthew 18:15-18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; Gal. 6:1; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:16-18; James 5:19-20*). Members of this Church who shall fall into serious and unrepentant sin pertaining to conduct or essential doctrine shall be subject to dismissal according to *Matthew 18:15-18, Galatians 6:1, 1Cor 5:1-5; 1Tim. 1:18-20, 1Tim. 5:19-20; 2Tim. 2:16-18; and James 5:19-20*. If said erring member finally refuses to heed the warning of the Church, he or she shall be publicly excommunicated from the Church. There shall be no appeal to any court from that decision. It is understood that this process will continue to conclusion even if the erring member leaves the Church or otherwise seeks to withdraw from membership to avoid the discipline process. If said member, after dismissal, heeds the warning, demonstrates repentance, and requests restoration of membership, he or she shall be publicly restored to membership. Any such request shall be made to the Elders.

ARTICLE VI – MEETINGS

Section 1: Worship Meetings

Worship services shall be held each Lord's Day, and may be held throughout the week as the Elders determine.

Section 2: Members' Meetings

In every meeting, Members shall act in a spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration, which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. A regular annual meeting shall be held to affirm the Church's annual budget and hear reports to the congregation from the Elders regarding the Church. Special meetings may be called by the Elders to report to the Church of pending decisions or final decisions made by the Elders. All such meetings shall be held at Dayspring Chapel.

Section 3: Elders' Meetings

There shall be regular Elders' meetings. Seeking the Lord's wisdom and blessing through thankful prayer shall be a part of every meeting. A quorum shall be understood to be more than 50% of the Elders. Affirming that God's will is never divided, all decisions shall be made prayerfully, humbly and on a unanimous basis. On matters of special significance, such as the removal or appointing of Deacons or Elders, the adoption of an annual budget, changes to the Church Constitution and Bylaws, major building projects or expenditures, and the corporate pursuit of unrepentant members through church discipline, the Elders shall seek the input of the whole congregation in a members' meeting. At any regular or special Elders' meeting, Church officers may be chosen and positions filled as needed, if all relevant constitutional requirements have been met.

It shall be the duty of the secretary to record the minutes of all regular and special Elders' meetings of the Church. The secretary shall be nominated and elected by the Elders. In the absence or incapacity of the secretary, the Elders shall appoint an Elder to perform the duties of the Church secretary.

ARTICLE VII – OFFICES

Section 1: Summary

The biblical offices in the Church are Elders and Deacons, also referred to as officers in this Constitution and Bylaws.

Section 2: Elders

The New Testament Scripture is clear about those who have the responsibility of rule, oversight, and care of the Church. These men are called Elders, overseers, and bishops. All three different titles are used to refer to the same spiritual office of leadership in the Church and are interchangeable (1 *Timothy* 3:1-7). We know that Christ is the head of the Church and that He mediates His loving rule in the Church through the shepherding of Elders (*Acts* 20:17-18, 28-31; 1*Peter* 5:1-4). The Elders shall be comprised of men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of Elder set forth in 1 *Timothy* 3:1-7 and *Titus* 1:6-9. The Elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the Church. In keeping with the principles set forth in *Acts* 6:1-6 and 1 *Peter* 5:1-4, the Elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God's flock. Toward this end, Elders will rely on the deacons and the loving service of other members to fulfill the needs of the congregation by using their spiritual gifts.

Each year the Elders shall present to the Church an itemized budget according to the constitutional provisions on Finances (VIII.1). No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the Church or any of its ministries without the approval of the Elders.

The Elders shall recognize and ordain men as fellow Elders called by God, gifted and willing to serve in this calling. An Elder of Dayspring Fellowship must be ordained to the gospel ministry by this Church or a Church of like faith. All the decision-making authority of the Church is vested by Jesus Christ in the Elders who shepherd the Church. However, the Elders, forbidden by God's Word of domineering over the congregation (1 *Peter* 5:3), shall not make major decisions apart from the knowledge and input of the congregation. The objective of any and all decisions made shall be to do the will of God regarding the matter at hand.

Texas state law requires a minimum of three directors and a president to operate as a nonprofit corporation. In Dayspring Fellowship, the Elders are the board of directors, and the president of the corporation shall be an Elder nominated and elected by the Elders.

Section 3: Staff Elders

As the need arises, a candidate for Staff Elder shall be nominated by the Elders and called as a staff Elder only after a thorough examination by the Elders of his life, calling, gifts, doctrine and philosophy of ministry, and only after receiving the input of the congregation after they have been given the opportunity to meet and question the candidate and hear him minister God's Word through preaching. Staff Elders shall be compensated for their labors. Each year, the other Elders will review a staff Elder's compensation package.

Staff Elders shall perform the duties of an Elder and shall be recognized by the Elders as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. They shall preach on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office or as set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws. In the absence or incapacity of staff Elders, the Elders shall assume responsibility for these duties, and of those which can be delegated.

No Elder shall be exempt from church discipline (V.4). No charge will be admitted against an Elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses (1 Timothy 5:19). If discipline of an Elder is necessary, it shall be administered in a loving manner, as that of church discipline for any other member. The removal of an Elder from his office shall require a transparent process which includes making a report to the congregation and seeking their input, as well as clear and demonstrable grounds for disqualification from pastoral ministry, such as criminal activity, immorality or heresy.

Section 4: Deacons

The office of Deacon is described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-6. In keeping with these biblical principles, Deacons shall not exercise a ministry of spiritual authority, but shall support the Elders' ministry of the word and prayer by working to maintain the unity of the Church and care for the physical needs of the Church.

The Church may recognize deacons to take responsibility

- for seeing that the sick, the grieving, the aged, and the infirm receive physical and spiritual comfort;
- for leading the hospitality ministries of the Church;
- for attending to the normal care and maintenance of Church properties;
- for attending to the accommodations for public worship; and
- for serving in other specific capacities as the Church has need.

Members who are giving of themselves in service to the Church and who possess particular gifts of service shall be nominated by the body of Members and then affirmed by the Elders according to the constitutional provisions on Elders' Meetings (VI.3). They shall be received as gifts of Christ to His Church and set apart as deacons.

ARTICLE VIII – FINANCES

Section 1: Summary

The Elders shall present an operations and missions budget at an annual members' meeting not more than three months after the start of the fiscal year. Before this meeting and subject to the Elders' discretion, expenditures may continue at the prior year's level.

Section 2: Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Church shall begin January 1 and end December 31.

Section 3: Treasurer

The treasurer shall ensure that all funds and securities of the Church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The treasurer shall also be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues, and expenses of the Church to the Elders. This responsibility may be delegated with the approval of the Elders.

The treasurer shall also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the Church and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the Church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the Church. The treasurer and those with access shall guard the confidentiality of members' contribution records, and shall be accountable to the Elders.

ARTICLE IX – AMENDMENT

This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended only by the unanimous consensus of the Elders.

This Constitution and Bylaws shall be made available to all Church members.

ARTICLE X – DISSOLUTION AND DISBURSEMENT OF ASSETS

In the event of dissolution of the Church, no part of the Church's earnings or assets shall inure to the benefit of any of its members; the residual assets of the Church shall be distributed to Redemption Hill Church in Round Rock, TX, which is exempt as organizations described in Sections 501(c) (3) and 170(c) (2) of the Internal Revenue code of 1986 or corresponding sections of any prior or future law.