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Mission Statement

Of

My Community Church

Our mission is to glorify God by...

Sharing His Gospel (Evangelism)

We believe that faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to abundant and eternal life, and are compelled to share this message with those who do not know Him as their Lord and Savior. **As a church, we will** provide the training, encouragement, and opportunities needed for our members to share their faith with others. *II Corinthians 5:17-20*

Teaching His Word (Discipleship)

We believe the Bible is the inerrant Word of God and is valuable to every part of our lives today. **As a church, we will** teach the Bible faithfully to everyone and provide the training and opportunities necessary for each person to study and apply God's Word. *II Timothy 3:16-4:2*

Equipping His People (Ministry)

We believe that God has given every believer the responsibility and ability to serve His kingdom in the local church. **As a church, we will** help our members discover, develop, and exercise their unique gifts in meaningful and fulfilling ways. *I Corinthians 12:12-20*

Uniting His Family (Fellowship)

We believe that all believers are to live in unity, express love to one another, and serve all people. **As a church, we will** build a community of love and encouragement in which all of our members can develop dynamic and meaningful relationships with one another. *John 15:12-17*

Exalting His Name (Worship)

We believe the chief end of people is to worship God, and that life apart from Him is meaningless and unsatisfying. **As a church, we will** lead our members to worship God in spirit and truth both in church and in their daily lives. *Psalms 96*

Expanding His Kingdom (Missions)

We believe our task as followers of Jesus Christ reaches far beyond the walls of our building. **As a church, we will** help other believers build God's kingdom through mission work and mission support. *Matthew 28:19-20*



CHURCH COVENANT

My Community Church

Having given ourselves to God, by faith in Jesus Christ, we adopt the Word of God as our rule of faith and practice. We now give ourselves to one another by the will of God in this solemn covenant.

1. We promise by the grace of God to love and obey Him in all things.
2. We promise to avoid the appearance of evil, to abstain from sinful amusements and unholy conformity to the world.
3. We will neither sell nor use intoxicating beverages.
4. We will provide things honest in the sight of all men.
5. We will faithfully study the scriptures, have secret prayer, family devotions, and social worship.
6. By self-denial, faith and good works, we will endeavor to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
7. We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together for church services, public worship, and the observance of the ordinances of the Gospel.
8. We will pay according to our ability for the support of the church, of its poor, and all its benevolent work.
9. We agree to accept Christian admonition and reproof with meekness, and to watch over one another in love, endeavoring to “keep the unity of the Spirit” in the bonds of peace, to be careful of one another’s happiness and reputation.
10. We will seek to strengthen the weak, encourage the afflicted, admonish the erring, and as far as we are able, promote the success of the church and the Gospel.
11. We will everywhere hold Christian principles sacred and Christian obligations and enterprises supreme; counting it our chief business in life to extend the influence of Christ in society; constantly praying and toiling that the Kingdom of God may come, and His will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

12. We agree to labor for the promotion of Christian enterprises, the support of Missions, the success of Sunday School, and evangelistic efforts for the salvation of the world.

May the God of peace sanctify us wholly, and preserve us blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.



CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

My Community Church

(Approved by congregational vote – January 11, 2009)

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

The New Testament teaches that the local church is the visible, organized expression of the body of Christ. The people of God are to live and serve in obedience to the Word of God and under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. By the grace of God, our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ, and our faith in Him, we, the members of My Community Church, being completely dependent on the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit and the written word of God, in order to establish rules and procedures with which to administer this church, do ordain and establish the following Constitution and By-laws to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name under which this church is organized is:
My Community Church, Inc.

ARTICLE II – AFFILIATION

My Community Church is not affiliated with any denomination.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

Qualifications for membership shall consist of:

1. Confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior
2. Agreement with the Church Covenant, Statement of Faith, and Mission Statement of My Community Church, in their entirety.

3. A meeting with the Membership Committee, during which the Faith and Mission statements, Church Covenant, Water Baptism, and the Lord's Supper will be explained and questions will be welcomed.
4. Recommendation by the Membership Committee and approval by the membership.
5. Water Baptism. If a person who wishes to join My Community Church has previously been baptized and documentation is not available, My Community Church will, upon the statement by the person seeking membership that they have been baptized by immersion, accept his or her baptism upon consideration of the Elders. To those who have not been baptized, or desire baptism, it will be administered prior to or during the time the person joins My Community Church.

ARTICLE IV – SACREMENTS

Water Baptism and the Lord's Supper are recognized as the two sacraments of My Community Church.

- a. **Water Baptism** will be administered by My Community Church after a profession of faith in Jesus Christ.
- b. The **Lord's Supper** shall be held twice a year. Once as determined by the membership and once as determined by the Pastor. **Foot Washings** shall be held at each offering of the Lord's Supper whenever possible.

ARTICLE V – GOVERNMENT

There shall be an Annual Business Meeting of My Community Church, held at a time specified in the By-laws at which time Committee reports, including audited reports of the treasurer(s) will be made available. The elected officers and committees will begin their service after the Annual Business Meeting and serve until the next Annual Business Meeting. The Board of Elders, as defined in the By-laws of My Community Church, will conduct the affairs of My Community Church between meetings. Additional meetings may be called with proper notice as specified in the By-laws. On general matters in which no legal questions are involved, it is understood that all members in good and regular standing shall be entitled to vote, but

in matters involving titles of property or legal procedures, the laws of the state that determine the age at which members are eligible to vote shall be adhered to.

ARTICLE VI – MISSIONS

My Community Church, upon approval of the general membership, can support missions. In a case of an emergency, the Board of Elders can decide the disbursement of mission funds.

ARTICLE VII – SERVICES

My Community church shall meet Sundays for worship of God and study of His word, and at other times as designated.

ARTICLE VIII – FINANCIAL POLICY

My Community Church shall be supported by tithes and free-will offerings. Fund-raising projects are permissible, except on Sunday, but must be approved by the Board of Elders.

ARTICLE IX – BUDGET

A detailed annual budget shall be prepared by the Finance Committee and approved by the membership. The Finance Committee shall be authorized to spend up to \$250.00 on community outreach and up to \$500 on operational expenses per occurrence without prior approval of the Board of Elders or the general membership.

ARTICLE X – ORDINATION

A man seeking ordination as Minister or Deacon first seeks counsel from the pastor and a letter or recommendation from him to the church. The church arranges for the candidate to fill out an application for additional credentials. The church will then convene an Ordaining Council to consider the request.

- 1. Ministers:** Upon the approval of the Ordaining Council, he is granted initial credentials (License). He must maintain an acceptable ministry at the licensed level for a minimum of two (2) years and is recommended to be at least twenty-three (23) years of age before being invited to request ordination. This is to ensure his maturity personally and professionally (“not a novice,” I Timothy 3:6). Upon his presentation of an application for ordination, he is examined again by an Ordaining Council. Upon their approval, he is ordained in a special Ordination Service.

The Ordaining Council, by written examination and oral interview shall examine the candidate upon the following points:

- The genuineness of his Christian experience
- The reality of his divine call to the ministry
- The sufficiency of his spiritual, moral, emotional, and social maturity
- The sufficiency and correctness of his understanding of Bible content and doctrine
- The adequacy of his preparation and practical abilities
- The acceptability of his knowledge of, and allegiance to, the church’s policies, covenant, and programs

Upon the approval of the council, a special service will be scheduled to present to the minister his new Ordination Certificate. Ministers from the local church as well as ministers from other churches may be invited to attend and take part in the ceremony.

Previously ordained ministers who wish to be issued a new ordination certificate will make that wish known to the local church and the church will consider the request at the next regular business meeting, or at a business meeting called for that purpose. Upon the approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the members present, a special service will be scheduled to present to the minister his new Ordination Certificate. Ministers from the local church as well as ministers from other churches may be invited to attend and take part in the ceremony.

2. **Deacons:** Upon approval of the Ordaining Council, he is granted a Deacon Certificate. He must maintain an acceptable ministry, is recommended to be at least twenty-three (23) years of age. This is to ensure his maturity personally and professionally (I Timothy 3:6-13). Upon his presentation of an application for ordination, he is examined by an Ordaining Council. Upon their approval, he is ordained in a special Ordination Service.

The Ordaining Council, by written examination and oral interview, shall examine the candidate upon the following points:

- The genuineness of his Christian experience
- The sufficiency of his spiritual, moral, emotional, and social maturity
- The sufficiency and correctness of his understanding of Bible content and doctrine
- The adequacy of his preparation and practical abilities
- The acceptability of his knowledge of, and allegiance to, the church's policies, covenant, and programs

Upon the approval of the council, a special service will be scheduled to present to the Deacon his new Ordination Certificate. Ministers from the local church as well as ministers from other churches may be invited to attend and take part in the ceremony.

ARTICLE XI – AMENDMENTS/CHANGES

This Constitution and By-laws may be amended at a duly organized business meeting, provided a quorum of 50% of the membership is represented, proxies included. A two-thirds (2/3) vote in the affirmative is required to pass the amendment. The text of the amendment must be provided to all members, and announced for four (4) consecutive weeks prior to the vote on said amendment.

ARTICLE XII – MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

- A. All financial statements shall be kept on file and made available for review by all active members of My Community Church.
- B. My Community Church, including all of its ministries, shall accept no funds, services, or benefits of any kind whatsoever from any level of government or agency thereof unless the church pays fair market value for the same.
- C. No profit shall ever accrue to the benefit of any person(s) from the assets, holdings, or other transactions in which My Community Church, Inc. become involved.
- D. No fees, dues or assessments shall be levied against any member of My Community Church.
- E. The fiscal year of My Community Church shall be from January 1 through December 31.
- F. In addition to other matters specifically reserved to My Community Church members, no sale, lease, mortgage, or pledge of, or the creation of a security interest in, or a lien or judgment against all or part of church property, real or personal, shall be done without prior approval of My Community Church's 2/3 vote of the membership.

ARTICLE XIII – PROPERTY AND RECORDS

Section 1 - Property: My Community Church may acquire, own, dispose of, improve, encumber, and convey property, real and personal, for church purposes, in conformity with the laws of the state where the property is situated.

Section 2 – Records: The official records of all officers of My Community Church and all its departments are the property of My Community Church, Inc. In the event of the death or resignation of the incumbent or upon the election of his/her successor, the current records of the office shall be passed on to the newly elected officer. All records other than current shall be kept in a secure repository.

ARTICLE XIV – DISSOLUTION

In the event of the dissolution of My Community Church, all of its debts shall be fully satisfied. None of its assets or holdings shall be divided among the members, but shall be irrevocably dedicated by the Board of Elders to such other non-profit religious corporation(s) as are in agreement with the letter and spirit of the Statement of Faith, and in conformity with requirements of Section 401 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended.



BY-LAWS

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

A: APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

1. Applicants shall request membership from the Pastor or Membership Committee.
2. Children under eighteen (18) years of age shall request membership from the Pastor or Membership Committee and be accepted into membership of My Community Church after fulfilling the qualifications of Article III and upon written consent of a parent or guardian.
3. All applicants will be provided with a copy of, and required to read and consent to, this constitution, its by-laws, and the church covenant. Further, they must affirm their agreement with My Community Church's Statement of Faith and Mission Statement. Such consent and affirmation exists when the applicant places his/her signature on the application for membership.

B. MEMBERSHIP LIST

The membership list shall be examined each year by the Pastor and the Membership Committee prior to the congregational business meeting so that My Community Church will have an updated membership list.

C. TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP

Upon request, active members in good standing shall be granted a letter of transfer.

ARTICLE V – GOVERNMENT

A. Congregational Meetings

1. The Quarterly Business Meeting shall be held the earliest convenient time after the end of each calendar quarter. No business meeting shall be held on Sundays. Notification of the quarterly meeting shall be announced at least two weeks prior to the date of the meeting. All members will be notified of the

meeting time and place by any means available, including electronic and physical means.

2. The Annual Business Meeting shall be held approximately one month after the end of the last quarter and will be combined with the fourth quarter business meeting. An annual report will be published and made available at this meeting and will include reports from each of the following:
 - a. The Pastor
 - b. The Board of Elders
 - c. The chairperson or secretary of each of the various committees and organizations within My Community Church
 - d. A year-end financial report from the My Community Church treasurer(s)
 - e. A completed report from the auditor(s) of all financial records within My Community Church
 - f. Finance Committee's annual budget. These reports shall be processed in printed form and copies made available to the congregation upon request, prior to the start of the Annual Business Meeting. All written financial and departmental reports shall cover the calendar year.
3. All elections (Board of Elders, Deacons, Board of Trustees, Officers, Teachers and Committees) will be held the first business meeting following the end of the fourth quarter. Voting shall be by ballot and the member receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected.
4. Special Business Meetings may be called by the Board of Elders upon notification approximately one week in advance, when possible.
5. Roberts Rules of Order shall govern all matters of church business unless changed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of members present.
6. Quorum: A quorum shall consist of the membership present at any meeting, except at a meeting where the Constitution and/or By-laws are amended. (See Article XI – Amendments/Changes).

7. A proxy vote will be accepted from a member, provided that the proxy bearer presents it to the Secretary prior to the commencement of the Business Meeting. The proxy must state who the bearer is, and shall be signed and dated by the member submitting the proxy. A proxy shall be valid only for the date specified on the proxy. Proxy votes are valid only for officer elections and constitution and by-laws amendments. Proxy votes are only valid on ballots for that purpose. Proxy ballots can be requested from the Secretary in person or in writing. Proxy ballots are only permitted for those members who are physically unable to attend the scheduled business meeting and must be approved by the Board of Elders.
8. In matters of church business, all active members, male and female, shall have a voice.

B. BOARD OF TRUSTEES

1. The Board of Trustees will be elected annually by the voting members of My Community Church. The election of Trustees shall be held on the first business meeting following the end of the forth quarter. Each Trustee shall serve a two (2) year term. Three (3) Trustees will be elected on odd number years and two (2) Trustees on even number years.
2. The physical property of My Community Church, and the day-to-day operation of such property shall be managed by the Board of Trustees.
3. To be qualified to hold the office of Trustee, an individual must be at least twenty-one (21) years of age and a member of My Community Church in good standing, shall have worshipped at My Community Church on a regular basis for at least six (6) continuous months, shall support the church financially, shall agree with My Community Church's Statement of Faith, agree to abide by the by-laws and procedural rules of the church and the Board of Trustees itself.

BOARD OF ELDERS

4. The Board of Elders shall be elected by the members of My Community Church and shall include: the Pastor, Deacons, Board of Trustees, Secretary of the Church, Treasurer(s) and Sunday School Superintendent.
5. All members of the Board of Elders shall be at least twenty-one (21) years of age and a member in good standing of My community Church.
6. Duties and Authority:
 - a. Organize, establish and supervise committees which are necessary for the work of My Community Church.
 - b. Assist in preparation of an annual budget to be submitted at the Annual Business Meeting.
 - c. Determine the compensation to be paid all persons by My Community Church for services rendered (except the Pastor(s). {See Article V, Section E, 2, (c)}.

C. COMMITTEES

The following is a list of the standing committees, which may include, but are not limited to:

- Audit
- Membership Committee
- Financial Committee
- Missions/Outreach/Activities*
- Ad hoc committees may be appointed as needed by the Pastor and/or the congregation.

*Pastor shall be a member

D. PASTORATE

1. Qualifications of the Pastor:
 - a. Shall have a confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior
 - b. Shall agree with My Community Church Statement of Faith, Church Covenant, and Mission Statement in their entirety

- c. Shall have the gift of pastor/teacher for equipping the saints to do the work of the Lord
- d. Shall have a wholehearted commitment to the task of evangelism
- e. Shall express a conviction of the calling of God to be the Pastor of My Community Church
- f. Shall be committed to prayer
- g. Shall be water baptized by immersion
- h. Shall be an ordained minister

2. Call of the Church:

- a. The pastoral candidates shall be interviewed by the Board of Elders and the Pastoral Committee and thereafter be recommended to the church membership.
- b. Shall be extended the call only after such recommendation and an 80% vote of the quorum at a duly called Business Meeting.
- c. Condition of Employment: The salary of the Pastor and other compensation such as social security, insurance, housing allowance and pension shall be specified in writing and made a part of the call upon which the membership votes. Likewise, such items as authorized vacation, attendance at meetings and conferences, moving expenses and other agreed upon conditions shall be addressed in the call. The call shall be in the form of a legal agreement. Changes in the initial conditions of employment are to be enacted by vote of the membership.

3. Duties:

- a. Shall assume the spiritual leadership of all areas of church life
- b. Shall attend church business meetings except when the meeting directly involves the position of the Pastor.

- c. Shall preach the Gospel and teach the Word of God at all regularly scheduled services except when, by the Pastor's request, the Pastor's absence from the pulpit is approved by the Board of Elders.
- d. Shall secure from the Board of Elders approval for persons to replace the Pastor in the pulpit in the Pastor's absence.
- e. Shall administer the sacraments, visit the sick, and conduct funeral services.
- f. Shall conduct pre-marital counseling classes.
- g. Shall perform Christian marriages between a man and woman only, according to the Holy Scriptures and at the Pastor's discretion.
- h. Shall oversee the teaching and training ministries of My Community Church and oversee the spiritual needs of the membership.

4. Accountability:

- a. The Pastor shall be accountable to the Board of elders and members of My Community Church.
- b. Terms of Service: A pastor will be called for an indefinite period of time. The Pastor's tenure of service shall terminate by the Pastor's resignation or death, or a 75% vote of the members present at a business meeting, including proxies. In the event of the Pastor's resignation, the Pastor shall give at least thirty (30) days notice. In the event My Community Church votes to terminate the Pastor's services, the Pastor shall receive thirty (30) days notice or thirty (30) days salary in lieu of such notice.

E. SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT, SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS, AND OTHERS

1. Qualifications:

- a. Shall have a vital Christian testimony and demonstrate the call of God to the particular ministry in which they are serving.

- b. Shall provide a Godly example of a Christian life for My Community Church members and constituents to observe and copy.
- c. Shall be a member of, and in regular attendance at My Community Church.

Ordination Procedures

MINISTERS/DEACONS

My Community Church

The view of ordination is predicated upon biblical principles and is harmonious with the evangelical view. The following characteristics comprise the view of this organization.

It is acknowledged that the ordination of a minister is first by Divine Call. A Divine Call is not required to be ordained as a Deacon.

Ordination can be defined as the public ceremony by which the Church acknowledges the divine call (for ministers), commission, and the qualifications of a person to ministry in My Community Church; extends its blessings, fellowship, and opportunities; receives his pledge of dedication, faithfulness, and loyalty; and invokes divine enablement for success in life and ministry.

Ordination is held to be spiritual and functional rather than sacerdotal. It is important as a public acknowledgment of God's prior call and commission. All Christians are equal, but ministers are set apart for special, full-time Christian service and leadership as defined in the word of God. When necessary, the laity can perform all of the functions of ministry except those for which the State requires an ordained minister.

Ordination is performed only after a careful examination of the candidate as to qualification on six essential points:

1. The genuineness of his Christian experience;
2. The sufficiency of his spiritual, moral, emotional, and social maturity;
3. The reality of his divine call;

4. The correctness of his doctrine;
5. The adequacy of his preparation and practical abilities; and
6. The acceptability of his allegiance to the Movement's policies and programs.

Authority and power for ministry/deaconship are conferred directly by Christ through the Holy Spirit, not through those who perform the ordination ceremony. No particular man or group is essential to the ordination process. Those who participate are dispensable instruments. The stress is upon an immediate spiritual connection with Christ rather than a historical Episcopal (apostolic) succession. The living Lord of the Church is making direct, dynamic appointments in His body today.

Ordination is held to be of concern to the whole Church, not just the local church. This is indicated by the fact that the apostles, whose ministry was international in scope, presided in each of the five New Testament ceremonies of ordination. Therefore, the ordination is conducted with the imposition of hands and prayers. Also, since ministers participated in each of the New Testament ceremonies, presbyters and other senior ministers are involved in ordination in the laying on of hands and prayer.

The Church stresses the importance of the spiritual quality of the ordination ceremony as opposed to a formal ritual. Typical ordinations include fasting, prayer, and the laying on of hands, preaching, a charge, and other elements which were seen in the New Testament ceremonies of ordination.

Ordination is available to those who meet the biblical qualifications proposed for bishops in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, and who are fulfilling one of the types of proclamation-oriented ministry given to the Church by Christ in Ephesians 4:11. These are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastor-teachers (bishops/elders). Those fulfilling a ministry as directors of youth, music, or Christian education may qualify for a Christian Workers Certificate or specialized license but are not afforded ordination if they do not fulfill the basic preaching-pastoral ministry.

Benefits of Ordination

Benefits to the Minister

A first benefit is that ordination serves as a goal which represents a high level of spiritual, moral, emotional, social, intellectual, and ministerial maturity. This is not an end in itself, for the ordained minister will need to continue to grow in all of these areas personally and professionally.

A second benefit is that ordination provides the minister the opportunity of corporate judgment as to the genuineness of his Christian experience; the sufficiency of his spiritual, moral, emotional, and social maturity; the reality of his divine call; the

correctness of his doctrine; the adequacy of his preparation and practical abilities; and the acceptability of his allegiance to the Church's policies and programs.

A third benefit is that ordination is recognized as a mature level of personal and professional accomplishment in all of the areas mentioned above. Thus, ordination becomes the goal, test, and testimony of personal and professional maturity and effectiveness.

Ordination provides a fourth benefit in that it opens opportunities. It is an essential key for acceptance in pastoral, evangelistic, administrative, teaching, chaplaincy, and other ministries. A corollary to this is that ministry in the church provides reasonable assurance that the fruit of one's ministry will be preserved.

A fifth benefit of ordination is that it qualifies the minister to meet civil requirements for certain functions of ministry such as funerals, weddings, and serving on certain community, state, and federal boards or agencies, etc.

Benefits to the Church

In the first place, ordination benefits the Church by insuring that its ministry is comprised of individuals who are qualified by virtue of the genuineness of their Christian experience, the reality of their divine call, and the sufficiency of their spiritual, moral, emotional, and social maturity to have an effective ministry.

A second benefit to the Church is that ordination provides a checkpoint to insure a ministry which has sufficient and correct understanding of Bible content and doctrine in order to edify the body of Christ and not bring disharmony.

Ordination benefits the Church by guaranteeing an effective level of practical ability for the ministerial functions of preaching/teaching: worship leading, administering the ordinances and performing the ceremonies, pastoral care and the administration (oversight and planning) for the departments, deacons, committees, staff, finances, public relations, building programs, etc.

And finally, ordination benefits the Church by ascertaining that its ministers have an acceptable knowledge of and loyalty to the policies and programs of the Church.

Qualifications for Ordination

The qualifications for bishops, as set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, are the norm for all ministers today. In addition, the following groups of attributes are recommended for the ordained minister.

Spiritual Attributes

The following spiritual attributes are essential to a most productive ministry: A devotional spirit; love (for God, the ministry, people, I Thessalonians 1:3; I Timothy 6:11, 12; I John 3:16); faith (Romans 12:3-8; II Corinthians 3:5, 6; 5:18-20; Ephesians 3:7; 4:11; Colossians 1:23-29; I Thessalonians 1:3) humility (Proverbs 15:33; Romans 12:3); convictions (Jude 3); dedication (total commitment to God's will); a ministerial spirit (an aptitude to give service; to be solicitous over the well-being and growth of people spiritually, morally, socially, etc.); and faithfulness (I Corinthians 4:1,2 in stewardship of time, spiritual preparation, business matters, etc.).

Moral Attributes

The following moral attributes are essential to a most productive ministry: integrity (basic honesty and wholeness of character, spiritual honesty (Psalm 51:6), intellectual honesty, honesty in preaching, and in everyday dealings) and moral purity (Isaiah 52:11; Galatians 1:10; 2:11-14; I Timothy 6:11-14; II Timothy 1:7, 9).

Emotional Attributes

It is quite likely that more inefficiency and failure in the ministry are caused by emotional and personality deficiencies than by ill health, moral defection, and lack of training, education, or talent. Because of this it is most important that the ordained be very mature in self-understanding and healthy emotionally. If he has unresolved emotional problems, violent mood swings, personality conflicts, or fails under duress it will greatly affect his attitudes in the pulpit as well as determine his attitudes in all of his interpersonal relationships. At least the following seven emotional attributes of character are important to the ordained: A sanctified temperament (Galatians 5:22, 23); a sense of proportion (balance of humor and seriousness); enthusiasm; realism; a sense of the beautiful (Philippians 4:8; Titus 1:15); sympathy (Romans 12:15; Hebrews 5:1); and patience (Romans 5:1-5; II Peter 1:5-8).

Intellectual Attributes

The following intellectual attributes are important for the ordained: Studiousness; regimentation (reasonably well-organized); moderation (in views rather than radical extremes, I Corinthians 9:25; Galatians 5:23; Philippians 4:5; Titus 1:8; II Peter 1:6); logic; imagination; power of concentration; memory (John 14:26); and wisdom (James 1:5).

Social Attributes

Among the social attributes which are essential to the ordained are the following: Sociability, knowledge of human nature, lack of prejudice, a cooperative attitude, a conciliatory disposition, respect for authority, teach ability and loyalty (to family, church, associates, and friends).

Practical Attributes

It is essential to a productive ministry that the minister develops his practical ability to perform the functions of the ministry with skill. It is important that the ordained study Bible and theology in order to educate their heads, but is important that they study practical theology in order to educate their mouths and hands as well. The ordained should cultivate the spiritual and practical abilities requisite to the functions of preaching/teaching, worship, administering the ordinances, pastoral care, and administration.

The Process of Ordination

Previously Ordained Ministers who wish to be issued a new ordination certificate will make that wish known to the local Church and the Church will consider the request at the next regular business meeting, or at a business meeting called for that purpose. Upon the approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the members present, a special service will be scheduled to present to the minister his new Ordination Certificate. Ministers from the local church as well as ministers from other churches may be invited to attend and take part in the ceremony.

For person who has not been previously ordained, ordination is an orderly process which involves prescribed key personnel, advancement in ministerial levels, examination, and the ordination service itself.

Organizational Structure and Ordination

The key personnel in the organizational structure with respect to ordination of a minister are his pastor, presbyter and ordination committee. The pastor is essential to the process as the one who grooms the candidate spiritually, trains him for ministry, and recommends him to the presbyter and/or examining committee. The ordaining council examines the candidate.

Steps to Ordination

A person seeking ordination seeks counsel from his pastor and a letter of recommendation from the Pastor to the Church. The Church arranges for the candidate to fill out an application for additional credentials. The Church will then convene an

Ordaining council to consider the request. Upon their approval, the applicant is granted initial credentials. (License) He must maintain an acceptable ministry at the licensed level for a minimum of 2 years and be at least 23 years of age before being invited to write for ordination. This is to insure his maturity personally and professionally ("not a novice," I Timothy 3:6). Upon his presentation of an application for ordination, he is examined again by the Ordaining Council. Upon their approval, he is ordained in a special *Examination for Ordination*.

The ordaining council, by written examination and oral interview, shall examine the candidate upon the following points:

1. The genuineness of his Christian experience
2. The reality of his divine call to the ministry
3. The sufficiency of his spiritual, moral, emotional, and social maturity.
4. The sufficiency and correctness of his understanding of Bible content and doctrine
5. The adequacy of his preparation and practical abilities.
6. The acceptability of his knowledge of and allegiance to the Church's policies and programs.

Upon the approval of the council, a special service will be scheduled to present to the minister his new Ordination Certificate. Ministers from the local Church as well as ministers from other churches may be invited to attend and take part in the ceremony.

The Ceremony of Ordination

The Church stresses the importance of the spiritual quality of the ordination service as opposed to a formal ritual. While we do not believe as the sacramentalists do that a supernatural grace and power are communicated by our words and hands, we do believe fully that Christ can and will (if He hasn't already) impart the grace and power necessary to the fulfillment of the ministry as we pray and lay hands on the ordained. Thus the ordination service provides, in addition to its public acknowledgement that the ordained has been called, commissioned, and qualified for mature ministry, an opportunity for the ordained to make a fuller consecration of his life and receive the maximum grace and power for service. It provides opportunity for one of the most significant spiritual experiences of his life.

Typical ordination services include fasting, prayer for candidates with the imposition of hands by the elders, preaching, a scriptural charge, and other New Testament elements of worship.

Responsibilities of Ordination

Ordination is a most responsible step for all concerned. Grave responsibilities fall to the Church which ordains, to the minister/deacon who is ordained, and to those who are ministered to by the ordained.

Responsibilities of the Church

It is the responsibility of the Church to ordain only men who are highly qualified on the biblical qualifications as represented in the points of examination.

It is the Church's responsibility to solicit the highest levels of personal life and ministerial proficiency among its ordained ministers.

It is the Church's responsibility to provide means of spiritual, moral, emotional, social, intellectual, and professional growth among its ordained.

It is the church's responsibility to provide opportunities for fruitful ministry.

Responsibilities of the Ordained

It is the ordained responsibility to achieve, with the Lord's help, the highest level of qualifications he can on the biblical qualifications as represented in the points of examination.

It is the ordained responsibility to maintain the highest level of personal life and ministerial proficiency that the Lord can help him to achieve. It is advisable to review the definition of ordination, the biblical qualifications, and the points of examination each year as a self-check and as an incentive to continue growing.

It is the ordained responsibility to enter into opportunities of ministry with dedication, love, faith, anointing, and faithfulness in order to render service acceptable to those to whom he ministers, to the Church, and to the Lord.

Responsibilities of Those Ministered To

It is the responsibility of those to whom one ministers to:

1. Accept him as God's messenger (Luke 10:16; I Corinthians 4:1; Galatians 4:14).
2. Pray for him (Romans 15:30; II Corinthians 1:11; Ephesians 6:18, 19; Hebrews 13:18).
3. Love and respect him (II Corinthians 8:7; I Thessalonians 3:6; 5:12, 13).
4. Follow and obey him (I Corinthians 11:1, 16:16; Philippians 3:17; Hebrews 13:7, 17).

5. Support him generously financially (I Corinthians 9:7-14; Galatians 6:6; I Timothy 5:17, 18).

Enhancing the Ordained Ministry

No vocation is more worthy of a goal of excellence than the Gospel ministry. Since ordination is the goal, test, and testimony of maturity and proficiency in life and ministry, it is the primary point at which concentrated effort should occur. The following suggestions are made in the interest of enhancing the ministry through the process leading to ordination and afterward as well.

1. Each person receiving initial credentials should receive a copy of the Church's Ordination Procedures for careful study as he progresses to ordination.

2. Ordaining Council should take their work very seriously. They should be sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit as to who should be ordained (Acts 13:2; 14:26; 20:28). They should maintain high standards of qualification and not be reluctant to extend the probationary license period for another year or longer on any doubtful candidates. They should examine candidates very carefully on the points that have repeatedly been dealt with in this paper.

3. An extensive questionnaire should be developed on character, emotional problems, views on human relations, spiritual and practical matters, etc., which could be administered by presbyters to those seeking credentials. This tool could be the basis of one or more counseling sessions by the presbyter, a committeeman, or the Elders. Such a questionnaire would become a worksheet in the ordained file with space for notes of strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations by the committee. This would contribute to better analysis, continuity, and follow-up until the candidate is ordained. It would be kept in a confidential file until the candidate reached ordination and would then be destroyed.

4. Require a minister anticipating ordination to write, during his period of license, his credo on doctrine and the functions of ministry. This would be read by the presbyter and Elders and kept on file until the candidate's ordination and then returned to him. The credo, and questionnaire mentioned above, would be utilized to help the candidate achieve self-understanding and the ability to express his beliefs clearly. Also they would provide the Ordaining Council insight into the personality, beliefs, strengths, and needs of the candidate. They would be used for counseling and growth of the candidate, and not as tests for him to pass.

5. The ordination applicant should supplement the work of the pastor and the Ordaining Council by seeking council from mature elder ministers. These elders could provide excellent counsel out of years of experience. This would provide a much-needed service for ministers in general, and for young ministers and their companions in particular, as

they recognized the need for help in their lives and ministries. This service would help relieve the work load of presbyters; help young preachers to achieve personal, domestic, and ministerial growth; and increase the harmony and progress in the ministry.

6. Make the ordination ceremony a truly important spiritual experience. We know that much fasting and prayer was standard procedure in the Early Church. We would be careful to retain not just the outward symbolism, laying on of hands, but also the spiritual exercises of fasting and prayer in our ordination service (Acts 13:3).

7. Stress the importance of both basic and continuing education. While we do not require certain formal studies or degrees for ordination, the Church is committed to the importance of education for ministry. (II Timothy 2:15).

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised (Luke 4:18).



Disciplinary Action

Excommunication is the formal removal of an individual from church membership roles and the informal separation from that individual. Matthew 18:15-20 gives the procedure and authority for a church to do this. It instructs us that one individual (usually the offended party) is to go to the offending individual. If he/she does not repent, then two or three go to confirm the situation and the refusal to repent. If there is no repentance, it is taken before the church. This process is never "desirable," just as a parent never delights in having to discipline his/her children. Often, though, it is necessary. The purpose is not to be mean spirited or to display a "better than thou" attitude. Rather, it is to be done in love toward the individual, in obedience and honor to God, and in godly fear for the sake of others in the church.

A person who is excommunicated is no longer a member of the Church. Excommunication is the most severe Church disciplinary action. As directed by the Spirit, it may be necessary for:

1. Members who have committed serious transgressions, especially serious violations of covenants and Church bylaws.
2. Members whose conduct makes them a serious threat to others and whose Church membership facilitates their access to victims.
4. Church leaders or prominent members whose transgressions significantly impair the good name or moral influence of the Church in the community that is aware of the transgression.
4. Excommunication is mandatory for rape or murder and almost always required for incest.
5. A person who is excommunicated does not enjoy any benefits of Church membership. He/she may attend public Church meetings if his/her conduct is orderly, but his/her participation in such meetings is limited to the same as for nonmembers.

Sometimes the disciplinary action of the church is successful in bringing about godly sorrow and true repentance. When this occurs, the individual is able to be restored to fellowship. The individual involved in the I Corinthians 5 passage repented, and Paul encouraged the church to restore him to fellowship with the church (II Corinthians 2:5-8). Unfortunately, the disciplinary action, even when done in love and in the correct manner, is not always successful in bringing about such restoration, but is still needed to accomplish the other good purposes mentioned above.