

Orangetree Bible Church Constitution

Preamble

We, the members of Orangetree Bible Church, desiring to honor the Lord Jesus Christ, do hereby establish the following biblical principle of government and order and adopt these By-Laws as a declaration of our commitment to carry out the work of the Lord in a proper and biblical fashion.

Article I - Name

The name of our fellowship shall be Orangetree Bible Church.

Article II - Purpose

This church is organized to glorify God in reverent and orderly worship, systematic teaching and practice of the principles embodied in His Holy Word, growth in Christian unity and in the grace and knowledge of His Son, and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world.

Article III - Membership

Section 1 - Eligibility for Membership

Membership shall be limited to those who profess faith in Jesus Christ, have been baptized by immersion, and are willing to subscribe to the Confession of Faith, Covenant, and Constitution of Orangetree Bible Church (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 2:41).

Section 2 - Procedure for Membership. All individuals desiring membership shall:

1. Indicate their desire to become a member to an Elder.
2. Confess personal faith in Jesus Christ before two Elders or Elder representatives and if not already baptized, be willing to undergo believer's baptism by immersion.
3. Be in agreement with the confession of faith, covenant, and constitution of this church.
4. Already be active or desiring to become active in the ministry of Orangetree Bible Church.

The present membership of Orangetree Bible Church and those hereafter admitted to membership shall constitute the membership of this corporation.

Section 3 – Responsibilities of Membership

See Church Covenant

Section 4 - Privileges of Membership

Orangetree Bible Church functions as a body under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:23) and the leadership of the elders who are duly elected to conduct the spiritual and business affairs of the church, and to care for the soul of each member. Membership in this church does not afford those individuals any rights to property, contract or civil rights based on the principles of democratic government. Determinations of the internal affairs of this church are ecclesiastical matters and shall be determined exclusively by the church's own constitution consisting of The Articles of Incorporation and the By-Laws. The final authority in all matters is the Holy Bible (II Timothy 3:16-17).

Members are entitled to vote upon the call of the senior pastor, assistant pastors and the admission of new members; purchase and sale of real church property; elections; approval of amendments to, or changes of, the By-Laws. Any member may appeal to an elder on an issue for consideration by the elder board.

Section 5 - Discipline and Restoration of a Member:

The elder board shall have sole authority in determining the need for church discipline and shall base those determinations on Scripture and the Statement of Faith. Once the process of discipline has begun of any member, resignation of membership will not end the process. Church members realize that their natural human response to correction often is to hide or run away from accountability (Genesis 3:8-10). To avoid falling into this age-old trap and to strengthen our church's ability to rescue a member caught in sin, a church member agrees not to run away from this church to avoid corrective discipline and waives their right to withdraw from membership or accountability if discipline is pending against him or her. Although a church member is free to stop attending the church at any time, he or she agrees that a withdrawal while discipline is pending will not be given effect until the church has fulfilled its God-given responsibilities to encourage our repentance and restoration, and to bring the disciplinary process to an orderly conclusion (Matthew 18:12-14; Galatians 6:1; Hebrews 13:17).

The spirit of discipline must always be that of restoration through repentance, with the objective of maintaining the purity and unity of Christ's Church (I Corinthians 5:1-7, Titus 3:9-11).

If a pastor, elder, or deacon is the subject of a disciplinary matter, he shall not sit as a board member. He shall be entitled to the same biblical process of discipline and restoration as other church members. Two or more witnesses must substantiate an accusation brought against an elder (I Timothy 5:19).

Members are expected to demonstrate special loyalty to God, with love and concern for one another. Scripture outlines the biblical process of discipline and restoration as follows:

1. When a member becomes aware of another member engaged in persistent sin, he is to go alone to the offending party and seek to restore his brother. Before he goes, he should first examine himself. When he goes, he should go with a spirit of humility and have in mind the goal of restoration (Matthew 18:15; James 5:19-20; Galatians 6:1-2).
2. If restoration is not reached, then "By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established." These witnesses are to accompany the one seeking to resolve the matter. This second step should also be preceded by self-examination, and exercised in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration (Matthew 18:16, Deuteronomy 19:15-20, II Corinthians 12:20-13:6).
3. If there is no repentance after taking these steps, the matter shall be brought before the elder board. If the elder board determines there is an offense with no confession of sin and repentance, the elders will "tell it to the church." At that point subsequent contact should focus on admonishment and calling the person to repentance (Matthew 18:17-20; II Thessalonians 3:14-15).
4. If the person refuses to hear the church an announcement will be made to the church of their refusal to repent, the member's name will be removed from the church roll and they shall be to the church "as an unbeliever." If an unrepentant offending party is removed from the church membership, contact with the person from that point forward should be for the sake of salvation or restoration.

In the case of a substantiated accusation against a member in leadership, that person shall step down until such a time that the elder board deems the accusation false or the matter to be closed. The elder board must then review the accusation and seek restoration of all parties.

In the instance of a divisive person who comes into the church the elders may act quickly to reject them so as to protect the unity and purity of the church as instructed in Titus 3: 9-11.

Should the restoration process be successful, an announcement will be made to the membership.

Removal from Membership - A member who is physically able and fails to show a willingness to meet the responsibilities of membership shall be contacted by the elders. Based upon the person's response and approval by the elder board, the person's membership may be revoked. In addition, members who have not responded to church discipline shall have their names removed from the roll. The removed members shall be advised of the action by letter. Upon request for removal of membership, the elders will be advised and a letter of confirmation sent. Members who permanently move from the area will be removed from the membership after six months unless they notify the church office.

ARTICLE IV - Meetings and Elections

Section 1 - Meetings

Periodic meetings shall be held at a time of Elders' choosing.

Section 2 - Voting Members

All active members are eligible to vote. Members who have been absent from the church for eight consecutive weeks forfeit their right to vote.

Section 3 - Taking a Vote

At any duly called meeting a quorum shall consist of twenty percent (20%) of the membership eligible to vote.

Section 4 - Rules of Order

Except where it is contrary to these Bylaws, Roberts Rules of Order shall govern the conduct of meetings.

Section - Services

Orangetree Bible Church will:

1. Conduct regular worship services on Sunday (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2).
2. Hold Bible study and prayer meetings..
3. Develop other ministries and services as the need arises.

ARTICLE V - Leadership and Organizational Structure Section 1 - Overview

While Scripture does not provide a precise leadership or organizational structure, it does provide two official offices of leadership, the elder and the deacon. Scripture also provides many principles that are to be honored within a leadership and organizational structure. These principles include: authority, accountability, work ethic, biblical qualification, service, order, unity, and love.

Section 2 - Elders

Responsibility – The elders shall have full authority and responsibility over care and oversight of the body and ministry of Orangetree Bible Church. A secondary responsibility is the interpretation of the language used in these By-Laws. There will always be two or more elders to govern the church.

Qualification - Elders shall be men who are members of Orangetree Bible Church, of high Christian character and shall maintain an exemplary reputation in all aspects of their lives both in the church and in the world. They shall be the spiritual leaders of the church and shall meet the qualifications and fulfill the responsibilities as set forth in Titus 1:5-9, 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and 1 Peter 5:1-3. Each elder shall understand, fully support and affirm the By-Laws of Orangetree Bible Church.

Election and Tenure – Elders shall seek, observe, test, and thoroughly prove potential candidates for the office of elder. Elders, by unanimous consent, will present new candidates for the office of elder to the members at any meeting of the church. Affirmation by the membership is completed by not less than a two-thirds (2/3) majority of those present and voting. Elders shall be elected for a term of three years with their terms being arranged on a rotating basis so that as nearly as possible, the terms of one-third (1/3) of the elders shall expire each year.

Section 3 - Deacons

Responsibility - The deacons are responsible to the elders in the fulfillment of their office.

They shall specifically assist the elders in:

1. The administration of the approved annual budget.
2. The protection of all church cash and investments.
3. Oversight over all church property and equipment.
4. Administration of all church benevolence.
5. Administration of the care and concern of our supported missionaries.
6. Other tasks as requested by the elders to assist them in the work of ministry.

Qualification - Deacons or deaconesses shall be members of Orangetree Bible Church, of high Christian character and shall maintain an exemplary reputation in all aspects of their lives both in the church and in the world. They shall meet the qualifications and fulfill the responsibilities set forth in Acts 6:3 and in I Timothy 3:8-13. They shall understand, fully support and affirm the By-Laws of Orangetree Bible Church.

Election and Tenure - Elders shall seek, observe, test, and thoroughly prove potential candidates for deacon. Elders, by unanimous consent, will present new candidates for deacon to the members at a membership meeting. Affirmation by the membership is completed by not less than a two-thirds (2/3) majority of those present and voting. Deacons shall be elected for a term of three years, their continuance as deacons being subject to elder approval.

Section 4 - Staff Senior Pastor

Responsibility – The senior pastor shall be an elder for his entire tenure. As such, he shall, along with the other elders, have full authority and responsibility over care and oversight of the body and ministry of Orangetree Bible Church. As an elder who has devoted both his vocation and ministry to the body at Orangetree Bible Church, he shall demonstrate a significant work ethic in ministry and act as a leader and visionary among the elders, deacons, and staff drawing them toward unity in purpose and ministry. He shall take a prominent role in services, ordinances, ceremonies, and formal teaching of the church body.

Qualification – Upon the acceptance of a call, the senior pastor shall become a member of Orangetree Bible Church, of high Christian character and shall maintain an exemplary reputation in all aspects of their lives both in the church and in the world. He shall be a spiritual leader of the church and shall meet the qualifications and fulfill the responsibilities as set forth in Titus 1:5-9, 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and 1 Peter 5:1-3. He shall

exhibit spiritual giftedness in both teaching and preaching. He shall understand, fully support and affirm the By-Laws of Orangetree Bible Church.

Election and Tenure – The elders shall oversee the selection process of a senior pastor.

Whereas the other elders come to office from amongst the body of Orangetree Bible Church, the senior pastor, prior to coming to the church, will typically not have any history or understanding of the church or its members. Therefore when the need for a senior pastor arises, the church should take extreme caution, proceeding with great purpose in measuring the qualifications and heart of the man. The process should lead to significant assurance that the candidate has a spirit of unity with the elders, the mission and methods of ministry, and the proposed direction of the church. Once the elders are unanimously in agreement to issue a call to the candidate, a special congregational meeting for the purpose of extending a call to the candidate will be announced. Only active members, as outlined in these By-Laws, are eligible to vote. A minimum of 90% majority vote is necessary to extend a call to a candidate to become senior pastor. The pastor shall serve until such time as he resigns or has disqualified himself from ministry (gross moral failure) at which time the elders will release him from His responsibilities and the congregation will be informed. Additionally, the senior pastor can be removed if, through the process of accountability, he is unwilling to fulfill the responsibilities of the senior pastor set forth in these By-Laws. The pastor will be removed from office based on a recommendation of the elders and a majority vote of the members.

Other Staff

The elders of the church may determine the need for additional staff. Assistant pastors shall have specific responsibilities per a formal written job description, shall meet the qualifications of the elders, and shall be called in a similar fashion as the senior pastor. Other staff may be added by unanimous approval of the elders and hold qualifications both spiritually and vocationally that are appropriate to their formal job description. All staff serve at the will of the elders but may also be under an additional authority structure as designated by the elders.

ARTICLE VI - Statement Concerning Law

Following the command of the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 6:1-8, no member shall take any legal action against Orangetree Bible Church or its leadership for its counsel, its practices, its ordinances, its doctrine, or its disciplinary action for any reason whatsoever.

ARTICLE VII - Amendments

These By-Laws may be amended, altered or repealed, in whole or in part, at any meeting of the membership.

As a working flexible document, these By-Laws may be amended, altered or repealed, at any membership meeting by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present.

Proposed amendments to these By-Laws may be presented in writing to the elder board. If accepted, the amendment shall be presented to the church for vote at any membership meeting.

ARTICLE VIII - Dissolution

In the event of dissolution of this organization, proceeds shall be used for a non-profit organization chosen by the membership that meets the requirements of the Internal Revenue Code, Section 501(c)3 of 1954.