

BYLAWS

ARTICLE A – CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership Qualifications

Membership within Redeemer Fellowship (hereinafter “this church”) is based upon an accurate understanding and personal trust in Jesus Christ and His completed work for salvation—the essence of biblical faith. This faith is initially expressed in public baptism. Individuals will be received into the membership of this church after: completing the steps of the membership process as defined in the policies set forth by the elders and affirmation through a majority vote of current members present at any called member meeting of this church as outlined in Article E, Section 2 of the bylaws.

Section 2. Membership Responsibilities

Membership within a local church carries both privileges and responsibilities. Members of this church are accountable to each other. Through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit, members should desire to stir one another up:

1. to joyfully submit to the authority of the Scriptures as the final arbiter on all issues (Psalm 119; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21).
2. to faithfully attend corporate worship, regular meetings, and various opportunities offered by the church for spiritual growth, fellowship, and relationship building (Hebrews 10:23-25).
3. to personally cultivate the practice of spiritual disciplines (Luke 18:1; Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Ephesians 5:1-21; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22).
4. to obediently participate in the ordinances of baptism and communion (Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 22:19-20).
5. to generously steward the resources God has given each member through sacrificial, cheerful, and voluntary financial giving, service, and participation in community (Matthew 25:14-30; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 1 Peter 4:10-11).
6. to thoughtfully walk in holiness in all areas of life and by God’s grace, striving to put certain attitudes and actions to death while stimulating love and good deeds through the Spirit (1 Peter 1:13-16, 4:1-3).
7. to abstain from all sexual immorality, whether single or married. If married, to demonstrate complete fidelity within heterosexual and monogamous marriage. Sexual purity involves: fleeing and abstaining from adultery, homosexuality, fornication, and pornography (Romans 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 6:15-20, 10:8; Ephesians 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).
8. to intentionally preserve the gift of marriage and agree to walk through the steps of marriage reconciliation within this church before pursuing separation or divorce from his or her spouse (Matthew 19:1-12; Mark 10:1-12; Luke 16:18; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11).

9. to humbly submit to the biblical procedures for church discipline where unrepentant sin is evident in another, the hope of such discipline being repentance and restoration (Matthew 18:15-18; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; Hebrews 12:5-6).
10. to respectfully obey the elders and other appointed leaders of this church, diligently striving for unity and peace within this church (Ephesians 4:1-3; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:5).

Section 3. Membership Rights

Every member should expect spiritual care by the elders, other appointed spiritual leaders of the church, and from the other members of the church.

All members eighteen (18) years of age and over shall be eligible to vote on all church matters requiring a vote and should exercise this right by participating in its member and business meetings. Members of this church have no property rights and shall be entitled to no personal claim to its assets.

Section 4. Membership Classification

Any individuals who have been received into this church through normal action, as specified under Article A of these bylaws, is considered a member without classification. Because of the nature and meaning of church membership, this church will not maintain an inactive membership list and no one will be permitted to retain member status outside of the guidelines in Article A, Section 5 of these bylaws.

1. **Associate Members:** are students or other persons living temporarily in the area who desire the spiritual fellowship and care of a local church without terminating membership in their home church. Associate Members are expected to fulfill the responsibilities in Article A, Section 2 of these bylaws, but are not eligible to vote, hold office, and have no property rights or any personal claim to the church's assets.
2. **Homebound Members:** are individuals who may live within an area where they would be able to attend, but are unable due to physical limitations. Homebound members are expected to fulfill as many of the responsibilities in Article A, Section 2 of these bylaws as physically possible, but are not eligible to vote by proxy, hold office, and have no property rights or any personal claim to the church's assets.

Section 5. Termination of Membership

Termination of membership shall be on the unanimous vote of the elders. A membership list shall be maintained and reviewed regularly.

Members can be removed through:

1. voluntary resignation of membership by one in good standing,
2. death, or
3. action taken by the elders as a result of the disciplinary process. Requests by members to remove their membership while subject to the formal disciplinary process, will not be accepted.

1 **Section 6.** Church Discipline

2 Church discipline is the process of correcting sin in the life of the congregation and its
3 members. Church discipline is not punishment. Punishment is retribution towards someone
4 for doing something wrong. As followers of Christ, this church is responsible to carry-out
5 discipline out of love for any member consistently living with unrepentant sinful attitudes and
6 behaviors that are not in obedience to Christ and his Word (John 15:1-11). The purpose of
7 discipline is to encourage the individual to bear fruits in keeping with repentance so that
8 their joy may be full and prove to be followers of Jesus Christ. Any action set forth in
9 policies and procedures is taken to work towards this purpose and not for retribution, but for
10 restoration.

11 **Section 7.** Member Restoration

12 Restoration to the fellowship of the church occurs when there are signs of true repentance.
13 What true repentance looks like depends on the nature of the sin. Sometimes, repentance
14 is a black and white matter, as with a man who has abandoned his wife. For him, repenting
15 means returning to her, plain and simple. Yet sometimes, repentance does not mean
16 conquering a sin completely so much as demonstrating a new diligence in waging war
17 against the sin, as with a person caught in a cycle of addiction.

18 **Section 8.** Church Disruptions

19 Any person deemed by a member of the staff or elders to pose a physical or psychological
20 threat to any person or to the church, or to be causing, about to cause, or capable of
21 causing disruption to the religious services and activities of the church, shall be considered
22 a trespasser on church property, and may be ejected summarily. No church employee or
23 elder shall incur any liability for acting in good faith in the interests of the church pursuant to
24 this section.

1 **ARTICLE B – CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

2 **Section 1. Overview**

3 Jesus Christ is the Head of the church. Under His headship, the church is elder-led. This
4 elder leadership is congregationally-affirmed. Those who have been congregationally
5 affirmed as elders of this church, under the authority of God’s Word and Holy Spirit, have
6 been granted the privilege and responsibility of spiritual oversight, and are accountable to
7 this church’s members for the careful exercise of these responsibilities. The goal of church
8 government is to provide a context out of which Christian ministry, by the people of God,
9 best flourishes.

10 **Section 2. Organization**

11 1. Elder-led

12 Those who function within the office of elder are biblically qualified males. The elders
13 have the privilege and responsibility of leading the congregation in seeking to discern
14 the mind of Christ for all the decisions of the church and shepherding the church
15 members in those decisions.

16 2. Congregationally-affirmed

17 The final earthly authority rests with the church members as it corporately seeks God’s
18 will. The church members affirm the leadership of the elders and contribute to seeking
19 the mind of Christ as it is revealed in the Scriptures.

1 **ARTICLE C – ELDERS**

2 **Section 1. Overview**

3 The qualifications for the office of elder are established in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
4 Specifically, an elder is chosen when he is recognized for his high spiritual character, his
5 proven household management, and his demonstrated leadership in the church. The office
6 of elder will only be filled by biblically qualified, naturally-born males who are members of
7 the church as set forth in the bylaws under Article A.

8 **Section 2. Responsibilities**

9 Include, but are not limited to:

- 10 1. Devoting themselves to prayer and the Word of God.
11 2. Governing and leading the church.
12 3. Teaching the Word of God both publicly and privately.
13 4. Protecting the church from false doctrine.
14 5. Administering the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's table.
15 6. Caring for the spiritual needs of the church both individually and corporately.
16 7. Examining prospective members, ensuring that they understand and believe the
17 gospel.
18 8. Overseeing the process of church discipline and restoration.
19 9. Overseeing the work of the deacons and other ministry leaders.
20 10. Examining, training, and mentoring potential elders.
21 11. Scheduling member and business meetings, providing a moderator for them, and
22 ensuring that the reporting and recording of official church business is performed.
23 12. Establishing and evaluating policies, procedures, and practices for the church, making
24 adjustments as necessary.
25 13. Evaluating the church ministries, making adjustments as necessary.

26 **Section 3. Organization & Affirmation**

27 The elders shall organize themselves however they determine to be best in order to achieve
28 the mission of the church. The elders are equal in authority but may be specialized in
29 function in order to carry-out proper oversight.

30 The elders shall consist of members serving three-year terms. After serving three-years, an
31 evaluation will be completed by the other elders. In light of that evaluation, a period of
32 purposeful rest should be granted, which length shall be determined by the elders on a
33 case-by-case basis. When the period of purposeful rest is complete, the individual elder
34 may be reaffirmed by the congregation to serve another three-years following the
35 procedures set forth in these bylaws.

36 Nominees for the office of elder will be evaluated by the existing elders to determine that

1 biblical qualifications are met. The elders must unanimously agree upon a nominee before
2 recommending him to the congregation. Recommendations may be submitted by church
3 members to the elders for their consideration.

4 The affirmation of elders may be held at any members' meeting of the church. Nominees for
5 the office of elder should be made known at least four weeks prior to any called member's
6 meeting. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified,
7 should express this concern to the elders within 21 days after official nomination.

8 **Section 4. Resignation, Dismissal, & Vacancies**

9 An elder's term of office may be terminated by written resignation with a (30) day notice
10 submitted to the elders unless other arrangements can be made by mutual agreement of
11 both parties, or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should
12 be dismissed should express that concern to the elders and, if need be, to the congregation.
13 Any such action will be done following the instructions of Jesus in Matthew 18:15–17 and I
14 Timothy 5:17–21. After a thorough corroborating investigation by the elders, (or appointed
15 committee by them) any elder may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members
16 present at any members' meeting of the church.

17 When an elder is dismissed because of sin that is deemed sufficient to disqualify him from
18 shepherding, and if he refuses to repent from that sin, his dismissal will be accompanied by
19 a public rebuke (1 Timothy 5:20).

20 A vacancy in the eldership because of death, resignation, dismissal, or any other cause, will
21 be filled only in the manners prescribed in these bylaws. Such vacancies may be filled as
22 they occur.

23 The eldership, along with the congregation, will first seek to prayerfully disciple and exam
24 aspiring and gifted men within the membership. At any time, the eldership, partnering with
25 the members of this church can recognize those candidates. Should the necessity arise to
26 look outside of the current eldership or body of this church to fill such a need, we will seek
27 the guidance of other like-minded churches or parachurch organizations to find qualified
28 and gifted candidates. The elders will recommend to the congregation the remuneration of
29 elders as needed.

30 **Section 5. Accountability**

31 Collectively, the elders are accountable to the church members. Individually, they are
32 accountable to one another.

33 **Section 6. Meetings & Voting**

34 The elders should meet as often as deemed necessary to carry-out proper oversight. In
35 addition, they should also meet for dedicated times of prayer and learning.

36 In voting, when unanimity is not required, the elders should still prayerfully seek it, but may
37 make decisions based on consensus. Once a decision is made, each elder should positively
38 affirm and submit to the decision that has been reached, being an example to the flock in
39 protecting unity and speaking well of the other elders.

40 If unanimously agreed upon in advance, some voting issues may be done through e-mail or
41 in absentia, so long as it is documented in the official minutes.

1 **Section 7.** Compensation, Rest and Sabbaticals, Professional Development, and Reviews

2 There is no qualitative or functional difference between elders who are remunerated
3 (vocational) and those who are not. Both are equally recognized to serve the church body in
4 the manner set-forth by Scripture. Elders are remunerated (fully or partially) according to the
5 scope of responsibilities determined and agreed upon within the eldership.

6 **7.1** Compensation

7 The compensation of any elder will be based on qualification, experience, job
8 performance, longevity, and determined by the elders. Professional ministry
9 resources for determining fair compensation including salary and benefits, should be
10 consulted.

11 **7.2** Rest and Sabbaticals

12 Vacation, days off, personal time, sick leave, sabbaticals, study breaks, or a leave of
13 absence will be determined by the elders after discussing those needs with him and
14 granted accordingly.

15 A fully or partially compensated elder who has served two consecutive three-year
16 periods, will receive a reasonable time away from his daily responsibilities which
17 may be for a period of up to one year. It is intended that this sabbatical serve as a
18 purposeful rest during which time, he may receive respite and recuperation.
19 Activities may include, but are not limited to: furthering his education, writing, or
20 being involved with a special ministry or missions project.

21 Following an adequate sabbatical break, the elders will assess the elder and may
22 reinstate him to his former work. The reinstatement will begin a three-year term.

23 The terms of remuneration during a sabbatical will be considered by the elders and
24 presented to the congregation for approval at a regularly called meeting. Pulpit
25 supply will be determined by the elders during that sabbatical year.

26 **7.3** Professional Development

27 A fully or partially compensated elder is encouraged to further his education and
28 improve his overall skills and leadership. Such opportunities may not count against
29 Section 7.2. Opportunities may include, but are not limited to: advanced degrees,
30 conferences, workshops, et.al. Expenses may be covered under the general budget
31 or a designated account.

32 **7.4** Performance Reviews

33 Annually, the elders, or the person whom they may appoint, will review all
34 compensated elders.

35 **Section 8.** Weddings

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Elders may perform weddings for church members only. Exceptions are limited to their extended family or personal friends and may be done with approval by the other elders.

1 **ARTICLE D – DEACONS**

2 **Section 1. Overview**

3 The qualifications for the office of Deacon/Deaconess are established in 1Timothy 3:8-13.
4 Specifically, a Deacon/Deaconess is chosen when he or she is recognized for their high
5 spiritual character, proven service, and demonstration of walking in the Spirit and wisdom.
6 The office of Deacon/Deaconess will only be filled by those who are: biblically qualified,
7 either naturally-born males or naturally-born females, and members of the church as set
8 forth in the bylaws under Article A.

9 **Section 2. Responsibilities**

10 The duties of the Diaconate are specifically appointed to free the elders to pursue the
11 ministry of the Word of God and prayer. The nature of their function is serving rather than
12 authority. Responsibilities may include, but are not limited to:

- 13 1. Ministering to widows and problem solving
- 14 2. Organizing and administering various ways for serving
- 15 3. Maintaining church-owned facilities and property
- 16 4. Distributing benevolence to those in need from an established benevolence fund
- 17 5. Managing the church budget and finances

18 **Section 3. Organization & Affirmation**

19 The Diaconate shall organize itself however it determines to be best in order to achieve the
20 mission of the church under the oversight of the elders. Members of the Diaconate are
21 equal in their position but may be specialized in function in order to carry-out proper service.

22 The Diaconate shall consist of members serving three-year terms. After serving three-years,
23 an evaluation shall be conducted by the elders. In light of that evaluation, a period of
24 purposeful rest should be granted, which length shall be determined by the elders on a
25 case-by-case basis. When the period of purposeful rest is complete, the individual
26 Deacon/Deaconess may be reaffirmed by the congregation to serve another three-years
27 following the procedures set forth in these bylaws.

28 Nominees for the Diaconate will be evaluated by the current elders to determine that biblical
29 qualifications are met. Recommendations may be submitted by church members to the
30 elders for their consideration.

31 The affirmation of Deacons/Deaconesses may be held at any members' meeting of the
32 church. Nominees for the office of Deacon/Deaconess should be made known at least four
33 weeks prior to any called member's meeting. Any member with reason to believe that a
34 nominated candidate is unqualified, should express this concern to the elders within 21
35 days after official nomination.

36 **Section 4. Resignation & Dismissal**

1 A Deacon's/Deaconess' term of office may be terminated by written resignation with a (30)
2 day notice submitted to the elders unless other arrangements can be made by mutual
3 agreement of both parties, or by dismissal. After a thorough corroborating investigation by
4 the current elders, (or appointed committee by them) any Deacon/Deaconess may be
5 dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any members' meeting of the
6 church.

7 A vacancy in the Diaconate because of death, resignation, dismissal or any other cause, will
8 be filled only in the manners prescribed in these bylaws. Such vacancies may be filled as
9 they occur.

10 **Section 5.** Accountability

11 Collectively, The Diaconate is directly accountable to the elders and church members.
12 Individually, they are accountable to one another.

13 **Section 6.** Meetings & Voting

14 The Diaconate should meet as often as deemed necessary to carry-out and organize proper
15 service to and for the church body. In addition, they should also meet for dedicated times of
16 prayer and learning.

17 In voting, the Deacons/Deaconesses should prayerfully seek and make decisions based on
18 consensus. Once a decision is made, each Deacon/Deaconess should positively affirm and
19 submit to the decision that has been reached, being an example to the flock in protecting
20 unity and speaking well of the other Deacons/Deaconesses.

21 If unanimously agreed upon in advance, some voting issues may be done through email or
22 in absentia, so long as it is documented in the official minutes

1 **ARTICLE E – MEETINGS**

2 **Section 1. Worship**

3 Corporate worship will be scheduled for each Sunday. Other meetings will be scheduled as
4 agreed upon for purposes consistent with the overall vision, mission, and values of the
5 church.

6 **Section 2. Member Meetings**

7 1. Purpose:

8 The purpose of member meetings is to affirm prospective church members, elders,
9 deacons, financial, legal, or property issues that require or are deemed worthy of
10 congregational attention by the elders. Such affirmations shall be done through voting.

11 There will be an annual business meeting held. Other business meetings may be
12 scheduled by the elders as needed.

13 2. Notification of Meetings:

14 All member or business meetings require a two-week notification when an affirmation
15 by vote is required unless providentially inhibited.

16 3. Voting:

17 All questions shall be decided by a majority vote of the members present and voting
18 unless otherwise specified within the bylaws.

19 **Section 3. Facility Use & Property**

20 The church will use its facility and its property in a manner that meets the standards named
21 in this church’s constitution and bylaws. Furthermore, Redeemer Fellowship affirms that all
22 marriage ceremonies performed in the name of this church and any related celebrations or
23 activities allowed in its facilities, shall be for unions that meet the standards prescribed by
24 Scripture, under the direction of these bylaws and the policies and procedures as set forth
25 by the elders.

1 ARTICLE F – AMENDMENTS

2 The bylaws set forth the general administrative practices of the church. These bylaws may
3 be amended by three-fourths vote of the members present and voting at a called member or
4 business meeting as specified in the bylaws.

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