

Fellowship Baptist Church



COVENANT

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Receiving Members

We must be very careful about receiving new members. Our aim is a regenerate church membership so that we are a spiritual body with one mind in Spirit and in truth (1 Co. 1:10). If we are hasty and careless in this matter, the church will grow weak because it will be a mixed multitude of saved and unsaved.

Not all who say they believe in Jesus are saved. The people in Matthew 7:21-23 call upon Jesus and do many works, but they are not saved because they do not know Christ personally. The people in John 2:23-25 “believed,” but Jesus knew that they were not believing on Him for salvation; they were merely wanting a king to provide for them and to conquer their enemies. Compare John 6:15, 26. In John 6:66, these same people turned away from Jesus because they were offended at His teaching. Also in Acts 8:12-13, Simon “believed,” but he was only believing in order to get power and was not believing sincerely for salvation. See Acts 8:18-23.

The requirement for those who joined the first church (Acts 2:36-42)

Acts 2 is the example of church membership in the first church, which is the pattern for every church throughout the age.

The following two fundamental things were required.

1. They were saved by repenting of their sin and believing on Christ (Acts 2:36-41).

Salvation is necessary for membership in a New Testament church. This is called a “regenerate church membership.” A New Testament church is a spiritual body composed of born again members (1 Co. 12:27). It is a spiritual house composed of living stones (1 Pe. 2:5). Carelessness and haste in the matter of salvation has turned multitudes of churches into weak mixed multitudes of saved and lost, faithful and unfaithful.

The members of the first church repented (Acts 2:38). They were pricked in their hearts and convicted of their sin and their lost condition (Acts 2:37). This is what produces repentance. It is the work of the Holy Spirit. Christ also preached repentance (Lu. 13:3, 5). The apostle Paul preached repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21). Repentance is to surrender to God’s authority. It is to turn *to* God *from* idols and false religion (1 Thessalonians 1:9). On the day of Pentecost, the Jews repented of their works religion. They repented of trusting in Moses and the law. They repented of their own self-righteousness. Repentance is a change of heart that produces a change of life. If there is a repentant heart, there is a willingness to change the life. Two examples of repentance are Zacchaeus (Lk. 19:5-9) and the Prodigal Son (Lk. 15:17-19).

The members of the first church not only repented; they believed on Christ. They received the gospel gladly (Acts 2:41). There is no compulsion. They believed that Jesus was crucified for their sin and rose from the dead (Acts 2:23-24). They believed that Jesus is the only Lord (Acts 2:36). Saving faith is to believe 100% from the heart that Christ is the only Lord and Saviour, that He died for my sin, and that there is no other way of salvation. Compare John 6:69; Acts 8:37; Romans 10:9-10.

We see in Acts 2 that those who believed on Christ had a changed life. They had a born again conversion experience. They gave evidence of their faith by continuing steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers (Acts 2:42). This is the example for every church throughout the age. The members must be saved and give clear evidence of it by faithfulness to the church and zeal in Christian living.

2. They were baptized scripturally (Acts 2:41).

They were baptized *after* they were saved, and they were baptized *by immersion* in water as a public testimony of their faith in Christ and as a picture of the gospel: the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Compare Acts 8:38-39; Romans 6:3-4.

Steps for receiving new church members by baptism

1. A candidate for baptism must meet with the elders and give account of his salvation and his qualification to be a member. The leaders will ascertain whether the individual understands salvation and baptism properly and whether or not the individual has been born again. They will check things such as the following: Does the person understand repentance? Does he understand the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)? Has he repented and turned from idols and false religion (1 Th. 1:9-10)? Has he believed on Christ as Lord and Saviour (Romans 10:9)? Has he experienced a changed life (2 Co. 5:17)? Has he testified of his salvation before his unsaved relatives and friends? (Luke 9:26)? Does he understand the biblical purpose of baptism?

2. The elders must agree unanimously as to whether to receive the candidate for baptism and membership. If there is doubt on the part of a leader, the decision should wait until there is full agreement. They can assign him further materials to read, courses to take, etc.

3. The candidate must go through the baptism course with a teacher who will be assigned to him. He must also study the church covenant. He must read each of the Scriptures that are referenced in the covenant and answer the review questions. He must agree 100% with the covenant. We want the body to be completely likeminded as God commands (1 Co. 1:10; Ro. 15:4). In order to protect our unity, we will not allow someone to join our church who works for an ecumenical organization, such as United Mission to Nepal, Campus Crusade, Youth for Christ, and Youth With A Mission. It is impossible to obey the Bible and work for such organizations. See Romans 16:17; 2 Corinthians 6:14; 2 Timothy 3:5; Jude 3. If we earnestly contend for the New Testament faith as commanded by God, it is impossible to be yoked together with ecumenical organizations that are composed of doctrinal mixed multitudes.

4. If the elders are satisfied with the candidate's testimony of salvation and qualification for church membership, they will recommend him/her to the church for baptism and membership.

5. An announcement will be made before the church at least one week before the baptism to give the members an opportunity to talk to the leaders if they have any doubts about the individual's qualification.

6. On the baptism day, the candidate will give his testimony of salvation before the congregation and will publicly agree with the church's covenant.

7. The church will receive the new member by a vote of hands.

8. After being baptized, the candidate becomes a member.

9. Every new member must go through the *One-Year Discipleship Course* with an instructor. He will be assigned a teacher, and he must make time in his schedule to meet with the teacher each week. If a member began these studies before membership, he will continue the studies afterward until the course is completed.

Steps for receiving members from another church

1. The church leaders will contact the leaders of the previous church to see if the candidate is a member in good standing.
2. The candidate must have a scriptural testimony of salvation. He must appear before the leaders and their wives and give his or her testimony and answer any questions. The leaders will ascertain whether the individual understands salvation and baptism properly and whether or not the individual has been born again. They will check things such as the following: Does the person understand repentance? Does he understand the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)? Has he repented and turned from idols and other false religions (1 Th. 1:9-10)? Has he believed on Christ as Lord and Saviour (Romans 10:9)? Has he experienced a changed life (2 Co. 5:17)? Has he testified of his salvation before his unsaved relatives and friends? (Luke 9:26)? Does he understand the biblical purpose of baptism?
3. The candidate must have a scriptural baptism. The baptism must be *after* salvation; it must be by immersion; and it must be performed by a New Testament church that has the authority to baptize. This does not mean that the church must agree with our church in all matters of doctrine and practice. It means that it is a church that has a sound gospel and a sound doctrine of Christ and other such “fundamental” doctrines of the New Testament faith so that it can be called a true church. We will not accept baptism from false groups such as the Roman Catholic Church, Mormon, Church of Christ (who teach baptismal regeneration and salvation by grace plus works), Seventh-day Adventist, or Jehovah’s Witness. We will not accept baptism from Protestant denominations that baptize infants. We will not receive members from any church that teaches that a child of God can lose his salvation, because this is a corruption of the gospel.
4. The elders must agree unanimously on the decision as to whether to receive the candidate for membership. If there is doubt on the part of a leader, the decision should wait until there is full agreement.
5. The candidate must study the church covenant. He must read each of the Scriptures that are referenced therein and take the covenant test. He must agree 100% with the covenant. We want the body to be completely likeminded (1 Co. 1:10). Someone will be assigned to help the candidate in this matter, to answer any questions, and to grade the test.
6. The candidate must fill out the application for church membership.
7. An announcement will be made before the church at least one week before the individual is received into membership. This is to give the members an opportunity to talk to the leaders if they have any doubts about the individual’s qualification.
8. On the day when the candidate is presented to the church for membership, he will give his testimony of salvation before the congregation and will publicly agree with the church’s covenant.
9. The church will receive the new member by a vote of hands.
10. After being approved, the candidate becomes a member and can take the Lord’s Supper.
11. Every new member must go through the *One-Year Discipleship Course* with an instructor, as mentioned previously.

Child Baptism Policy and Junior Church Membership

A child (meaning anyone under the age of 18) will be received for baptism after the same fashion as an adult. The child must be old enough to understand repentance and the gospel and must demonstrate a good understanding before his elders. He must testify of his repentance and faith in Christ. He must

give evidence of his salvation before his parents and before the church. The child must go through the baptism class and show good understanding of biblical baptism.

The child must appear before the church leaders and their wives to give his or her testimony and to answer questions.

A child that is accepted for baptism becomes a church member, but not a full voting member. He is a Junior Member. He or she can take the Lord's Supper and participate in ministries according to his age and ability and qualifications.

At age 18, the Junior Membership will expire and he or she must seek membership under full adult privileges. He does this by approaching the leaders and giving his testimony of salvation before them. He also studies the church covenant, answers the review questions, and agrees to it 100%. If approved, he gives his testimony before the church and is received as a full member by vote of the church.

This is meant to be a check point. It is a protection for the individual and for the church. It is common for those who are baptized in childhood to later express doubt about their salvation. This gives each one an opportunity to reexamine his salvation experience to make sure that he has full assurance of faith. If he has doubts, he can settle the matter by professing repentance and faith in Christ and being baptized. It also gives the youth an opportunity to confirm his personal commitment to church membership when he reaches adulthood. Decisions made in childhood are made under adult supervision and must be reevaluated in adulthood from an adult perspective. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (1 Corinthians 13:11).

Standards for Workers

Standards for Elders

The standards for elders are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 11 and Titus 1:5-9. These standards emphasize that the pastor must be blameless in his personal Christian life, in his family, and in his reputation before the community. A divorced man cannot be a pastor because he cannot be the example that he should be before the church and the community (1 Pe. 5:3). The pastor's wife and children must also serve the Lord and not have a bad reputation (1 Ti. 3:4, 5, 11; Tit. 1:6).

Standards for Deacons

The standards for deacons and their wives are found in 1 Timothy 3:8-11.

Standards for General Workers

The following standards apply to all church workers, including song leaders, Sunday School teachers, those who take up the offerings or greet visitors, read the Bible in the services, etc.

It is important to establish such standards for many reasons.

First, God requires it (1 Co. 4:2).

Second, the workers represent the church and Jesus Christ. The community knows who the church workers are and if they don't live as they should, they will bring reproach upon Christ. Visitors judge the church by those who are prominent in leadership and work. If the workers don't live good Christian lives, the unbelievers judge that Christianity is an empty religion.

Third, the workers are examples to the rest of the church. Having standards for church workers is an important part of raising the level of Christian living for the entire church. It is not possible for a church to have worker-type standards for every member, but it is possible to require a certain level of standard for those who serve in the church. A person doesn't have to teach Sunday School or work in the music ministry, etc., but if he does it is not unreasonable for the church to require him to meet the following standards, which are mere basic standards of Christian living. New members learn how to live for Christ by observing the church leaders and workers, and if they do not live right the entire church is affected. If the Sunday School teachers, for example, are not required to maintain the following standards, the students will learn from their poor example, but if Sunday School teachers are required to maintain these standards the students will follow their example and will grow in Christ.

Fourth, the workers should challenge the other believers (2 Co. 9:2). By having good standards for all workers, the churches members learn that if they want to serve the Lord in any capacity in the church beyond merely attending, they must live a godly, faithful Christian life. I recall how I was challenged by this type of standard when I was a new believer. I wanted God to use my life and I wanted to prepare for His service. I learned that the Bible school I wanted to attend had high standards, and this was a motivation for me to cut my hair, quit smoking, and do other things in preparation for the Lord's service. The standards challenged me.

Following are the standards that this church requires for general workers:

1. *Good Christian testimony* (2 Co. 8:18). Church workers must have a good testimony so that the name of Christ and the reputation of the church are not injured. There must be a good testimony in the home, in the church, in the school, and on the job.

2. *Sound in doctrine* (1 Co. 1:10; 1 Ti. 1:3). Church workers must agree with the doctrines of the Bible as taught by the church.

3. *Faithfulness* (1 Co. 4:2; Pr. 25:19). Church workers must be faithful--faithful to the church services and required activities (Heb. 10:25), faithful to their assigned church duties, etc. If a church worker must miss a service or other required activity because of his job or some emergency, he should inform the leaders.

4. *Honest reputation* (2 Co. 8:21). Church workers must be honest in their dealings with all men and must have a reputation of honesty. The church worker must not steal, must not lie, and must pay his debts.

5. *Diligence* (2 Co. 8:22). Church workers must show diligence in their Christian lives and in their work for the Lord. A person who is lazy and half-hearted should not be involved in Christian ministry. See also Ro. 12:11; Eph. 4:28; 1 Th. 4:11; 2 Th. 3:10.

6. *Separation from the evil things of the world* (Ro. 12:2; 1 Jn. 2:15-17; Jas. 4:4). Church workers must avoid such things as unwholesome movies and television programs and YouTube, worldly things on social media, video games, using or selling liquor, and worldly partying. They should also not work in places where such things are conducted. Church workers should avoid worldly music such as cinema music, pop music, and contemporary Christian music.

7. *Godly submission to the pastor-elders* (1 Th. 5:12-13; 1 Ti. 5:17; Heb. 13:17). Pastors are not lords over the church (1 Pe. 5:1-3), but they are overseers. God has given them authority to teach the Word of God, to exhort in the way of righteousness, to lead in the fulfillment of the Great Commission, and to discipline those who err. Thus, as long as the pastors are following the Bible, the church members should submit and be a blessing to and seek for unity in the congregation. (See *Pastors, Deacons, and Church Members*, a free eBook available from www.wayoflife.org.)

8. *Modest dress*. The following are six Bible principles that teach God's people how to dress properly in this fallen world. Our church requires that the female workers dress in a modest fashion all of the time and not just when they are at church. *First, the Christian's clothing must cover the body properly and not expose the parts of the body which have particular sexual appeal.* Isaiah 47:2 says that for a woman to bare her leg and thigh is nakedness. Thus immodest clothing would include skirts or dresses that show the leg, shorts, slit skirts that tease, low blouses, short blouses that bare the midriff, deep V-necked dresses, backless dresses, halter tops, and any modern swimsuit. Immodest clothing would also include any style that uses flimsy material that can be seen through. *Second, the Christian's clothing does not sensually accent the body.* Tight, clinging attire is as immodest as skimpy attire because the woman's figure is emphasized and accented. *Third, the Christian's clothing is not extravagant.* When the apostle deals with modest attire in 1 Timothy 2:9, he mentions "broided hair, gold, pearls, and costly array." The goal of this world's godless fashion industry is to create a haughty, ostentatious, worldly-wise look, as well as a sexual look. The godly woman will reject such fashions. This means that a godly woman would not wear excessive jewelry and makeup that would draw undue attention to herself. We must remember to "let our moderation be known unto all men" (Php. 4:5). We must dress for the Lord's glory and not our own (1 Co. 10:31). *Fourth, the Christian's clothing is to be sexually distinctive* (Ge. 1:27; De. 22:5; 1 Co. 11:14-15). The woman's attire and appearance is to be distinctively feminine and the man's distinctively masculine. The modern unisex movement is in open rebellion against Almighty God and His Word, and the Christian should have nothing to do with any fashion associated with it. We believe that this means the woman should not wear pants, because these have historically been man's apparel and it was the feminist unisex movement in the 1960s that popularized pants on women. Revolutionary fashion designers such as Mary Quant, inventor of the mini-skirt, wore pants as a sign of "woman's liberation." This also means that men should not wear long hair or earrings or anything that is feminine

in appearance. *Fifth, the Christian's clothing is to be identified with holiness and godliness and not to be identified with anything that is evil* (1 Th. 5:22; Eph. 5:11). If a clothing style is clearly identified with rebellion against God's laws, with anarchy, with sexual license, with blasphemy, with idolatry, with moral decadence, or with any other evil, it should not be worn by a Christian. This would prohibit fashions, for example, that have come out of the world of punk and rap, such as long hair on men, tattoos, tight jeans on women, torn jeans, low pants, and such. This would also prohibit tattoos with their historic identification with rebellion and paganism. *Sixth, the Christian's clothing is to mark him or her as peculiar unto the Lord, as one who has been redeemed from all iniquity and who is zealous for good works* (Titus 2:14). God's people are to be separate, peculiar, different, set apart, pilgrims, heavenly citizens in a foreign world. We must bear His stamp. We must stand out from the crowd because we are walking by heaven's light. We must not fly the world's flag. When God's people are no longer peculiar before the world they have compromised the Word of God. We must fear God more than man. We must be more concerned about pleasing God than man. We must not draw back from bearing Christ's reproach in this wicked world. He said, "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mk. 8:38). Paul said that if we deny Christ, he also will deny us (2 Ti. 2:12).

Ushers

"I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Psalm 84:10).

This church appoints ushers to assist the leaders in maintaining order in the services.

The usher's job is not merely to sit by the church door and watch people. The usher's main duties are as follows: Greet the people in a friendly Christian manner. Welcome visitors and help them know where to go and what to do. This involves meeting visitors at the gate if it looks like they don't know what to do. Help visitors obtain a hymnbook and find a seat. Maintain peace and quiet during the services (1 Cor. 14:40). Keep people from talking on their mobile phones. (If they go outside to talk, they should move away from the church building so they cannot be heard.) Keep children quiet. Seat latecomers in the back and don't allow them to walk toward the front and thus disturb the service. Watch for suspicious characters that might cause trouble. Guard the outside of the church against thieves during the services.

The usher is required to wear a shirt and tie and have a clean, neat appearance from head to toe.

The usher must arrive at the services at least 15 minutes early to begin his work.

The qualifications of the usher are as follows: He must be a member of the church in good standing. He must be faithful and have a good spiritual testimony in the church and in the community. He must have a respectful attitude toward the leaders. He must have a servant spirit so that he does his job diligently and cheerfully. He must be old enough and mature enough for the work. He must have the courage to enforce peace and order in the services and to confront people who are disturbing.

The usher operates under the authority given to him by the church and its leaders.

He can get courage from God. 2 Timothy 1:17 says, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Fears are common to man, but a child of God can face his fears and receive God's power and help.

Standards for Church Music

The following standards are summarized and abbreviated from “Biblical Principles of Music” in *Church Music Standards and Training Course* (www.wayoflife.org). See “Biblical Principles of Music” for the full teaching on these points and references to further explanation and training. This course also includes suggested resources for further training on the music issue.

The churches need to train the people in music so well that they can test it by biblical standards. They must be able to discern such things as soft rock, honky tonk, dance rhythms, chords as used in CCM, and worldly vocal styles.

It is not enough to publish a list of unacceptable music. Such lists are helpful, but any list will be obsolete in a short time. Further, no list is exhaustive.

The music must be sound in doctrine (Col. 3:16).

The words of the songs must be theologically sound according to the teaching of the Bible. A great deal of Contemporary Christian Music is unacceptable because it represents ecumenical charismatic doctrine or it presents a vague message that lacks doctrinal clarity and strength.

God’s people must weigh every song and hymn by the absolute standard of God’s Word. Just because a song is in a good hymnbook doesn’t mean that it is sound theologically. Just because it has a pleasant tune and people like it doesn’t mean that it is acceptable.

We want more than just theological soundness, we want theological depth. We want richness of truth that will edify deeply and broadly. The lyrics must be examined carefully to make sure that we are not singing heresy and also that we are not singing vapid, emotional, sweet nothings. This is why we avoid shallow Southern Gospel songs such as “I’ll Fly Away,” “Just a Little Talk with Jesus,” “Step into the Water,” “There’s a Rainbow,” and “My God Is Real.” The Stamps-Baxter hymns were typically characterized by biblical shallowness, if not outright heresy. This is also why we don’t want only a diet of revivalist songs. These were geared for a mixed-multitude evangelistic forum, such as those written by Ira Sankey for D.L. Moody crusades, and therefore lack depth. “Sankey’s songs were simple and direct, appealing to the heart and leading to a decision.” Examples are “Tell Me the Old Story,” “There’ll Be No Dark Valley,” “Throw out the Life Line,” “Wonderful Words of Life,” “I Need Thee Every Hour,” “The Cleansing Fountain,” “Faith Is the Victory,” and “Trusting Jesus.” *The Sword of the Lord’s Soul Stirring Songs and Hymns* is in the Sankey revivalist tradition. These are all good hymns and have their place, but there is also a need for hymns of greater spiritual and doctrinal depth to challenge the people and better educate them and to build them up to a higher level.

“Godly music is word-enriched and loaded with sound doctrine. Godly music packages Bible doctrines in memorable format” (Chris Starr).

The music must emphasize “melody” (Eph. 5:19).

Melody is the simplest part of music. It is the basic tune. It is the part that can be sung and hummed and whistled.

A good melody reinforces the words and helps God’s people remember the words and edify themselves with the words all during their days.

By emphasizing melody, God’s Word is teaching us to keep the music simple so that it doesn’t distract from the message of the words. There should be a good singable melody and the rest of the music

should never overwhelm the melody. The music must never become so complicated or harmonic or loud that it drowns out the simple melody. In sacred music, a simple musical arrangement is superior to an overly complicated one.

The music must be spiritual and non-worldly in sound (Ro. 12:2; Eph. 4:17-19; 5:19; Col. 3:16; Jas. 4:4; 1 Pe. 2:11; 1 Jo. 2:15-16).

“Spiritual” means set apart for God, different from the world. Spiritual is that which is under the control of the Spirit of God, as explained in the verse previous to Ephesians 5:19. “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.” Spiritual is the opposite of carnal, fleshly. “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.” Spiritual is the opposite of the unfruitful works of darkness that are mentioned in Ephesians 5:11. Spiritual is the opposite of worldliness.

Paul is saying that God’s people are to sing songs that are holy, that are sacred, that are set apart for God, that are not carnal and fleshly, that are different in quality from the songs of the world, that are morally pure, that are of a heavenly flavor rather than a worldly.

The church’s music will not sound like world’s pop music and the music that the world uses for dancing and drinking and partying. The music of a holy God should contain no aspect of the world’s sensual ways.

Some styles of music that we purposefully avoid are dance syncopation (e.g., the backbeat, beat anticipation), honky tonk styles (ragtime, boogie woogie, etc., that are popular in Southern Gospel), sensual vocal styles (e.g., scooping, sliding, breathiness, vocal fry), soft, overly emotional styles that are created by the wrong use of chords (e.g., unresolving chord cadences). The “soft sound” that weakens the power, dynamism, majesty, spiritual conviction, and militarism of sacred music.

We avoid the use of drums and electric guitars, because they are so totally identified with rock music and so easily used in a pop music fashion. (An exception is the use of drums in a timpani section of an orchestra.) (We must realize, of course, that rock can be played easily on a piano or an acoustic guitar.)

See “The Language of Music Styles” for a basic education on how to judge styles of music. This is one segment of *The Satanic Attack on Sacred Music*, a video series available at www.wayoflife.org.

The music must edify (1 Co. 14:26).

“Edify” means to build up in the faith by means of hearing and understanding the truth of God’s Word.

All things being done unto edification means that sacred music must emphasize the message. The message must be clear so that it speaks to the people’s minds and hearts and thus edifies. Nothing must be allowed to detract from this. The musical instruments can be too loud and drown out the message. The music can also be so complex that it hinders the message. If the harmonies, for example, are so complex that the message is not clear, that is not good sacred music.

All things being done unto edification means there is no place for entertainment in sacred music. We want to purposefully and emphatically avoid anything that speaks of entertainment. This is why we do not applaud special music. This is why we don’t use sensual vocal techniques that draw attention to the singer (scooping, sliding, breathiness, vocal fry). This is why we don’t use video cameras to spotlight the singers and musicians and highlight them on video screens. These things are the way of performance and entertainment, not the way of true worship. It is carnally distracting.

All things being done unto edification means that each song should be selected because of its message. If the message is theologically wrong (e.g., “The Battle Hymn of the Republic”) or weak (e.g., “Church in the Wild Wood”), there is no edification.

The music must not produce a charismatic style mystical experience (“be sober,” 1 Peter 1:13; 5:8).

Contemporary worship music is designed to create an emotional experience, a sensual experience, as opposed to a sacred music style that edifies through the understanding. Toward his end, contemporary musicians use music with a sensual dance rhythms, non-resolving chord cadences, repetition, electronic modulation, and other elements so that people will get carried away emotionally.

We reject any church music that is designed to create a highly emotional state or that produces any sort of hypnotic effect.

The music must not borrow from and thus build bridges to the world of contemporary Christian music (Ro. 16:17-18; 1 Co. 10:21; 15:33; 2 Co. 6:14-18; Eph. 5:11; 2 Ti. 3:5; Re. 18:4).

Contemporary Christian Music is a major element of building the apostate one-world church and represents this world with all of its doctrinal, spiritual, and moral dangers

In former times, God’s people were not in much danger of being influenced by the authors of songs and hymns. But the Internet has changed that dramatically. Now if a song is sung in a church, the people can go online and find the author and communicate quite intimately with him or her and his associates and his “world.”

We reject any music that is written by contemporary musicians in order to avoid building bridges to these people and to their associates and to the dangerous ecumenical world that they represent.

The music must aim excellence (Php. 1:10; 1 Co. 10:31).

Everything about the church’s music must be done on purpose, with biblical and spiritual wisdom, always aiming for the very best, the very highest, never satisfied with mediocrity, progressing in excellence. This is not for the glory of man, but for the glory of God.

We will aim for excellence in the standards for singers and musicians, in the selection of every song and hymn, in the conducting of every aspect of the song service, and in the quality of the singing and playing.

The music must be unquestionably right and safe (1 Th. 5:21-22).

To hold fast only that which is good, avoiding even the very appearance of evil is the highest possible standard for music. The standard is not just the bare minimum, not mediocrity, not borderline, not questionable in any way.

This is one reason why we avoid the use of drums and electric guitars. Even if they are used to play the right kind of sound, they are too intimately identified with rock music, and we want to avoid all such identity.

This is our fundamental music standard. If a song or hymn is questionable, we want to avoid it. If we aren’t sure if it is right, sound, and healthy, we want to avoid it. There is a wealth of unquestionably sound, doctrinally correct, spiritual, non-worldly, non-charismatic music. To avoid a piece of questionable music never harms a church, but using questionable music can definitely bring harm.

This is the standard of wisdom and safety.

The music must avoid incrementalism (1 Co. 5:6; Ga. 5:9).

When it comes to church music, little can be big. The wrong music usually enters a church gradually, not overnight. One way it enters is through specials, choruses, and youth ministries. When this happens, the church is doomed to continue moving away from spiritual and toward contemporary unless there is a dramatic move to stop the progression, which rarely happens.

The music must be overseen by the pastors (Ac. 20:28; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pe. 5:2).

The pastors will oversee the music themselves and/or they will appoint the *right people* to be in charge of the church's music. They will approve all special music.

Church Finances

Miscellaneous Lessons

The following are some important lessons from the Bible about the church's finances:

1. The church's work should be supported by the tithes and offerings of the members and not by worldly means such as investments or operating businesses (Mal. 3:10; 1 Co. 16:1-2). Tithing was practiced by Abraham before the law (Ge. 14:20). God has promised to bless those who give (Lu. 6:38; 2 Co. 9:6-8).
2. The tithes and offerings belong to the Lord (Mal. 3:10). This means that when people give to the church, they are not giving to men but to God. Church members must not think that the church money is their own money; it is the Lord's. The finances must be used prayerfully and wisely according to God's will. No one can borrow from the church money, because the money is only for the Lord's business and should never be used for private purposes.
3. The church should not seek help from the unsaved for the Lord's work (3 Jo. 7; Ge. 14:21-23; 2 Ki. 5:15-16).
4. Our church has two offering boxes for the church members to use. This way we do not have to take up offerings during the regular services when visitors are present. Also, we want each church member to plan his giving and to give to the Lord purposefully instead of merely giving something as the offering is passed.
5. Only men with a good Christian reputation should handle the money ("honest report" Acts 6:3; 2 Co. 8:18-19).
6. The money must be handled in a careful and honest manner (2 Co. 8:20-21). This means that everything must be done openly and honestly. The counting of the money must be done by at least two men. Good records must be kept. Regular reports must be given to the church members so everyone understands how the money is being used. If a question is raised by a church member about the use of the finances, the leaders must give an answer.
7. Major decisions about finances should be made by the elders and church members working together (Ac. 6:1-6). This is the example we see when the first deacons were selected. The elders gave the instructions and set the standards (vv. 3-4); the church made the selection (v. 5); then the elders conducted the ordination (v. 6). This is a good example for how major decisions can be made in a church. (See the section on "Church Business Meetings.")
8. The leaders cannot spend more than Rs. 10,000 without a church vote.
9. The leaders are stewards and will give an account unto God; they must therefore be very careful about how the money is handled (1 Co. 3:9-15; 4:1-2; Jas. 3:1; 1 Pe. 5:1-5).
10. The church should support elders that labor in the Word and doctrine (1 Co. 9:13-14; Ga. 6:6; 1 Ti. 5:17-18). It should not support lazy men or men who spend much of their time in secular business.
11. The main work of the church is to fulfill the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15; Ac. 1:8). This means the main use of the church money is for preaching the gospel, teaching the Bible, and planting new churches. The church should support church planters and preachers (Php. 4:15-19; Tit. 3:12-13; 3 Jo. 5-8). When Paul said he was "brought on the way" by the churches, he was saying that they helped him (Ro. 15:24; 1 Co. 16:5-6; 2 Co. 1:16).

12. The church finance secretary and helpers will be chosen by the leaders and approved by church vote.

13. Three church men will be signers on the church bank accounts. They will be chosen by the leaders and approved by church vote.

14. Every individual who handles the church finances must have a reputation of being faithful, diligent, and honest. See 2 Corinthians 8:18-22.

15. Every individual who handles the church finances must sign the "Church Finance Worker's Agreement."

Church Finance Worker's Agreement

I recognize that I am handling the Lord's money which has been given to Sungati Church which is under the leadership of Brother Cloud, the church's founder under God.

I will fulfill my duties in an honest way before God and man according to 2 Corinthians 8:21. "Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men."

I will conduct my business in handling the church finances in harmony with the church leaders.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Church Business Meetings

Normally, the church business meetings will be held during the monthly Lord's Supper.

The meeting will be brought to order by a church leader and begin with prayer.

The business of the meeting will be recorded by a person appointed by the church.

New items of business will be proposed by the leaders.

If a church member wants to propose an item of business, he must present it to the leaders beforehand for their approval.

All items of business must be in accordance with God's Word.

Opportunity for discussion will be given for each item of business. The women can participate in the discussion, either by speaking or by writing a note that the leaders will read for them. This is spiritual business, and we want to conduct it in a spiritual way. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice" (Ephesians 4:31). If an individual acts in a carnal, angry, divisive way, he will not be allowed to participate in the church business.

Voting on items of business will occur at the next business meeting to give people an opportunity for prayer and further consideration. If the leaders consider the matter to be urgent, they can call for an earlier vote, depending on the situation and the need. Normally, though, we want to give the people opportunity to prayerfully consider each matter.

Voting will be by paper ballot. Each member will write "yes" or "no" on a piece of paper. If the individual cannot write, he can write an X for no or ✓ (tick mark) for yes.

To pass a vote, a quorum of 75% of the voting members must be present. And at least 75% of those present must approve the matter.

Church Discipline

Bible discipline is training and chastening with the goal of conforming the church and its individual members to the will of God. It involves teaching, encouragement, correction and reproof, punishment when required, and restoration. Church discipline involves everything necessary to keep a church pure before God (1 Co. 5:7-8). Discipline is a matter of love—love for God, love for holiness, love for the truth, love for Christ’s testimony in the church, love for the brethren, and love for the unsaved who are observing the church’s testimony.

The Goals of Church Discipline

1. To protect the purity of the church, to keep it from being permeated with sin and false doctrine (1 Co. 5:6-8). The passover pictured salvation through faith in Christ’s blood, and the feast of unleavened bread pictured putting sin out of the Christian life.

Both of these passages are written in the context of church discipline. In fact, the very epistles themselves (1 Corinthians and Galatians) are examples of the process of church discipline. The apostle was writing to correct sin and error; he was teaching, pleading, rebuking, warning. All of these things are involved in church discipline. Sin and false teaching are called “leaven,” because if moral and doctrinal impurities are not corrected and removed from the assembly, they will permeate the body and destroy the church. Unrepentant sin and false teaching cannot be ignored in the vain hope that the problem will somehow disappear on its own. It must be dealt with in a biblical fashion.

2. To maintain a good testimony before the unbelieving community (Php. 2:14-15; 1 Pe. 2:9-12).

3. To keep the church ready for Christ’s return (Tit. 2:11-15). We are warned that those who do not remain pure and ready for Christ’s appearing will be ashamed when He comes (1 Jn. 2:28).

4. To please and glorify the Lord. In Titus 2:14 we learn that a pure church pleases the Lord because this was His purpose in our redemption. In 1 Peter 2:9, 11-12 we see that a pure church is a praise and glory to the Lord.

5. To restore erring church members (1 Co. 5:5; 2 Co. 2:6-8). As we exercise church discipline, we must ever keep in mind that our goal is not to harm people, but to help them. Even when a member must be expelled from the assembly, the ultimate goal is to see that one restored.

6. To restrain sin (De. 13:11; 17:12-13; 19:18-20; Ac. 5:1-11; 1 Ti. 5:20). “It would be ideal if men could be encouraged to live godly lives without any warning of judgment upon ungodliness. But to suppose they will do so is idealistic and contrary to all observation, as well as to Scripture. God warns of impending judgment and says, ‘It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God’ (Heb. 10:31). ‘Because there is wrath, beware...’ (Job 36:18). If sin goes unjudged in a church, we are thereby inviting others to become self-indulgent. It will not do to plead ‘love’ as a basis for neglect. ... God does not put love and punishment in opposition to each other. He says, ‘For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth...’ (Heb. 12:5-11). The church has a solemn responsibility to restrain sin by proper discipline. If we do not exercise the judgment, the Lord will (1 Co. 11:31-32)” (Paul R. Jackson, *The Doctrine and Administration of the Church*).

The Right Attitude of Discipline

God’s people must be careful to maintain the proper attitude when dealing with sinning Christians and not to give place to the devil.

1. The attitude of humility (Ga. 6:1)
2. The attitude of impartiality (De. 1:17; 1 Ti. 5:21)
3. The attitude of compassion (2 Co. 7:12)
4. The attitude of mourning (2 Co. 2:4)
5. The attitude of firmness of purpose (1 Co. 5:3-5, 13)

The Patience and Wisdom for Discipline

Church discipline requires patience and much godly wisdom. Each situation is different. There are general biblical principles, as we will see, but the application of these principles requires the Lord's wisdom. He alone knows the hearts. The church and all of its members belong to Him. The undershepherds must constantly obtain wisdom from the Great Shepherd. If they are ready to receive, He is ready to give, and each situation will have the necessary wisdom and power and blessing.

“Discipline calls for discernment. Paul writes, ‘Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all *men*’ (1 Th. 5:14). We should not encourage the unruly, but admonish them. We should not admonish the fainthearted or weak, but encourage and help them. Sometimes, a newer believer is in sin due to ignorance of God's Word. He is weak. But, if he continues defiantly in the sin after you show him what the Word says, he then becomes unruly. I find the analogy of child rearing helpful here. If my three-year-old was acting like a three-year-old, I tried to help him learn how to behave in a more mature manner. But I didn't discipline him for being three. But when your three-year-old is defiant, you must deal with his rebellion. If a believer is overcome by a sin, but is repentant and wants help, you help him. But if he says, ‘I have a right to do as I please,’ he is defiant and needs discipline” (Steven Cole, “Dealing with Sinning Christians,” Aug. 13, 2006, Bible.org).

The Authority for Discipline

See 1 Corinthians 5:4 and Matthew 18:18-19. Dismissing someone from the church is not an easy matter. There are often many doubts and fears. Will it hurt the church? Has everything possible been done to correct the problem in other ways? Do we have the right attitude? Will some protest and sympathize with the offender? How will the erring one(s) react? How will his or her friends or relatives react?

I know of a church that had to discipline a member for marrying an unsaved man; and the offending party's mother and sister sided with her and all of them left the church. This is very common. The power of God is needed in exercising church discipline, and the Bible promises that His power and blessing will be available when His people are earnestly trying to walk in obedience to Him.

Discipline of Interpersonal Problems

The discipline of problems between church members is dealt with very clearly in Matthew 5 and 18.

“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift” (Mt. 5:23-24).

“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Mt. 18:15-18).

“There are two commands of Christ, which, if faithfully obeyed, would in almost every instance prevent personal offences from assuming such form and magnitude as to require church action” (J.M. Pendleton, *Church Manual Designed for the Use of Baptist Churches*, 1867).

Note that God is very concerned about interpersonal relationships. Maintaining right relationships lies at the heart of loving my neighbor as myself, which is the second great commandment (Mt. 22:36-40). This is so important to God that He commands His people to put it before worship (Mt. 5:23-24).

The objective is to clear up problems and achieve reconciliation and spiritual harmony - “first be reconciled to thy brother” (Mt. 5:24), “if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother” (Mt. 18:15). “If this is not his purpose, he violated the spirit of Christ’s law though he may obey it in the letter” (Pendleton).

Following are the practical steps in dealing with interpersonal problems in the church:

First, the matter should be discussed privately between the two church members (“go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone,” Mt. 18:15).

- The Scripture puts the responsibility of reconciliation equally upon both parties. In Matthew 5, the case is when a brother realizes that another brother has something against him, whether legitimate or not. In Matthew 18, the case is when a brother has trespassed against me. “The offended brother is not to wait till the offender goes to him and seeks reconciliation” (Pendleton).

- The individual who takes the initiative should go not only to confront the other person but also to listen. Oftentimes the problem lies in misunderstanding and lack of information.

- The individual who takes the initiative should go personally to the other person rather than writing a note or sending a text. A face to face interview is what is needed.

Second, if this doesn’t solve the problem, the injured brother should take one or two others (Mt. 18:16). These witnesses should be wise and spiritual people, not just people who are close friends of the brother.

Third, if that doesn’t solve the problem, the matter should be brought before the church (Mt. 18:17). Even here, there is still opportunity for reconciliation.

Fourth, if the trespasser refuses to hear the church, he is to be disciplined (Mt. 18:17).

What does it mean “let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican”?

It doesn’t mean never to speak with him or to forbid him to attend church. The unsaved are not forbidden to do such things.

- It means that the church member that is under discipline is not allowed to serve in a church ministry or to participate in church business and ordinances (such as taking the Lord’s Supper). The heathen or unsaved are not allowed to do these things.

- It means that the offender is not to be allowed to participate in the close fellowship that is normal between church members. This is for the purpose of making the offender ashamed. “And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed” (2 Th. 3:14)

“If individual members act contrary to this rule, and carry on freely toward an offender, as if nothing had taken place, it will render the censure of the church of none effect. Those persons also who behave in this manner will be considered by the party as his friends, and others who stand aloof as his enemies, or at least as being unreasonably severe; which will work confusion, and render void the best and most wholesome discipline. We must act in concert, or we may as well do nothing. Members who violate this rule are

partakers of other men's sins, and deserve the rebukes of the church for counteracting its measures" (Andrew Fuller, *Works*, vol. III, pp. 334-335).

The seriousness of church business is seen here (Mt. 18:18). Men often take the church and its business lightly, but God doesn't. Compare 1 Co. 3:17; Heb. 10:25 and 13:17.

The "binding" does not pertain to a person's eternal destiny but to his earthly life.

Discipline of Disorderly Conduct

2 Thessalonians 3:6-15 calls for separation from a church member that seems to fall short of excluding. One difference is that the 2 Thessalonians 3 offender is not turned over to the devil as in 1 Corinthians 5.

The context of 2 Thessalonians 3 is a church member who is engaged in disorderly conduct such as refusing to work and being a busybody in the affairs of others (1 Th. 3:6-15).

We believe this principle applies to other cases of refusing to obey the Word of God that fall short of 1 Corinthians 5 discipline. It would seem preposterous to think that churches are to discipline members who refuse to work while ignoring other types of cases. Another example is a young widow who is idle and a busybody (1 Ti. 5:11-14).

The old Baptists called this type of discipline "suspension." It entails removing the individual from the fellowship and not allowing him to partake of the Lord's Supper or participate in church ministry or business until he repents.

Discipline of Public and Grave Offenses

Excommunication is required for certain types of sins, particularly those of a public and grave nature. This is dealt with in 1 Corinthians 5:11.

The nature of the sin that calls for this type of church discipline is as follows:

It is public sin (1 Co. 5:1 -- "it is commonly reported").

It is grave sin (1 Co. 5:11). The six categories of sins are immorality, covetousness, idolatry, railing, drunkenness, and extortion.

Fornication. This is a broad term for sexual sins. It refers to fornication outside out of marriage (1 Co. 7:2); adultery within marriage (Mt. 5:32). It is likened to "concupiscence" in 1 Th. 4:3-5, which refers more particularly to the lusting aspect of sexual impurity. A believer would be a fornicator, therefore, who engages in such things as homosexuality, incest, rape, bestiality, and the use of pornography.

Covetousness.

Covetousness is to be greedy. Covetousness is to desire that which is not mine, to desire that which is forbidden (Ex. 20:17; De. 5:21; Achan Josh. 7:21).

Covetousness is to obtain things by oppressing others; cheating, stealing, borrowing and not paying back (Pr. 28:16; Mic. 2:2). Government officials and legal officials cheat because they are covetous.

Covetousness is to love and pursue money instead of pursuing the will of God (1 Ti. 6:6-11). It is to make money and possessions the focus of one's life (Lk. 12:15-21). The person who borrows money and does not pay back is covetous. The man who puts his business before God is covetous.

Idolatry. This refers to worshipping idols or to putting some material possession or pleasure in the place of God and to bestow upon it the love and devotion that belongs to God alone. The first law is to love God with all the heart, soul, and strength (De. 6:5).

Railing. This means to heap abuse upon another, to revile. The same Greek word (*loidoros*) is translated “reviler” in 1 Co. 6:10. Calling people names like fool, pig, dog. Christ wants His people to love one another, so He hates this type of thing and will not allow it in His kingdom (Mt. 5:21-26).

Drunkness. To be intoxicated with foreign substances, either by alcohol or drugs. We believe that this sin also involves selling liquor, because he contributes to and is a party to drunkness (Hab. 2:15).

Extortion. This is the act of taking things from others by means of force. It refers to cheating, blackmailing, kidnapping, requiring bribes, unjust or unauthorized taxation (e.g., the publicans). See Ps. 109:11; Eze. 22:12. The person who works in government or police or courts in a corrupt nation is particularly tempted to commit this sin.

It is sin that would destroy the church if ignored (1 Co. 5:6). There will always be sin of one sort or another in a church that is populated by sinners, but there are some sins that have the ability to destroy the church if left alone.

If such a sin becomes known to the leaders, it is important that they investigate the matter thoroughly and not act on partial facts and hearsay. The leaders can appoint mature deacons or other mature church members to help conduct the investigation.

When the church is satisfied that it has all of the relevant facts, it can take one of several actions.

- First, they can find the accused innocent and dismiss the charges.
- Second, they can rebuke the offender, receive his confession of repentance, and forgive him without further action.
- Third, they can give the individual time to reflect on his sin and give the church time to pray for him.
- Fourth, they can decide to put the offender under discipline according to 1 Corinthians 5:4, 5, 13. This is called exclusion.

Exclusion means the following:

1. The excluded one is turned over to Satan (1 Co. 5:5). This refers to turning the unrepentant offender over to Satan’s domain, the world, and over to Satan’s power for chastisement. Compare Lk. 22:31-32; 13:16.
2. The excluded person cannot hold a ministry or participate in church business.
3. The members should not have close fellowship with the excluded person so that he will be ashamed and brought to repentance. (1 Co. 5:11; 2 Th. 3:14).
4. The offender is not allowed to partake in the Lord’s Supper (1 Co. 5:11). The eating in this verse probably refers both to personal social eating and to eating the Lord’s Supper (1 Co. 11:26, 29).
5. The members should pray much for the individual that he will repent and take any opportunity to exhort him to do this.

Restoration

When the excluded individual seeks restoration, the church tries to determine whether the repentance is sincere. They look for ready, hearty, and full admission of guilt. They look for admission of and naming of the specific sins they committed, as opposed to merely saying, “I’m sorry,” or, “I’m sorry for what I did.” If the individual is blaming others and otherwise making excuse for his sin, this is not true repentance. See 2 Corinthians 7:11 for a description of true repentance.

See also David’s repentance in Psalm 51:3-6.

Those who show genuine repentance should be forgiven and restored (2 Co. 2:7).

Sometimes it is wise to put the individual on probation. During probation the individual is required to show repentance for a determined period of time. Old Baptist churches expected a longer period of probation for “sins that were especially grave or involved deceit.”

Forgiveness and restoration to church membership does not mean there are no abiding consequences to sin and that things can necessarily return to the way they were before the sin. If a pastor commits adultery, for example, we believe that he should never again hold the office of a pastor. If a girl runs off with a boy and commits fornication, she can never regain her virginity. There are many consequences to sin in this present life. We think of David. Though he repented deeply of his sin as recorded in Psalm 51 and was forgiven, he suffered consequences for the rest of his life.

Discipline of False Teachers

The apostle Paul warned the leaders at the church in Ephesus that false teaching would come from without and from within (Ac. 20:20-21). This is even more applicable in these closing days of the church age, days of great apostasy and of serious compromise even among those who claim to be Bible-believers. We must be constantly alert to this danger and deal with every false doctrine which reveals itself within the assembly (Ep. 4:11-14).

The discipline of heretics (those who have chosen to cleave to a false teaching) is described in Titus 3:9-11.

The terms “heretic” and “heresy” refer to the willful choice of false doctrine, a willful alignment with error.

A heretic is not a person who is merely ignorant of sound doctrine. If the heresy is a matter of ignorance on the part of a true believer, the individual will respond to the truth and turn from it. I know a pastor who was saved out of a hippie lifestyle and went to Bible college only a few months after he was saved. Soon after arriving he saw a book in the bookstore entitled “Was Jesus God?” and in his mind he said, “Of course, Jesus wasn’t God!” But this great heresy was only an ignorance problem, and as soon as he was taught about Christ’s deity he readily accepted it.

The heretic is to be admonished two times (Titus 3:10). An effort is to be made to reclaim the heretic from his error. It is possible that he is not truly a heretic but that he is only teaching out of ignorance.

But the heretic is to be admonished *only* two times (Titus 3:10). We are not instructed to get involved in endless efforts to win heretics to the truth. When it is obvious that a person is set in his false ways, he must be rejected and put out of the assembly.

The heretic condemns himself by his self-willed commitment to error (Titus 3:11). There is something wrong in the heretic’s heart. “Subverted” is from the Greek word “ekstrepho,” which means to be twisted or turned inside out. Something has perverted the person’s heart so that he is not willing to hear the truth.

Discipline of Church Leaders

1 Timothy 5:19-22

Pastors/elders are members of the church body, and they should be subject to discipline just as other members are. In addition to the things we have stated above about discipline, which would apply to any

church member including a pastor, there are some important lessons in 1 Timothy 5:19-22 about the discipline of church leaders in particular:

1. It is essential that the church be very cautious about selecting and ordaining pastors (1 Ti. 5:22). This is the first step in keeping the church pure. Haste and carelessness in ordaining pastors will result in injury to the work of God. If the church is careful to ordain only godly, scripturally qualified men who have proven themselves, it will rarely need to go through the heartache of trying to discipline an erring pastor.
2. Accusations must not be received against a pastor unless they can be substantiated by two or three witnesses (1 Ti. 5:19). This principle was a part of the law of Moses (De. 19:15). See also Mt. 18:16 and 2 Co. 13:1. This protects the elder from false accusations by disgruntled people who want to hurt him and/or the church.
3. Pastors that sin in such a manner that requires discipline should be rebuked publicly (1 Ti. 5:20). This action would be occasioned by the type of sins listed in 1 Co. 5:11.
4. God's people are charged not to show partiality in these things (1 Ti. 5:21).

Inactive Membership

According to Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 4:2; Hebrews 10:25, God requires that church members be faithful to the services, and that is what our church requires. The church's job is to build up and protect the members (Eph. 4:11-16), but this is not possible if the members aren't faithful. The church is a body and each member has an important part in the body (1 Co. 12:27), and it is impossible to carry on the Lord's business unless the members are present. Therefore, members must faithfully attend the services, including the men's meeting on Saturday and the mid-week prayer meetings.

If an individual ceases to be faithful, the church leaders or those appointed by the leaders will meet with him and try to restore him. Each case will be dealt with individually, and the leaders will consider such things as the person's health, age, distance from the meeting places, and family situation (for example, a young person with unbelieving parents or a wife with an unbelieving husband). Exceptions will be made for those who are truly unable to attend all of the services. The leaders will try to determine the state of the individual's spiritual life and whether or not his heart is right in this matter. They want to see whether the individual desires to be faithful but is hindered in some justifiable way or whether the individual simply *refuses* to be faithful. The process of dealing with those who aren't completely faithful will take as long as the leaders deem necessary.

If an individual continues to be unfaithful in a willful manner without a proper excuse, he will be put on the inactive membership roll and cannot participate in the Lord's Supper and business meetings. For another four months, the church leaders will continue to try to restore the individual to faithfulness. If that is unsuccessful, he or she will be removed from the membership.

If a member goes overseas without permission from the leaders, he will be automatically put out of the membership. (See the report "Going Overseas to Work.")

To be restored to membership, the individual must confess his sin of unfaithfulness before the church and show true repentance. He must prove his faithfulness for some time before he is re-admitted to membership.

Inactive Membership Letter

Date _____

This is to inform you that you have been placed on Inactive Membership status.

This is because of your failure to be faithful as you promised when you joined the church.

While on Inactive Membership status, you cannot participate in the Lord's Supper or in church business.

We urge you to repent of your unfaithfulness and to return to faithful church attendance. We are praying for that and longing for that.

If you do not change your ways within the next four months, your name will be removed from the membership of Sungati Baptist Church. You will be welcome to re-apply for membership when you meet the biblical standards of Acts 2:41-42; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, etc.

Love in Christ,

Leaders of Sungati Baptist Church

Review Questions

1. What year did Fellowship Baptist Church start?
2. Who were the founders of the church?
3. What verse says that the church should be perfectly joined together in the same mind?
4. What are the five goals of this church?
5. The people that Jesus described in Matthew 7:21-23 do many works, but what is missing in their lives?
6. John 2:23-25 says some people “believed” in Jesus, but He did not commit Himself to them, meaning they were not saved. What were they believing?
7. In Acts 8, Simon “believed” in Jesus but he was not saved. What was his motive in “believing”?
8. In what book and chapter of the Bible do we find the first church members?
9. What two things were required for membership in the first church?
10. What produces repentance?
11. In what book and chapter did Christ preach “except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish”?
12. In what verse did Paul preach repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ?
13. What are the two examples of repentance that we give in the church covenant?
14. In John 6:69, what testimony did Peter give about Jesus?
15. In Acts 8:38-39, what did Philip tell the Ethiopian that he must do before he could be baptized?
16. Romans 10:9 says that to be saved I must confess with the mouth what and believe in the heart what?
17. In Acts 2, what evidence do we see that the people who believed on Christ were saved?
18. What Bible course is required for every new church member?
19. If a person under age 18 is baptized, what kind of church member does he become?
20. At age 18, he must do what?
21. God’s standards for church leaders are found in what two chapters of the Bible?
22. God’s standards for deacons are found in what chapter?
23. What verse contains the standards for the wife or a church leader or deacon?
24. What are the eight standards that this church requires for workers in general?
25. What verse says it is required in stewards that a man must be found faithful?
26. What verse says that confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth?
27. What verse says “not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together”?
28. 1 John 2:16 describes the world in what three ways?
29. What verse says “be not conformed to this world”?
30. In your own words, what does this mean?
31. What verse says “whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God”?
32. In your own words, what does this mean?
33. What book and chapter instructs the woman to wear modest apparel?
34. According to this passage, what two words describe the character of the modest Christian woman?
35. What book and chapter says that the church members are to esteem the leaders very highly in love for their work’s sake?
36. What book and chapter instructs the church members to obey them that have the rule over them?
37. What are the four standards for church music in our covenant?
38. What verse says “Give, and it shall be given unto you”?
39. What book and chapter describes the requirement that men who handle the finances have an “honest report”?
40. What book and chapter says the church should provide for honest things in the sight of men?
41. What are the six goals of church discipline?
42. In 1 Corinthians 5:11, what are six types of people who are to be disciplined by the church?
43. In Matthew 18:15-20, what are the two next steps that are to be taken if a brother trespasses against you and refused to hear you?
44. In Matthew 18:15-20, what is to be done if the trespasser refuses to hear the church?

45. According to 1 Timothy 5:19, accusations cannot be brought against an elder without what?
46. What happens to a church members if he stops being faithful to the services?
47. We give 12 reasons why our church members should not go overseas to work. In your opinion, what are the four most important reasons?

Application for Church Membership

It is my desire to be received into membership of Sangati Church. I cheerfully accept and agree with the church's doctrine and covenant.

I am seeking membership of my own free will, and nobody is forcing me or enticing me with gifts.

In assuming this membership, I agree to be loyal to the interests of this church, to seek its purity and prosperity, to be faithful to its services and conferences, to be an obedient, fruitful disciple of Jesus Christ, to do some definite Christian work, to be subject to the discipline of the church, and to contribute to its support as the Lord prospers me.

If at any time I find myself out of harmony with the church doctrines or covenant and if the problem cannot be resolved in conference with the leaders, I hereby authorize the church to drop me from the membership.

Name _____

Signed _____

Date _____

Why I Want to Be a Member of Sangati Church (in my own words)