

# Bay Valley Christian Church



## Structure of Ministry

Bay Valley Christian Church

**FOR ACCOMPLISHING OUR MISSION AT  
Bay Valley Christian Church**

***NOTES***

**I.** We will develop a training center for Christians. We will reach the lost and build them up to send them out to the community. (Eph. 4:11)

**II.** We believe there is room for everyone that God is raising up. Many leaders will join together as a team of ministers reaching in many directions to those who have not yet heard the message of Jesus Christ. (I Tim. 4:14)

**III.** We desire to build strong families. We want to see young people serving the Lord. Therefore, our priorities at BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH will be quality education, practical living and teaching our children to live what they are taught. (Psalm 145:4)

**IV.** Our emphasis will be placed on Bible study to help people of all ages grow and mature. (II Tim. 2:15)

**V.** Praise and worship from a pure heart is what is pleasing to God. We will teach what God wants from a worshiper. (Psalm 7:1)

**VI.** We will emphasize the Fruit of the Spirit, as well as the Gifts of the Spirit; honesty, integrity and sincerity will cultivate the Gifts of the Spirit. (Eph. 5:1 & Gal. 5:20)

**VII.** Our church will be a new, fresh expression of the body of Christ in a Spirit of Evangelism reaching a broad spectrum of people. (Luke 19:10)

**VIII.** Our church will not only reach to the lost, but with fresh vision and excitement, we will reach out to those who have walked away from God and the Church. (Jer. 3:22)

**NOTES**

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## Junior Member Profile Sheet

(Continued):

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Have you completed the Understanding God Class?  Yes  No

If not, have you taken a Membership Class?  Yes  No

Have you been baptized since you became a Christian?  Yes  No

Have you been baptized with the Holy Spirit?  Yes  No

Have you read the Statement of Faith?  Yes  No

## Statement of Faith

### THE SCRIPTURES

We accept the Bible, including the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament, as the written Word of God. The Bible is an essential and infallible record of God's self-disclosure to mankind. It leads us to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Being given by God, the Scriptures are both fully and verbally inspired by God. Therefore, as originally given, the Bible is free of error in all it teaches. Each book is to be interpreted according to its context and purpose and in reverent obedience to the Lord who speaks through it in living power. All believers are exhorted to study the Scriptures and diligently apply them to their lives. The Scriptures are the authoritative and normative rule and guide of all Christian life, practice and doctrine. They are not to be added to, superseded or changed by later tradition or extra-biblical revelation. Every doctrinal formulation, whether of creed, confession or theology, must be put to the test of the full counsel of God in Holy Scripture.

### GOD IS TRIUNE

There is one God: infinite, eternal, almighty and perfect in holiness, truth and love. In the unity of the godhead there are three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, co-existent, co-equal, co-eternal. The Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Holy Spirit; yet each is truly Deity. One God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – is the foundation of the Christian faith and life.

### GOD THE FATHER

God the Father is the Creator of heaven and earth. By His word and for His glory He freely created the world out of nothing. Through the same word He daily sustains all His creatures. He is faithful to every promise, works all things together for good to those who love Him, and in His unfathomable grace He gave His Son, Jesus Christ, for mankind's redemption. He made man for fellowship with Himself, and intended that all creation should live to the praise of His glory.

### JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, was the eternal Word made flesh, supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary. He was perfect in nature, teaching and obedience. He is fully God and fully man. He was always with God and is God. Through Him all things came into being and were created. He was before all things, and in Him all things will hold together by the power of His word. He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation, and in Him dwells the fullness of the godhead bodily. He is the only Savior for the sins of the world, having died a vicarious death on Calvary's cross for all mankind. By His death in our place, He revealed the divine love and upheld divine justice, removing our guilt and reconciling us to God. Having redeemed us from sin, the third day He rose bodily from the grave, victorious over death and the powers of darkness, and for a period of forty days appeared to over five-hundred witnesses, performing many convincing proofs of His resurrection. He ascended into heaven where, at God's right hand, He interceded for His people and rules as Lord over all. He is the Head of His Body the Church and should be adored, loved, served, and obeyed by all.

# Statement of Faith

## THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit, the Lord the Giver of life, convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. Through the proclamation of the gospel, He persuades us to repent of our sins and confess Jesus as Lord. By the same Spirit, a person is led to trust in divine mercy. The Holy Spirit unites believers to Jesus Christ in faith, brings about the new birth, and dwells within the regenerate. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify the Son who in turn came to glorify the Father. He will lead the Church into all the truth. He is to be respected, honored and worshipped as God, the Third Person of the Trinity.

## MAN

God made man – male and female – in His own image as the crown of creation that man might have fellowship with Him. Tempted by Satan, man rebelled against God. Being estranged from his Maker, yet responsible to Him, he became subject to divine wrath, inwardly depraved and apart from grace, incapable of returning to God. Fallen, sinful people, whatever their character or attainments, are lost and without hope apart from salvation in Christ.

## THE GOSPEL

Jesus Christ is the gospel. The good news is revealed in His birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension. Christ’s crucifixion is the heart of the gospel, His resurrection is the power of the gospel, and His ascension is the glory of the gospel.

## MAN’S RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL

The gospel is to be preached to all people, but is only effectual to those who genuinely repent of their sins and by God’s grace put saving faith in Christ. Biblical repentance is characterized by a changed life, and saving faith is evidenced by kingdom service or works. While neither repentance nor works save, unless a person is willing to deny himself, pick up his cross and follow Christ, he cannot become his disciple.

## MAN’S INHERITANCE THROUGH THE GOSPEL

Salvation, the free gift of God, is provided solely by His grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Anyone turning from sin in repentance and looking to Christ and His substitutionary death is born anew into eternal life by the Holy Spirit and declared to be righteous as a gift. Through Christ’s great redemptive act, an individual is reconciled to God as Father and becomes His child. The believer is forgiven the debt of his sin and liberated from the law of sin and death into the freedom of God’s Spirit.

## DIVINE HEALING

Jesus Christ is alive and active in our world through the power of the Holy Spirit. He can and does heal sick bodies, minds and emotions. Divine Healing is provided for in the atonement of Christ and is available to all. We know He is able and has provided healing for His people. Yet we must trust Him and His impeccable timing. We are responsible to pray; He is the Healer.

# Junior Member Profile Sheet

Please Print Clearly or Type

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last) (First) (Int) (Prefer to be called)

Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(First) (Int) (Prefer to be called)

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street, apt. #, etc.) (City) (State) (Zip)

Phone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

Vocation \_\_\_\_\_

Work Address (if any) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Check Applicable Box

Age:

- 12    13
- 14    15
- 16    17

Are you currently a member of another church? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you regularly attended the Sunday services? \_\_\_\_\_

Denominational background \_\_\_\_\_

Are there any specific areas of the ministry in which you are presently serving?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any particular skill or talent that you feel could be used here at BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH? (Carpentry, typing, accounting, writing, music, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please summarize how you came to know Christ as your Savior, and describe briefly the present condition of your spiritual life (feel free to include another page):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Member and Affiliate Profile Sheet

Are you currently a member of another church? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you regularly attended the Sunday services? \_\_\_\_\_

Denominational background \_\_\_\_\_

Are there any specific areas of the ministry in which you are presently serving?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any particular skill or talent that you feel could be used here at BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH? (Carpentry, typing, accounting, writing, music, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please summarize how you came to know Christ as your Savior, and describe briefly the present condition of your spiritual life (feel free to include another page):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Have you completed the Understanding God Class?  Yes  No

If not, have you taken a Membership Class?  Yes  No

Have you been baptized since you became a Christian?  Yes  No

Have you been baptized with the Holy Spirit?  Yes  No

Have you read the Statement of Faith?  Yes  No

Please indicate which you desire: Fellowship \_\_\_\_\_

## Statement of Faith

### SANCTIFICATION

The Holy Spirit is the active agent in our sanctification and seeks to produce His fruit in us as our minds are renewed and we are conformed to the image of Christ. As we are led by the Spirit, we grow in the knowledge of the Lord, freely keeping His commandments and endeavoring to so live in the world that all people may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven.

### BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit empowers believers for Christian witness. Being indwelt by the Holy Spirit and being baptized in the Holy Spirit are distinct experiences, though the latter may occur in close proximity to the former. The promise of the Father is freely available to all who believe in Jesus Christ. While the Holy Spirit baptizes the believer into Christ's Body Jesus baptizes the believer in the Holy Spirit, thereby enabling him to exercise the powers of the age to come in ministry and mission. The Holy Spirit desires to fill each believer with power to witness and imparts his supernatural gifts for the edification of the Body and the work for the ministry in the world. Speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence that the gift of the Holy Spirit has been received. This results in the exultation of God and personal edification. All the gifts of the Holy Spirit at work in the church of the first century are available today and are earnestly to be desired and expected. They are essential in the mission of the Church in the world today.

### THE CHURCH

God by His Word and Spirit creates the Church, calling sinful men out to the whole human race into the fellowship of Christ's Body. By the same Word and Spirit, He guides and preserves that new, redeemed humanity. The Church is not a religious institution or denomination. Rather, the Church universal is made up of those who have become genuine followers of Christ and have personally appropriated the gospel. The Church exists to worship and glorify God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It also exists to serve Him faithfully doing His will in the earth. This involves a commitment to see the gospel preached in all the world for a testimony. The ultimate mission of the Church is the redemption of souls. When God transforms human nature, this then becomes the chief means of society's transformation. All members of the Church universal are to be a vital and committed part of a local church. In this context, they are called to walk out the New Covenant as the people of God and demonstrate the reality of the kingdom of God. The ascended Christ has given gift ministries to the Church (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) for the equipping of Christ's Body that it might mature and grow. Through the gift ministries, all members of the Church are to be nurtured and equipped for the work of ministry. In the context of the local church, God's people receive pastoral care and leadership and the opportunity to employ their God-given gifts in His service in relation to one another and to the world.

## Statement of Faith

### THE CONSUMMATION

The Consummation of all things includes the visible, personal and glorious return of Jesus Christ; the resurrection of the dead and the translation of those alive in Christ; the judgment of the just and the unjust; and the fulfillment of Christ's kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth. In the Consummation, Satan with his hosts and all those outside Christ are finally separated from the presence of God, enduring eternal punishment; but the righteous, in glorious bodies, shall live and reign with Him forever. Married to Christ as his Bride, the Church will be in the presence of God forever, serving Him and giving Him unending praise and glory. Then shall the eager expectation of creation be fulfilled, and the whole earth shall proclaim the glory of God who makes all things new.

## Member and Affiliate Profile Sheet

Please Print Clearly or Type

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last) (First) (Int) (Prefer to be called)

Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(First) (Int) (Prefer to be called)

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street, apt. #, etc.) (City) (State) (Zip)

Phone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

Vocation \_\_\_\_\_

Work Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

### Check Applicable Box

Education  
 Background  
 (Completed)

Marital  
 Status

Age

- |  |                                   |                                |                                    |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> High School     | <input type="checkbox"/> Single   | <input type="checkbox"/> 12-17 | <input type="checkbox"/> 40-49     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College         | <input type="checkbox"/> Married  | <input type="checkbox"/> 18-29 | <input type="checkbox"/> 50-59     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate School | <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed  | <input type="checkbox"/> 30-39 | <input type="checkbox"/> 60 & Over |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced |                                |                                    |

### Children

Name	Age	Lives Home	Lives Outside Home
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Membership

(All individuals 17 years of age and under who desire to become members of BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH must receive the written consent of their parents or legal guardian).

### SCRIPTURAL PROCEDURE AND PRINCIPLES FOR CONFRONTATION

Ongoing sin in the life of a believer obstructs his walk with the Lord, threatens the unity and fellowship within the body, and ultimately weakens the witness of the church among non-believers. (1 John 1:7; 2 Cor. 6:3)

Scripture, therefore, encourages believers to be concerned with each other's spiritual well-being, and teaches them to confront in love where there is evidence of sin. BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH acknowledges the following Biblical procedure for such confrontation: (2 Cor. 11:29; Luke 17:3; Gal. 6:1)

1. If one has knowledge of ongoing sin in the life of a fellow believer, he should go promptly and confront the individual in private. (Matt. 18:15)
2. If there is no expression of repentance, he should reprove the individual in the presence of two (2) or three (3) witnesses. (Matt. 18:16)
3. If there is still no repentance, Scripture teaches that the matter should be brought before the church. In the BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH church structure, the matter should, at this point, be brought before the elders, as representatives of the church. (Matt. 18:17)
4. If there is no evidence of genuine repentance after confrontation by the elders, the elders should bring the matter before the whole congregation. (Matt. 18:17)
5. If there is still no evidence of repentance, Scripture teaches that the individual should be removed from the body and believers should break fellowship with him, until such time as there is genuine repentance. (2 Thess. 3:14; 1 Cor. 5:11; Titus 3:10-11; 2 Thess. 3:6)

In addition to the above procedure, Scripture teaches that confrontation should be approached and carried out with an attitude of love, concern and humility, and should be motivated by the sincere desire to see repentance and restoration of fellowship. Reflecting Christ's grace and forgiveness, believers are taught to be quick to forgive when there is the genuine expression of repentance on the part of a fellow believer. (Gal. 6:1; Matt. 18:21; Matt. 6:14-15; Eph. 4:32; Luke 17:3)

NOTE: The same Biblical principles and procedure for confrontation apply in attempting to resolve relational conflicts within the body. In such cases, Scripture indicates that it is the responsibility of the believer to go promptly to his brother/sister when he has been offended, or when he has reason to believe that he may have done the offending. (Matt 5:23-24; Eph. 4:26-27)

## Statement of Purpose

### LOVING GOD

*"And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." John 17:3*

Our primary purpose at Bay Valley Christian Church is to continually grow in the knowledge of the living God, standing in awe of His holiness, enjoying His grace and glorifying Him in all we do. In our personal experience with Jesus Christ, as well as in times of corporate celebration, we want to fully honor the one true God who is worthy of all. Through devotion to prayer, worship, and the study of God's Word, it is our heart's longing to be a people who truly know and love God.

*"And being found in appearance as man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, also, God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow... and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." Phil. 2:8-10*

The purpose of the Church begins with the recognition that we do not belong to ourselves, having been purchased by the death of Jesus Christ, and that He alone is Lord. Enthroned with all authority, He is the Head of the Church, the One to whom entire allegiance is due. We thus should seek in all things to follow His will as revealed in Scriptures and bring glory to His name. (Eph. 1:22, 23; 1 Cor. 6:19; Col. 2:9-10; Col. 1:18; 1 Peter 1:18, 19; John 19-21; Mark 14-16; Matthew 27:28)

### GENUINE RELATIONSHIPS

*"Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another." Romans 12:10*

One of the primary goals of the Church must be the life-transformation of each of its members. This requires a strong program of Bible teaching and of training in discipleship and personal evangelism. Believers are to be committed one to another. The Body of Christ is thus composed of interdependent members, each having received from the Holy Spirit gifts which are to be exercised for the building up of the whole Body and for the bearing of one another's spiritual and temporal burdens. We thus desire to encourage in one another the development and use of each other's abilities, knowing that "the whole Body, as a harmonious structure knit together by that which every joint supplies, grows by the proper functioning of individual parts to its full maturity in love."

*"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to be a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Eph. 4:11-13*

## Statement of Purpose

Meaningful relationships are a rare commodity in an age of independence and isolation. Yet, in God's family, loving and caring relationships really can be the norm. These kinds of friendships are based on commitment and mutual investment rather than convenience. Enjoying worthwhile relationships means learning to practically live out our Christianity together in covenant love and service (1 Peter 4). Through this commitment to maintain healthy relationships according to the guidelines of God's Word, we believe the world will be provoked to jealousy as they see how we love one another. (2 Tim. 4:2-4; Titus 2:15; Gal. 6:1, 2; Deut. 6:1, 2; 1 Cor. 12-14; Romans 12:4-8; Heb. 10:24, 25; Heb. 3:13; Titus 3:14; Acts 4:34, 35; Acts 2:42; Joshua 1:8; Eph. 4:16)

### COMMON PURPOSE

*"Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." Philippians 2:2*

Unity of vision and purpose is a key to accomplishing anything for God. Without common agreement, the simplest task can be a challenge (Proverbs 29:18). Our vision at Bay Valley Christian Church can be summarized in a single statement of purpose:

**Springing from a vital relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ, our mission is to glorify God by serving His purpose to see the Church restored and the nations reached as we look to His return.**

To help foster unity of vision while benefiting from our diversity, we offer a special course entitled "Understanding God." This course is for those interested in pursuing vital relationships and to serve in a leadership role at Bay Valley Christian Church. "Understanding God" consists of classes designed to build a common passion for the mission God has given us together.

### RESTORATION OF THE CHURCH

*"Jesus said, 'I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not stand against it.'" Matt. 16:18*

The Lord is actively restoring His Church to the pattern, purity and power that earmarked the church of the New Testament (Acts 3:21). Authentic New Testament Christianity is a dynamic new life dedicated to God and His people, the Church. As the foundation and pillar of the truth, the local church is called to model God's righteousness, love and compassion to an onlooking world (1 Timothy 3:15).

The move of the Holy Spirit to "restore all things" (Acts 3:21) is also bringing a greater understanding of the proper function of the leadership ministries discussed in Ephesians 4:11-13 (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers). These equipping ministries are key ingredients in bringing the church into a place of maturity and influence.

## Membership

- E. Signed Statement of Commitment  
A signed Statement of Commitment shall be used as an instrument to affirm one's desire for membership and to serve as a formal record of one's membership.
- F. From time to time, there will be special situations in which individuals applying for membership may, upon approval of the elders, be granted a waiver of the one-year attendance requirement (i.e., new ministry staff or relocation from like-minded churches).
- G. Public Affirmation of New Members before the congregation.

### CERTIFICATE OF MEMBERSHIP

Individuals accepted for membership will be received by the right hand of fellowship (Galatians 2:9) and receive a membership certificate or fellowship card which indicates the same. This certificate needs never to be renewed, but may be revoked by the Board of Directors if they unanimously decide that the individual would be a detriment to the church. When a certificate is thus terminated, the person holding the same will be given notice at the last known address that their certificate or fellowship card is invalidated. In the event that membership is terminated, the process for reinstatement shall be the same as above.

BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH recognizes the need for both membership and those who would like to be affiliated with BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH without meeting the requirements for BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH membership. (See "Member and Affiliate Profile Sheet" section). There shall be three classes of membership of this church: Active Members, Associate Members (who are temporarily in other locations but desire to maintain membership) and Juniors (who are under 18 years of age). Membership may be denied if the Board of Directors decides that the person would be detrimental to the church.

### VOTING MEMBERS

Voting church members are adults of 18 years of age and above who have attended regular services of the church over three months; such have voting rights. Voting members shall be entitled to one vote at any of the general (or special) meetings of the local church, provided such vote shall be made personally.

### VOTING LIMITS

Members of this church having voting privileges shall have such privileges only in the following areas: the removal of the Senior Pastor and replacement of the Senior Pastor in conjunction with Bylaws Article V, 6; confirmation of major building construction and/or extensions, purchase of lands and properties, and the disposition of funds in the event of the dissolution of the congregation, as presented in Article XI. Members in good standing have the privilege of information of the church records at

## Membership

Realizing that sin obstructs one's walk with the Lord and impedes fellowship, we are commanded to confront brothers and sisters in love and according to the Biblical principles when there is evidence of sin, thus preserving the integrity of the body, the spirit of peace and the body of unity. (*Acts 4:32-34; 1 John 1:7; Gal. 6:1; Luke 17:3-4; Eph. 4:29-32*)

NOTE: The above Scriptural principles of commitment to the Lord and to the body in no way represent the pathway to salvation. Salvation is wholly a work of God's free grace, not the result in whole or part of any human works or goodness. However, the inevitable accompaniment of a genuine saving relationship with Jesus Christ is the desire to grow in obedience and godliness, brought about by the Holy Spirit's working in one's life. (*Titus 3:5; Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 4:5*)

### PROCEDURE FOR ADMISSION TO MEMBERSHIP

It is the desire of BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH to freely extend its fellowship to all individuals. At the same time, BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH desires to uphold the principles of commitment to Christ and to the body that Scripture teaches must accompany true membership in the body of Christ.

All individuals 12 years of age or older who have personally received Christ as their Savior and Lord, who have received baptism as a believer and who desire to be committed to BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH as a local body of believers, may become members of BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH through the following procedure:

- A. Consistent participation in the life of BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH by the giving of time, talents and gifts, treasures and fellowship, as stated on the previous pages
- B. Completion of one year of regular attendance at BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH
- C. Attendance at Membership Classes
  - Periodically, membership classes shall be offered to provide teaching on:
    1. The BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH Statement of Faith
    2. The Scriptural principles of commitment to the body of Christ
    3. BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH Principles of Government

These are also taught in the Understanding God class, in which believers are strongly encouraged to participate.

- D. Personal Interview
  - Following attendance at membership classes, the individuals desiring membership shall meet with an elder or appointed leader to verbalize their personal testimony,

## Statement of Purpose

### REACHING THE WORLD

*"Jesus said, 'Go and make disciples of all nations... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.'" Matt. 28:19*

The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ came to earth to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). As His modern-day disciples, we should do no less. Sharing the good news about Jesus Christ is a privilege and responsibility for every Christian and must not be relegated to just a few.

Through specialized training, creative church outreaches and summer festivals, our passion is to reach not only the Kawkawlin area, but reach beyond our borders in every direction of our state with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Matt. 28:19-20*

We accept this commission as a priority of the Church collectively and of each believer individually, and it is our desire to share as widely and effectively as possible the Good News of God's forgiveness in Christ. God equips and calls believers into a variety of vocations and ministries, and within that context each person is to be a witness by word and deed to the Lord Jesus Christ. God offers His love to all without distinction and is concerned that believers achieve their full potential in Christ. The proclamation of the Gospel should be accompanied by genuine love and concern for all and for the whole person. (*Acts 1:8; Col. 4:3-6; Mark 16:15; Matt. 5:13-16; Matt. 9:36; Romans 10:14-17; Matt. 22:37-39; Eph. 3:16-19; Eph. 4:13*)

*"Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'" Matt. 25:34-36*

In addition to the proclamation of the Gospel, the church has been commissioned by Christ to extend in the world His own ministry of compassion and of prophetic protest against evil. The church can never settle for its own comfort in a world wracked by problems such as moral decay, political corruption and oppression, violence and crime, unjust resource use and wealth distribution, and other social scourges that require solutions and interventions informed by Scriptural imperatives. Without manipulating political power to improve Christian standards on a secular and pluralistic society, the church is commanded to act as a conscience to the world by demonstrating the love and righteousness of God in both word and sacrificial deed. (*Luke 3:10-14; Luke 4:16-21; Acts 4:34-35; 2 Cor. 10:4; Gal. 6:10; James 2:14-26; James 5:1-5; 1 John 3:16*)

NOTE: The Bible references are used as illustrations of complete Biblical themes. They are not intended to be used as isolated proof texts.

## Biblical Principles of Church Government

### WHO IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH?

*“He is the head of the Body, the church, who is in the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.” Col. 1:18*

Christ is the head of the Church. He is the true source of all the Church is and does, and His glory is to be the objective of every act, function and motive of the Body, both individually and corporately. (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 2:19)

### WHERE DOES THE CHURCH RECEIVE ITS GUIDANCE?

*“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Tim. 3:16-17*

God has provided His thoughts and His direction for the body in His Word. The Bible reflects and contains His commands, His counsel and His purpose for the Church and for every believer. (2 Tim. 2:15; Matt. 22:37-39; Ps. 119)

### WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF THE CHURCH’S POWER?

*“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Acts 1:8*

The Holy Spirit is the source of the church’s power. The Holy Spirit’s role is to indwell and control believers in order to conform them to the character of Christ. The Holy Spirit imparts unique gifts as He will to build up the Body of Christ. (Rom. 8:10-11; Eph. 1:13; Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:16)

### HOW IS THE CHURCH LED?

*“For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.” 1 Cor. 3:9-10*

God’s plan for leadership is revealed in Scripture. He launched the Church by giving certain individuals specific gifts and abilities (grace) “—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.” These believers, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, initiated the Christian movement and brought local churches into existence through their teaching and preaching. (Eph. 4:11-13; Rom. 15:20)

At BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH we believe that today, this pattern remains the same. These governmental officers, meeting Biblical qualifications of elders, have the spiritual responsibility of setting other elders in place.

*“For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you.” Titus 1:5*

## Membership

### TALENTS AND GIFTS

“For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them.” (Rom. 12:4-6)

We recognize that the body of Christ is composed of interdependent members, each uniquely gifted by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of upbuilding the body. Therefore, each believer should seek to identify, develop and utilize his spiritual gifts and abilities and to seek a place of service within the body, with the support and affirmation of the body. (1 Cor. 12; 1 Cor. 14; Eph. 4:11-13; Matt. 25:14)

### TREASURES

*“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matt. 6:19-21)*

Realizing that we have been bought with the price of Christ’s blood, everything we are and have belongs to Him, and His Kingdom should become the true treasure we pursue.

We recognize the tithe (10% of one’s earnings) as the Biblical standard of giving for the general support of the body. In response to Christ’s abundant giving, offerings can be made above the tithe, which may or may not be designated. We should increasingly seek to submit our personal resources to His Lordship, displaying a spirit of generosity and cheerfulness, knowing that as we give, our lives will be “enriched in everything for all liberality.” (Luke 6:38; Phil. 3:7-8; Matt. 6:33; 1 Peter 1:17-19; Heb. 9:11-14; Matt. 23:23; Eph. 1:7; Mal. 3:8-10; 2 Cor. 8-9; Prov. 3:9-10; Luke 21:1-4; 2 Cor. 9:11)

### FELLOWSHIP

*“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.” (Phil. 2:1-3)*

As members of the body, we should continually seek to develop a spirit of mutual love, concern, encouragement, and the bearing of one another’s burdens. We are to be concerned with each other’s spiritual well-being, stimulating each other to a deeper walk and commitment to Christ. (1 Cor. 1:9; Ps. 133; Rom. 12:10; Gal. 6:2; 1 Peter 3:8-9; Heb. 3:13; Acts 2:42)

## Membership

### THE PURPOSE OF MEMBERSHIP

*“Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common... So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.” (Acts 2:44, 46)*

The New Testament presents a picture of definable groups of people who, once committed to the Lord, identified themselves with and committed themselves to a particular local body. (Rom. 16:1; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 8:1; Phil. 1:1; Acts 11:26)

In order to implement the principles of accountability and commitment to the local body of Christ, as defined in the New Testament and practiced in the early churches, BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH recognizes the need for formal membership.

### THE CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP

*“To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.” (1 Cor. 1:2)*

BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH membership shall be open to anyone twelve years of age or older who has personally accepted Christ as Savior and Lord, who has received baptism as a believer, and who desires to be committed to BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH as a local body of believers. (Acts. 2:38; Acts 2:41; Matt. 28:19-20)

### PRINCIPLES OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMMITMENT

Membership in the body of Christ requires submission to Christ – a desire to bring each phase of one’s life under His Lordship. It, therefore, involves obedience to the Scriptural principles of commitment and accountability to the body of Christ, as summarized below:

#### TIME

*“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Heb. 10:24-25)*

Regular fellowship with other believers is vital to one’s own Christian walk. Therefore, believers should be willing to adjust their schedules to give priority to meeting with the body when it corporately assembles. Further, because Christ expended Himself on our behalf, we should be willing to give of our time to build His Kingdom and pursue those things of eternal significance. (Matt. 6:33; Phil. 2:5-7; 2 Cor. 5:15; Rom. 14:7-8)

## Biblical Principles of Church Government

*“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” Acts 20:28*

As churches were established in the faith, and when more than one person became qualified, elders were appointed to continue and support the pastor-teaching ministry in each local church. To the elders was given the ultimate responsibility for the oversight of that particular church body and the shepherding of its members. (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:28-32)

*“Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.” 1 Tim 5:17*

Some elders would give more time to the spiritual leadership than others and would be called to fill more demanding responsibilities. They, therefore, would be worthy of “double honor” (usually understood as monetary compensation).

At BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH, we understand that ruling elders are the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher. Their calling demands their full attention to the responsibilities of the church. Therefore, we have other leaders who meet the qualifications of elders, but because of time requirements of their secular vocations, they are called ministry directors and lay pastors.

*“Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.’” Acts 6:2-3*

As necessary, deacons were also appointed to serve the church, particularly in undertaking those areas of need that would otherwise prohibit the elders and other leaders (pastor and staff) from performing their Biblical responsibilities (Acts 6:1-7). These leaders, along with all members of each local body, form a unique organism – a visible and functioning expression of the universal church. BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH recognizes this Biblical pattern for the plurality of godly leadership, under the oversight and watchcare of elders.

*“Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.” Heb. 13:17*

In response to the Biblical pattern of leadership, members of the Body are taught in Scripture to lovingly support their leaders and to submit to their leadership. (1 Cor. 16:16; 1 Thess. 5:12-13)

## Biblical Principles of Church Government

### THE BIBLICAL ROLE OF ELDERS

#### **Shepherd the Flock**

Serving in all humility, elders are to guide, direct, guard and protect the members of the body, seeking to meet their needs and assist in any way possible, warning against harmful influences and guarding against false teaching. (*Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-3*)

#### **Lead Through Example**

Elders are to provide a Scriptural role model and are to set a pattern before the flock of a rightly ordered life – with a single purpose, to glorify God. (*1 Peter 5:3*)

#### **Teach & Exhort**

Elders are to see that the flock is fed through insightful and accurate Biblical instruction and admonition. (*1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9*)

#### **Refute Those Who Contradict Truth**

Elders are to confront those who are teaching what they should not teach are who are continuing in a pattern of behavior contradictory to Biblical truth. Thus, elders are to keep closing potential entrances for Satan, so that the truth of Christ will remain credible to both the congregation and the community. (*Acts 20:29-31; Titus 1:9*)

#### **Manage the Church of God**

Elders are to oversee the life of the church, with the assistance of other godly leaders. They must be people who can “rule well.” (*1 Tim. 3:5; 1 Tim. 5:7*)

Elders are to pray for the spiritual and physical well-being of members of the congregation.

### BIBLICAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELDERS

*“A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence... not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.” (1 Tim. 3:2-7)*

*“If a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination... not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.” (Titus 1:6-9)*

1.	Above Reproach	Elders must be blameless, presenting no patterns of Scriptural disobedience or grounds for accusation.
2.	Husband of One Wife	Elders, if married, must be devoted spouses.

## Practical Applications

The Senior Pastor is entrusted with the responsibility to make authoritative decisions based on mutual respect as he oversees the spiritual life of the ministry. He is the mouth-piece of the Board of Elders, the Set Man or First-Among-Equals. Although final authority rests with the Senior Pastor’s office, all decisions will be made in a spirit of meekness with the Board of Elders.

As shepherds of the church, it is one of the roles of the elders to appoint other leaders with complementary gifts to undertake areas and aspects of the ministry that cannot be filled by the Senior Pastor. (*Acts 20:28*)

Teaching within the body should not be limited to the Senior Pastor. The New Testament emphasizes the need for teaching elders and the utilization of other members who are gifted in this area, thus providing a variety of input and role models. (*1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:2*)

### SELECTION OF THE SENIOR PASTOR

In the event of death in the office of Senior Pastor, the Board of Directors and the Leadership Team shall be responsible to conduct a search for candidates to fill the position. In the event of leaving, the Senior Pastor shall have the authority to name his successor in counsel with the Board of Directors and the Leadership Team. Once the elders have selected a candidate, that candidate shall be presented to the Board of Directors, Ministry Staff, Leadership Team, the Servants Council, and then the congregation for affirmation by a two-thirds majority vote.

Although Board members can be removed by the majority vote of the Board, the Senior Pastor, upon Scriptural qualifications, can only be removed by the majority vote of the Board, but must also have a confirmation by three-fifths of the voting church membership for his removal and replacement.

### PROCEDURE FOR AMENDMENT

This document was drafted by faithful but fallible people. Should the Spirit of God point out the need to revise this document in any way, the elders shall present the suggested revisions to the Board of Directors and to the ministry staff for their consideration, and ultimately to the members of the body for ratification by majority vote.

NOTE: Minor revisions not effecting change in the theology, ministry philosophy or overall structure and government shall be made at the discretion of the elders (i.e. grammar, clarification of ideas considered to be confusing, added Scriptural support, etc.).

NOTE: For more detail, see the Bay Valley Christian Church Constitution and Bylaws.

## Practical Applications

### MINISTRY DIRECTORS

A ministry director is a support minister who functions in a leadership role as an elder, fulfilling the ministry Christ has given him in the local church and in support of the Senior Pastor or Set Man. These men or women oversee a specific area of ministry and usually have limited time, because of their responsibilities to their work and family.

### LAY PASTORS

A lay pastor is a support minister who functions in a leadership role as an elder, giving spiritual care to a small group within the body of BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH. These lay pastors oversee a group of believers throughout the surrounding community of our local church and encourage loyalty to Jesus Christ and to our local body of believers.

### SERVANTS COUNCIL

The BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH Servants Council consists of church members who are actively serving in the local body. Meetings are held periodically to obtain their counsel and wisdom prior to presenting major decisions to the body-at-large.

### THE ROLE OF THE SENIOR PASTOR/ELDER

Consistent with the New Testament concept of the gifts, it is evident that the Senior Pastor, like any member of the body, is uniquely gifted and should seek to minister within his gift area. (*Eph. 4:11; 1 Cor. 12*)

The Senior Pastor is the key leader in God’s leadership structure. His office and ministry may be described as general overseer, presiding elder, first among equals, senior pastor, senior elder, or as the set man. He is the person in charge, the one with the God-given responsibility to lead and direct the local church. This leader, chosen by God, sets vision, makes decisions in partnership with the elders, and motivates the congregation to reach the church’s destiny.

In addition to his pasturing role as an elder, the Senior Pastor is primarily to be a teacher of the Word of God – the Bible. He is to teach and exhort by precept and example. His goal is to help mature believers through insightful and accurate presentation and proclamation of the Word, equipping them to be the true “ministers” in the body. As a teacher, he must stress both the understanding and application of God’s truth. (*Rom. 12:6-7; 1 Thess. 2:4-5; Titus 1:7; 1 Thess. 2:10, 12; Eph. 4:11-12*)

Thus, the Senior Pastor should not be responsible to minister in areas unrelated to his primary function as a teaching elder. To ask the Senior Pastor to function in areas that are not his primary gifting is to rob him of study time and devotion to the Word. This can lead to watered down, inaccurate teaching, which in turn weakens the body. (*2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Tim. 1:13*)

## Biblical Principles of Church Government

3.	Temperate	Elders must be self-controlled, enslaved to nothing, free from excesses.
4.	Prudent	Elders must be sober, sensible, wise, balanced in judgment, not given to quick, superficial decisions based on immature thinking.
5.	Respectable	Elders must demonstrate a well-ordered life and good behavior.
6.	Hospitable	Elders must be unselfish with their personal resources. They must be willing to share blessings with others.
7.	Able to Teach	Elders must be able to communicate the truth of God and exhort sound doctrine in a non-argumentative way. (2 Tim. 4:2 & 2:24)
8.	Not Addicted to Wine	Elders must be free from addictions, and must be willing to limit their liberty for the sake of others.
9.	Not Pugnacious	Elders must be gentle and characterized by forbearance and tenderness – not having a quick temper.
10.	Not Contentious	Elders must not be given to quarreling or selfish argumentation.
11.	Free From the Love of Money	Elders must not be stingy, greedy or out for sordid gain. They should not be preoccupied with amassing material things, but rather should be a model of giving.
12.	Manage Own Household	Elders must have a well-ordered household, a healthy family life, and well-behaved children. (Pertains to those children still under the authority of the parents).
13.	Not a New Convert	Elders must not be new believers. They must have been Christians long enough to demonstrate the reality of their conversion and the depth of their spirituality. NOTE: Suggested guideline – at least two years from time of BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH membership.
14.	Good Reputation With Outsiders	Elders must be well respected by unbelievers, and must be free from hypocrisy.
15.	Not Self-Willed	Elders must not be stubborn, insensitive or prone to force opinions on others. They must be more interested in service than self-pleasure.
16.	Not Quick-Tempered	Elders must be able to exercise self-control and patience in difficult situations.
17.	Love What Is Good	Elders must desire the will of God in every decision.
18.	Just	Elders must be fair and impartial. Their judgments must be based on Scriptural principles.

## Biblical Principles of Church Government

19.	Devout	Elders must be reverent, continually desiring to be separated from sin. They must be devoted to prayer, the study of Scripture and the guarding of their own spiritual walk. (Acts 20:28)
20.	Holding Fast the Faithful Word	Elders must be stable in the faith, obedient to the Word of God, continually seeking to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

### SELECTION OF ELDERS

Scripture gives evidence of the first elders being appointed by the founders of the church. By this example, it is implied that the existing spiritual leadership of a church be intimately involved in the process of selecting elders, to insure selection based on spiritual rather than superficial qualifications. Beyond this, there are no specific guidelines given regarding the selection process. It would, therefore, appear that freedom is given to the individual church to develop a process that will best serve its own special needs and situations. (Acts 14:21; Titus 1:2)

### PROCESS FOR ELDER SELECTION

In May of each year, the elders currently serving shall determine the number of positions, if any, to be filled that year on the Board of Elders. If the elders determine that additional elders are needed, they shall initiate the following process for elder selection:

The existing elders shall be the Nominating Committee, and nominate other members of the congregation

The Nominating committee will meet to review the qualifications for elders and determine questions that should be posed to the candidates.

The congregation shall be provided with teaching regarding the Biblical qualifications for elders and their Scriptural role.

With the Biblical qualifications in mind, members of the Board of Elders will be given 30 days to submit prayerfully the names of members for consideration as elder.

Men or women whose names are submitted shall be so informed, and they shall be urged to engage in self-appraisal and personal evaluation in light of the Scriptural qualifications. Any person may withdraw his name at that point if he does not aspire to the position of elder (1 Tim. 3:1) or if he does not believe he adequately meets the qualifications.

## Biblical Principles of Church Government

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH Board of Directors shall be comprised of five or more elders and/or deacons. While Scripture indicates that elders bear the ultimate responsibility for the watchcare of the church, the Board of Directors shall be specifically delegated by the elders to oversee legal and financial matters and provide for the care and maintenance of all properties owned by BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH. As necessary, further delineation of responsibilities shall be determined jointly by the elders and the deacons or those who make up this Board. See the BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH Constitution and Bylaws for details about the role of the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors shall have whatever internal organization it deems appropriate to carry out its responsibilities and to fulfill any requirement necessary for them to act as legal representatives of BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

The term for members of the Board of Directors shall be the same as for any other elder or deacon position.

### LEADERSHIP TEAM

BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH also has a Leadership Team, made up of elders and deacons who give care and direction to each ministry area where godly wisdom and counsel is sought. The Leadership Team meets monthly to ensure good communication and unity among its members.

### MINISTRY STAFF

In accordance with New Testament principles of leadership, "ministry staff" members are to be considered co-ministers and, therefore, are not to be selected solely on the basis of performance or professional credentials. Rather, we acknowledge the following criteria for the selection of ministry staff members:

1. A love for the Lord and the display of a consistent godly walk.
2. A specific commitment to the BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH body and co-leaders.
3. Gifts, abilities, or credentials that qualify them for their area of ministry.

All ministry staff members will be required to meet deacon qualifications, regardless of their specific area of ministry. They fulfill a position of leadership and will serve as role models for other believers. Therefore, spiritual qualifications and walk are of the utmost importance.

## Biblical Principles of Church Government

6. After prayerfully considering each nominee, the Leadership Team shall make final recommendations. Those nominees who have not been recommended would be informed by the Leadership Team as to the reason for their not being recommended, with reference to whatever qualifications might not have been fulfilled.
7. The elders shall review the nominees and make final selection. Nominees not selected at this point shall also be given reason by the elders as to why they were not selected.
8. The names of the prospective deacons shall be brought before the members of the church, who will be given 30 days to show cause why any of the prospective deacons would not be qualified to serve. Consistent with Matt. 18:15 and Matt. 5:24, such “cause” must be expressed first to the prospective deacon and then to the Leadership Team for consideration.
9. At the end of the 30-day period, the prospective deacons will be presented to the members of the church for affirmation by majority vote of the members present and for a service of dedication.

The process of selection of deacons may occur simultaneously with the annual selection of elders or as the need presents itself throughout the year.

### TERM OF DEACONS

Since Scripture indicates no fixed term for deacons, no specific term of office is recommended. Instead, each deacon, upon appointment, shall be asked for a one-year commitment, subject to review, recommitment and re-affirmation by the church members each subsequent year.

During that period of annual review, both the individual deacon, the elders and the director of that particular ministry shall evaluate his continued service as a deacon, again considering the Biblical qualifications, as well as any personal factors that might affect his service. An individual’s service as a deacon may be discontinued by his own decision, or by the unanimous decision of the elders and director of that ministry.

Those deacons renewing their commitments will again be presented to the members of the congregation for affirmation and dedication.

A person’s terminating his service as a deacon shall not preclude his service as a future deacon, subject at that time to the same process of deacon selection.

## Biblical Principles of Church Government

The Nominating Committee shall review the names of the nominees and shall conduct interviews with each nominee.

After prayerfully considering each nominee, the Nominating Committee shall make final recommendations. Those nominees who have not been recommended by the elders shall be informed by the Nominating Committee as to the reason for their not being recommended, with reference to whatever qualifications might not have been fulfilled.

The elders shall review the nominees and make a final selection. Nominees not selected at this point shall also be given reason by the elders as to why they were not selected.

The names of the prospective elders shall be brought before the members of the church, who will be given 30 days to show cause why any one of the prospective elders would not be qualified to serve. Consistent with Matt. 18:15 and Matt. 5:24, any member with such “cause” must first express his concern to the prospective elder, and then must also express his concern to the Board of Elders for consideration.

At the end of the 30-day period, the prospective elders will be presented to the members of the church for affirmation and for a service of dedication. Such time of affirmation and dedication shall occur every year, whether to affirm new elders or re-affirm the service of the existing elders.

The whole process of selection shall take three to four months. In the event of vacancy or special need, the elders may refer to previous nominees to make a selection, or may re-initiate the whole selection process, as they deem necessary.

### TERM OF ELDERS

Since Scripture indicates no fixed term for elders, no specific fixed term of office is recommended. Instead, each elder, upon appointment, shall be asked for a one-year commitment, subject to review, recommitment and re-affirmation by the church members each subsequent year.

During the period of annual review, both the individual and the other elders shall evaluate his continued service as an elder, again considering the Biblical qualification, as well as any personal factors that might affect his service. An individual’s service as an elder may be discontinued by his own decision, or by the unanimous decision of the other elders.

Those elders renewing their commitment would again be presented to the members of the congregation for affirmation and dedication in January of each year.

A person’s leaving the Board of Elders would not preclude his service as a future elder, subject to the regular elder selection process.

## Biblical Principles of Church Government

### BIBLICAL ROLE OF DEACONS

*“Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business;’” (Acts 6:2-3)*

Deacons serve under the direction of the elders, undertaking those areas of service necessary for the church’s functioning that would otherwise prohibit the elders and other leaders (pastor and staff) from performing their Biblical responsibilities. No specific, on-going roles are mentioned in Scripture, probably because service needs change, and so the role of the deacons should be flexible. (NOTE: Perhaps this is why qualifications for deacons are stressed rather than specific tasks. In contrast, the function of the elders is more stabilized, for spiritual needs are relatively constant).

While there is equality between elders, deacons, and all members of the body, for the purpose of order, Scripture indicates that elders, as overseers, are corporately entrusted with final authority within the local church.

### QUALIFICATIONS OF DEACONS

*“Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.” (1 Tim 3:8-12)*

1.	Individuals of Dignity	Deacons must be mature, of sound mind and character, yielded to the Holy Spirit.
2.	Not Double-Tongued	Deacons must demonstrate verbal consistency. They must not be prone to saying one thing to one person and something else to another.
3.	Not Addicted to Wine	Deacons must be free from addictions, and must be willing to limit their liberty for the sake of others.
4.	Not Fond of Sordid Gain	Deacons must be purely motivated in their service.
5.	Holding the Mystery of Faith With a Clear Conscience	Deacons must have a sound knowledge of Christian truths and a lifestyle in accord with them. They must not be easily swayed from the Truth.
6.	Beyond Reproach	Deacons must display a lifestyle free from on-going patterns of Scriptural disobedience.

## Biblical Principles of Church Government

7.	First Tested	Deacons must have proven over time that they faithful and that their walk is credible. (NOTE: Suggested guideline – at least one year from time of BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH membership).
8.	Their Spouses Must Be Faithful, Dignified, Temperate – Not Malicious Gossips	Deacons, if married, must have spouses that are also devoted to the Lord and yielded to the control of the Spirit.
9.	The Husband of One Wife	Deacons, if married, must be devoted spouses.
10.	Manage Household Well	Deacons must have well-ordered households, a healthy family life, and well-behaved children. (Pertains to those children still under the authority of the parents).

### SELECTION OF DEACONS

As the various ministries of BAY VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH expand and develop, the need may arise for the supportive leadership of deacons. It shall be the responsibility of the elders and the director(s) of a particular ministry to identify that need and determine the number of deacons needed at that time to provide adequate supportive leadership. The following process shall then be initiated:

1. The need for the deacon leadership shall be made known to the Leadership Team by the Senior Pastor.
2. The congregation shall be provided with teaching regarding the Biblical qualifications for deacons, as well as a description of the specific role to be filled and any additional qualifications that the elders and director of that ministry would deem necessary for that role to be adequately fulfilled.
3. With the role and qualifications in mind, the Leadership Team shall be asked to submit prayerfully the names of members for consideration.
4. Men or women whose names are submitted shall be so informed, and they shall be urged to engage in self-appraisal and personal evaluation in light of the Scriptural qualifications. Any person may withdraw his name at that point if he does not aspire to the position or if he does not believe he adequately meets the qualifications.
5. The Leadership Team, along with the director of the particular ministry involved, shall review the names and conduct an interview with each nominee.