

ARTICLES OF FELLOWSHIP

PREAMBLE

All that follows is subject to the ultimate constitution for every New Testament church, the Bible. Led by faith in our Savior, Jesus Christ, and for the glorification of God through the power of the Holy Spirit, we declare, establish, and voluntarily submit to these Articles of Fellowship to govern this body in an orderly manner in keeping with those principles and commands of Scripture regarding the conduct of a local New Testament Church. The Articles will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the autonomy of this body in relation to any other association. We also declare that the Articles of Faith, which accompany these Articles of Fellowship, are incorporated herein by reference. These Articles shall become effective as of the date of adoption by this church, and shall supersede all other rules, regulations, and procedures heretofore in existence.

ARTICLE I: NAME

This body shall be known as the High Pointe Baptist Church, hereinafter called "the Church", located at 101 High Pointe Lane, Cedar Hill, Texas 75104.

ARTICLE II: MISSION STATEMENT

To glorify God, to exalt Christ, and being empowered by the Holy Spirit to win the lost, to edify the saints, to minister to needs within the Church and community, and to extend the Kingdom of Christ to the ends of the earth.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: General

The membership retains unto itself the right of exclusive self-government of the life of the Church. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who may be members of the Church and the conditions of such membership. Each member of the Church (except those members who are under Watchcare as provided below) is entitled to vote in all elections and on all questions submitted to the Church, provided the member is present at the time of said voting. Each member is eligible for any elective office in the Church, subject to any and all scriptural requirements that may exist for such office.

The purpose for which the Church is formed is the worship of Almighty God according to the faith, doctrine, discipline, and usages of the Church, through which all questions of faith, doctrine, and discipline shall be decided. Membership in the Church shall be entirely subject to rules, regulations, usages, canons, discipline, and requirements of the Church, and a member expelled therefrom shall immediately cease to be a member of the Church until fully restored to membership in good standing.

Section 2: Initial Membership

The initial membership of the Church shall consist of all members at incorporation.

Section 3: Candidacy for Membership

Any person may present himself as a candidate for membership in the Church at any regular worship service in any of the following ways:

- A. Upon public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, followed by scriptural baptism.
- B. Upon receipt of a letter of recommendation from a church of like faith and order, and having been scripturally baptized.
- C. Upon statement of acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, being scripturally baptized and upon recommendation of the Pastor and/or his designee after counseling.
- D. Upon Watchcare. Any person who, for some valid reason, is prohibited from joining the Church may come under the Watchcare of the Church. They may share in all appropriate rights, responsibilities and privileges, save that of voting (most commonly Watchcare serves to help full-time students and/or missionaries who need to retain their membership at their home or sponsoring church). A person will be presented for Watchcare upon recommendation of the Pastor and/or his designee after counseling.
- E. Upon other conditions as the Church may deem proper in cases involving special considerations and circumstances.

Section 4: Requirements for Membership

Because the Pastor shall give an account of the members (Hebrews 13:17), each candidate for membership in the Church shall be referred to the Pastor and/or his designee. The Pastor and/or his designee shall be responsible to promptly fix a time and place for meeting with the candidate. The purpose of the meeting shall be to discern the candidate's basic Christian experience, doctrinal beliefs and, reasons to believe God is adding him or her to this body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:7, 18), seriousness of intention to support the total ministry of the Church (I Corinthians 10:24, Ephesians 4:29). The Pastor and/or his designee shall make their recommendation concerning candidates for membership in the Church at any of the regular monthly business meetings of the Church (Acts 9:27). Approval of those recommended for membership shall be by unanimous vote of the Church members present and voting at the business meeting in which the names of the candidates are presented. In the event of any dissenting vote, the Pastor and/or his designee shall investigate the validity of the objections and make a further recommendation to the Church. Approval or disapproval of the reconsidered recommendation shall be by a two-thirds ($2/3$)-majority vote.

Section 5: Termination of Membership

Membership may be terminated in any of the following ways:

- A. Upon death;
- B. Upon request for a letter of recommendation to another church of like faith and order, provided the member is in good standing and not subject to or under discipline at the time of the request. Letters of recommendation shall be given only to other churches of like faith and order;
- C. Upon expulsion by action of the Church (See Article X, Section 3); or
- D. Upon written request of a member. Although discouraged, any member who desires to terminate his or her membership in the Church shall make a request in writing which shall then be voted on by the membership.

ARTICLE IV: POLITY/RELATIONSHIPS

The government of the Church shall be congregational. The Church is an autonomous body operating through democratic processes under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The government of the Church is vested in its membership and following the leadership of the Holy Spirit will strive to move by consensus, in a spirit of love, and in the unity of the faith. The membership is composed of persons who have been presented and duly elected to membership.

The Church is not subject to control by any other ecclesiastical body within or beyond its membership.

As much as is practical, and to better carry out its purpose, the Church will affiliate and cooperate with the Dallas Baptist Association, the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Church will also endeavor to cooperate with other Christians and Christian organizations to better achieve its purpose.

ARTICLE V: CONDUCT

Each person who has been redeemed by Christ should live for Him and His church and not for himself or herself. Regular attendance at the services of the Church, daily systematic Bible reading, and private and family prayers and devotions shall be urged upon all members.

The conduct of each member should be fully in keeping with both the letter and spirit of the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:36-40), and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). The qualities described as fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) should be evident in the lives of all members and each should be above reproach both within the Church and without.

ARTICLE VI: MINISTRY

All Christian ministry is a result of meaningful relationships. It presumes a vital, saving, obedient relationship with Jesus Christ as head of the Church and requires caring relationships for all those to whom the Church is ministering.

Section 1: Philosophy of Ministry

- A. Christ is the head of the Church. He initiates and gives direction for all ministries.
- B. Every member of the Church is part of the Body of Christ. All members have been empowered by the Holy Spirit to evangelize the lost and use their spiritual gift(s) to build up the body.
- C. It is the function of the leadership of the Church to equip the members for works of service.
- D. All ministry of the Church shall be guided by the principles found in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) and the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:36-40).

Section 2: Practice of Ministry

As expressed in Ephesians 4:11-16, the TEAM approach is the Biblical approach to ministry. The Church will take the TEAM approach to ministry:

Together we can do more than we can separately.

Evangelism and discipleship are at the heart of all we do.

All members are ministers.

Ministry is best done through meaningful relationships.

ARTICLE VII: CHURCH OFFICERS

Jesus Christ alone is Head of the Church (Colossians 1:18). Christ superintends and cares for His church through His delegated representatives who fulfill the following two offices designated to accomplish the work of leading and caring for the Church (Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:1):

- A. Pastors and
- B. Deacon's

Section 1: Pastor

A. *Duties and Responsibilities:*

The Pastor shall shepherd the flock, direct the public services of worship, and supervise the general development of the Church ministry. He shall:

1. Proclaim the gospel, which includes filling the pulpit at stated worship services (or his designee);
2. Lead the Church, under the direction of the Holy Spirit to accomplish its mission;
3. Lead in the equipping of the members to do the work of the ministry;
4. Lead in the equipping of the members to be able to explain their faith and the reason they believe;
5. Supervise the work of all staff members including hiring and termination with the approval of the appropriate committee(s) and the Church membership;
6. Moderate the Church business meetings or assign a designee.

B. *Pastoral Tenure:*

The office of the Pastor shall be considered vacant upon his voluntary resignation or upon his being disfellowshipped as per Articles of Fellowship, Article X.

Section 2: Call of a Pastor

A pastor shall be chosen and called by the Church whenever vacancy occurs. The election of the Pastor shall take place at a special business meeting of the Church called for that purpose.

Section 3: Pastor Search Committee

When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a Pastor Search Committee shall be formed at a regularly scheduled or specially called business meeting for which at least a one-week notice has been given. By secret paper ballot each member present and voting shall submit the names of five (5) members of the Church to serve on the Pastor Search Committee. When the votes are tallied the five members receiving the highest numbers of votes shall serve as the Committee with the two members receiving the next highest numbers of votes serving as alternates to the Committee. Prospective Pastor Search Committee members must indicate a willingness to serve. The committee will elect its one chairman.

The first item of business of the Pastor Search Committee is to recommend a candidate who meets the qualifications found in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, as Interim Pastor. The election of the Interim Pastor shall be by a vote of three-fourths ($3/4$) majority of the church members present and voting at any regularly scheduled or specially called business meeting. The Interim Pastor shall serve at the pleasure of the Church or until a Pastor is called. Until an Interim Pastor is chosen, the Pastor Search Committee will be responsible for pulpit supply and recommendation of an interim moderator.

The Pastor Search Committee shall recommend to the congregation one man meeting the qualifications of I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, whom they have agreed upon unanimously, led of the Lord, to have the Church consider as Pastor. If he is not elected by the Church, they shall recommend another.

The election and call of the Pastor shall be by a vote of three-fourths ($3/4$) majority of the Church members present and voting. The Pastor, thus elected, shall serve until this relationship is terminated.

Section 4: Church Staff

Ministerial Staff:

The Church shall call or employ such ministerial staff members as the Church shall need or the Pastor deems necessary. A job description shall be written and approved by the Church when the need for a staff member is determined. Approval will be needed from the appropriate committee(s) and by two-thirds ($2/3$) majority of the Church members present and voting at a regular or specially called business meeting before a ministerial staff member will be hired.

Support Staff:

The Church shall employ such support staff members as the Church shall need or as the Pastor shall deem necessary. The hiring of a support staff member will require the approvals of the appropriate Church committee(s). Unless a job description for the support staff position has already been approved, then the job description for the support staff position to be filled must be approved by the appropriate committee(s) and ($2/3$) two-thirds of the Church members present and voting at a regular or specially called business meeting.

Section 5: Pastor's Fellowship

The Pastor's Fellowship shall consist of the Pastor and no more than seven men, all of whom display Christian maturity, a call to and gifts in ministry, meet the qualifications of I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, are ordained ministers, and are voting members of the Church.

The men comprising the Pastor's Fellowship shall be recommended by the Pastor and selected by the Church by three-fourths ($3/4$) majority vote of the Church members present and voting in a regularly scheduled or specially called business meeting. They shall serve the Church, and assist the Pastor in matters of spiritual oversight and ministry leadership as more specifically defined in the Church Handbook of Policies and Guidelines.

Terms of service shall be as stated in the Church Handbook of Policies and Guidelines.

Section 6: Deacon's Fellowship

The Deacons' Fellowship shall consist of no more than seven men all of whom display Christian maturity, ongoing service within the Church, meet the qualifications of Acts 6:3-5 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13, have been ordained to the office of deacon, and are voting members of the Church. The men comprising the Deacons' Fellowship shall be recommended by the Pastor and selected by the Church by three-fourths ($3/4$) majority vote of the Church members present and voting in a regularly scheduled or specially called business meeting. They shall serve the Church and assist

the Pastor by providing service oversight and ministry leadership as more specifically defined in the Church Handbook of Policies and Guidelines.

Terms of service shall be as stated in the Church Handbook of Policies and Guidelines.

Section 7: Other Church Officers

The Church may elect in addition to scriptural officers any other Church officers which might be required or helpful in fulfilling the mission of the Church. The Church officers may include, but are not limited to: clerk, moderator, treasurer and trustees. The Church shall have three (3) trustees who are duly authorized to conduct the legal affairs of the Church, in keeping with the wishes of the Church, as only expressed by majority vote of the Church members present and voting in a regularly scheduled or specially called business meeting.

Section 8: Support of the Church Leaders

It is the duty of every Church member to respect the God-appointed and Church elected leadership. Each member is to:

- A. Pray for them (I Timothy 2:1; II Thessalonians 3:1, 2; Hebrews 13:18);
- B. Obey them in the Lord (Hebrews 13:17);
- C. Follow their lead in the Lord (Hebrews 13:7, 17);
- D. Follow their example in the Lord (I Corinthians 11:1);
- E. Support them (Hebrews 13:7); and
- F. Encourage them (Hebrews 3:13; 10:24).

ARTICLE VIII: LICENSING AND ORDAINING

Section 1: Licensing to Ministry

Any person who gives evidence of God's call to the work of the ministry and who meets scriptural qualifications may, by approval of a majority of the members present and voting at a regularly scheduled or specially called business meeting, be licensed by the Church to the ministry.

Section 2: Ordaining to Ministry or Service

When the Church or a church of like faith and order requests the Church to ordain a person for a pastoral role or to ordain a person to ministry or service who meets the qualifications of I Timothy 3:13, Titus 1:6-9 and Acts 2:3-5, the Pastor shall convene an ordaining council to examine the candidate's life, doctrine, and call according to the Articles of Faith adopted by this Church. Upon recommendation of the Ordaining Council the ordination will be scheduled.

At a specially called business meeting, the Ordaining Council shall recommend ordination to the Church. The Church may authorize the ordination by approval of a majority of the Church members present and voting. All members of the Ordaining Council and the Pastor shall sign the ordination certificate. The ordination of the Church is valid for the lifetime of the minister or deacon, but the Church reserves the right to withdraw the ordination should the life or doctrine of the minister or deacon cease to bear those qualities required of such ordination.

ARTICLE IX: ORDINANCES

Section 1: Baptism

The Church shall receive for baptism any person who has believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord. Scriptural Baptism shall be by total immersion in water (See Articles of Faith, Article VII) and shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the Church. The Pastor, or whoever the Church shall authorize, shall administer baptism. The Ordinance Committee shall assist in the preparation and observance of baptism.

Section 2: The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper shall be administered at least once a quarter as scheduled by the Pastor in either the morning or evening worship services and shall be observed as an act of worship and commitment (See Articles of Faith, Article VIII). The Pastor and Pastor's Fellowship or Deacons' Fellowship shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper. The Ordinance Committee shall be responsible for the physical preparations.

ARTICLE X: CHURCH DISPUTES AND DISCIPLINE

Discipline is necessary because of conduct or doctrine contrary to Biblical standards. Immediate steps must be taken to secure forgiveness and reconciliation. These steps are to be initiated by the offended or offending parties. No offenses shall be brought before the Church until the instructions of Scripture have been followed (*Matthew* 5:23, 24; 18:15-22; *I Corinthians* 5, 6; *II Corinthians* 2:5-11; *Galatians* 6:1, 2; *Ephesians* 4:1-16; *II Thessalonians* 3:11-15; *Titus* 3:10). Church discipline always aims for the glory of God, the welfare and purity of the local church, and the restoration and spiritual growth of the parties involved.

Section 1: Reconciliation and Forgiveness

Initially, the reported offending party must be confronted with the offense in question. Reconciliation and forgiveness is the full intent and goal of the initial meeting. If reconciliation and forgiveness is achieved, all will rejoice. In the event that reconciliation and forgiveness are not realized, the following steps are to be taken.

Section 2: Admonition and Warning

The Pastor's Fellowship is to be informed. The Pastor and/or his designees shall comprise a group of two or three witnesses who shall confront the offending party regarding his/her reported unrepentance. If reconciliation is achieved, all will rejoice. If the party in question continues the unrepentant attitude, this group shall issue admonition and warning of steps to be taken if repentance is not realized.

Section 3: Church Action

If the offending party remains unrepentant the matter is to be presented to the Church for action at a regularly scheduled or specially called business meeting. A prepared statement will be read regarding the matter and any desiring to speak, including the offending party, may do so. After hearing all pertinent facts and discussion, the congregation has the right and responsibility to vote on the revoking of the membership of the party(ies) in question. This action requires a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) majority of the Church members present and voting.

If the offending party appears at this meeting to be repentant of reported misconduct or false belief, the Church has the full right and responsibility to affirm that person prior to the revoking of the membership.

Section 4: Restoration

The Church must restore to fellowship in full forgiveness those persons who show satisfactory evidence of repentance (II Corinthians 2:6-8). The object of the discipline being accomplished, repentant persons shall be restored to full membership at a regularly scheduled or specially called business meeting upon recommendation of the Pastor and two-thirds (^{2/3}) majority of the Church members present and voting.

ARTICLE XI: CHURCH PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS

The Church shall endeavor to maintain programs of Bible teaching; church member training; church leader training; new member orientation; mission education, action, and support; pastoral care; under-shepherding; evangelism; discipleship; and music education, training and performance.

Other organizations and ministries may be added to the Church program as needed. The Church reserves the right, for example, at any point in the future, to operate and maintain a Christian elementary and/or secondary school and day-care program.

All organizations related to the Church programs shall be under the Church staff supervision, with all officers being selected by the Church staff and approved by the Church by majority vote of the Church members present and voting in a regularly scheduled or specially called business meeting, and reports given as often as needed.

ARTICLE XII: CHURCH COMMITTEES

Many of the operations and ministries of the Church shall be administered by standing and, if needed, special committees. Church members can request a nomination to a specific committee, which is subject to the approval of the Committee on Committees. Church members will not be nominated to a committee without their prior consent. All recommendations for committee appointments shall be confirmed or rejected by a majority vote of the Church members present and voting at a Church business meeting.

A majority vote of members serving on any committee shall be necessary for a recommendation to be brought from that committee. The responsibilities and authority of any Church committee shall not be abridged except by majority vote of Church members present and voting at a regularly scheduled or specially called business meeting.

The Pastor and/or his designee will be ex-officio on any and all appropriate committees.

Terms of service of all members of church committees shall be as stated in the Church Handbook of Policies and Guidelines.

ARTICLE XIII: CHURCH FINANCES

Section 1: Budget

The Church shall operate its financial matters in accordance with a budget to be adopted annually. All expending of the Church monies, except designated gifts, shall be made in accordance with allowances set forth in such budget. Designated gifts shall be used only for the purpose stated by the giver.

In preparing a budget for the upcoming year, the Stewardship/Finance Committee may obtain from all committees, groups, organizations, and the Church staff projected and prioritized expenses for the upcoming church year.

The Stewardship/Finance Committee shall present the proposed budget to the Church for consideration at least one week prior to the meeting in which the budget is to be approved. The budget must be approved or amended by a majority of the Church members present and voting.

Section 2: Accounting

The Stewardship/Finance Committee shall provide for a system of accounting that will adequately account for all funds. The Stewardship/Finance Committee shall render to the Church on at least a quarterly basis an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. At the end of the Church fiscal year, the Stewardship/Finance Committee shall prepare an annual report of the financial condition of the Church including any and all indebtedness. Audits are not a requirement, but the Church may request by a majority vote of the Church members present and voting in a regularly scheduled or specially called business meeting that the financial records be audited.

The Church fiscal year shall run from January 1 through December 31 of each year.

ARTICLE XIV: CHURCH MEETINGS

Section 1: Worship Services

The Church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning, Sunday evening and Wednesday evening for the worship of Almighty God. These services will be open for the entire membership of the Church and for all people and shall be conducted under the direction of the Pastor, Church staff, or their designee.

Section 2: Revival Services

Revival services and any other Church meeting essential to the fulfilling of the Mission Statement shall be held as needed and as determined by the Pastor and Church staff in cooperation with the appropriate committee.

Section 3: Regular Business Meeting

The Church shall hold business meetings monthly for the purpose of conducting any and all Church business including Pastor's and Deacons' Fellowship reports, committee reports, and all other business essential to good congregational communication. The moderator shall be the Pastor or his appointed designee. One-week notice must be given in such a manner that all resident members have opportunity to know of the meeting. Announcement and listing of the business meeting in the Sunday worship bulletin shall fulfill the criteria of notifying resident members.

Section 4: Special Business Meetings

Notice of all specially called business meetings of the Church shall be given by announcement at least one week prior to the meeting unless circumstances render such notice impractical. The notice shall include the subject, the date, the time, and the place of such meeting. Notice must be given in such a manner that all resident members have opportunity to know of the meeting. Announcement and listing of the business meeting in the Sunday worship bulletin shall fulfill the criteria of notifying resident members.

Section 5: Quorum

The Quorum consists of those members who attend the business meeting, provided it is a regularly scheduled meeting or one that has been properly called.

Section 6: Parliamentary Procedure

Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed by the Moderator for procedure in all business meetings, committee meetings, and organization meetings of the Church. At the Moderator's discretion, a Parliamentarian may be appointed by the moderator to assist and advise the moderator in any business meeting.

Section 7: Minutes

Minutes of all regularly scheduled and specially called business meetings shall be taken by a person designated by the Moderator of any such meeting. Prior to any regularly scheduled business meeting, the minutes of the preceding regularly scheduled business meeting shall be made available for review by any voting member.

ARTICLE XV: AMENDMENTS/INTERPRETATION

Section 1: Amendments

Amendments to the Articles of Faith and/or Fellowship may be adopted by at least a three-fourths (3/4) majority of the Church members present and voting at a regularly scheduled or specially called business meeting. Before an amendment can be considered for a vote, it must be distributed to all Church members at least two weeks prior to the business meeting in which the vote will be taken. The time and date of the vote must accompany the distribution of the proposed amendment.

Section 2: Interpretation

The Pastor's Fellowship, including the Pastor, shall be responsible for interpreting the meaning of the Articles of Faith and/or Fellowship. If any member is dissatisfied with the interpretation of the Pastor's Fellowship, that member may appeal to the Church membership at a regularly scheduled or specially called business meeting. Any interpretation decision reached by a majority of the Church members present and voting at such business meeting shall be binding.

Amendments to Articles of Fellowship

ARTICLE VII: CHURCH OFFICERS

Previous to October 22, 2000

Section 4: Church Staff

The Church shall call or employ such staff members as the Church shall need or the Pastor deems necessary. A job description shall be written and approved by the Church when the need for a staff member is determined. Approval will be needed from the appropriate committee(s) and by two-thirds (^{2/3}) majority of the Church members present and voting at a regular or specially called business meeting before a staff member will be hired.

When the need arises, the Church may employ various support staff personnel to help meet the daily and ongoing needs of the work of the Church. These employee(s) shall be supervised by the Pastor and/or his designee.

New Reading from October 22, 2000 forward

Section 4: Church Staff

Ministerial Staff:

The Church shall call or employ such ministerial staff members as the Church shall need or the Pastor deems necessary. A job description shall be written and approved by the Church when the need for a staff member is determined. Approval will be needed from the appropriate committee(s) and by two-thirds (^{2/3}) majority of the Church members present and voting at a regular or specially called business meeting before a ministerial staff member will be hired.

Support Staff:

The Church shall employ such support staff members as the Church shall need or as the Pastor shall deem necessary. The hiring of a support staff member will require the approvals of the appropriate Church committee(s). Unless a job description for the support staff position has already been approved, then the job description for the support staff position to be filled must be approved by the appropriate committee(s) and two-thirds of the Church members present and voting at a regular or specially called business meeting.

ARTICLE XIV: CHURCH MEETINGS

Previous to October 22, 2000

Section 3: Regular Business Meeting

The Church shall hold business meetings monthly for the purpose of conducting any and all Church business including Pastor's and Deacons' Fellowship reports, committee reports, and all other business essential to good congregational communication. The moderator shall be the Pastor, or in his absence, his appointed designee. One-week notice must be given in such a manner that all resident members have opportunity to know of the meeting. Announcement and listing of the business meeting in the Sunday worship bulletin shall fulfill the criteria of notifying resident members.

New reading from October 22, 2000

Section 3: Regular Business Meeting

The Church shall hold business meetings monthly for the purpose of conducting any and all Church business including Pastor's and Deacons' Fellowship reports, committee reports, and all other business essential to good congregational communication. The moderator shall be the Pastor or his appointed designee. One-week notice must be given in such a manner that all resident members have opportunity to know of the meeting. Announcement and listing of the business meeting in the Sunday worship bulletin shall fulfill the criteria of notifying resident members.