

Constitution and Bylaws Outline Topics

This outline is a SAMPLE document only. The Executive Board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention is providing no legal advice. This document is a SAMPLE only a helpmate in conjunction with your legal advisor in preparing documents specifically designed for your church.

Possible Constitution Topics

- I. Name of Church
- II. Purpose or Mission
- III. Statement of Belief
(Baptist Faith and Message – Reference Only)
(Church Developed)
- IV. Church Covenant
- V. Church Character
 - A. Congregational Polity
 - B. Church Ordinances
 - 1. Baptism
 - 2. Lord's Supper
 - C. Denominational Affiliation
(Association)
(State Convention)
(Southern Baptist Convention)
 - D. Corporate status
- VI. Bylaws
The Church shall have bylaws has adopted by the Church as needed. In the case of conflict between this Constitution and the Bylaws then this Constitution shall control.
- VI. Amendments to the Constitution
 - A. Process
 - B. Required Notification
 - C. Vote Required

Possible Bylaw Topics

- I. Membership
 - A. Types of Membership
 - 1. Resident members
 - 2. Non-resident members
 - 3. Watchcare members
 - B. Receiving of members
 - 1. Baptism
 - 2. Transfer of letter
 - 3. Statement of faith
 - 4. Occasions for receiving members
 - C. Termination of membership
 - 1. Death
 - 2. Transfer of letter
 - 3. Removal by request
 - 4. Church Discipline

II. Church Leadership

A. Officers

1. Moderator
 - a) Responsibilities
 - b) Nomination, election, rotation
2. Church Clerk
 - a) Responsibilities
 - b) Nomination, election, rotation
3. Church Treasurer
 - a) Responsibilities
 - b) Nomination, election, rotation
4. Trustees
 - a) Responsibilities
 - b) Qualifications
 - c) Composition
 - d) Nomination, election, rotation
 - e) Meetings
5. Other Officers
 - a) Determination process
 - b)

B. Church Staff

1. Pastor
 - a) Primary Duties
 - b) Qualifications
 - c) Selection Process
 - 1) Search Committee
 - 2) Congregational review (Notice)
 - 3) Required affirmative vote
 - 4) Supervision
 - 5) Termination process
2. Other Ministerial Staff
 - a. Approval of positions
 - b. Qualifications
 - c. Selection Process
 - d. Supervision
 - e. Termination process
3. Non-ministerial Staff
 - a. Approval of positions
 - b. Qualifications
 - c. Selection Process
 - d. Supervision
 - e. Termination process

C. Deacons

1. Duties
2. Qualifications
3. Selection process
4. Terms of service
5. Deacon Emeritus
6. Ordination process
7. Officers
8. Deacon removal

- D. Church Council
 - 1. Duties
 - 2. Composition
 - 3. Meetings
 - 4. Authority

- III. Meetings of the Membership (Conferences, Business meetings)
 - A. Regular Meetings
 - B. Special or called meetings
 - 1. Authority to call
 - 2. Notice Requirement
 - C. Quorum requirements
 - D. Participation requirements
 - 1. Voting age
 - 2. Attendance requirement
 - E. Rules of Order
 - 1. Roberts' Rules of Order, latest revised edition
(Used to speak to procedures for situations not addressed in bylaws)
 - 2. Special rules
 - 3. Rules of Christian Decorum
 - F. Super majority vote requirements
 - 1. Budget
 - 2. Call of pastor
 - 3. Approval of debt

- IV. Committees and Councils
 - A. Permanent Standing Committees
 - 1. Identification
 - a) Finance Committee
 - b) Nominating Committee
 - c) Personnel Committee
 - 2. Authority
 - 3. Composition
 - 4. Rotation
 - B. Other Standing Committees
 - 1. Creation process
 - 2. Authorities
 - C. Permanent Standing Councils
 - 1. Identification
 - a) Sunday School Council
 - b) Youth Council
 - c) Preschool Council
 - 2. Authority
 - 3. Composition
 - 4. Rotation
 - D. Other Standing Councils
 - 1. Creation process
 - 2. Authorities

- V. Church Finances
 - A. Budget
 - 1. Development responsibility
 - 2. Oversight responsibility
 - 3. Approval process
 - B. Designated Giving
 - 1. Policy
 - 2. Approval process
 - C. Special Offerings
 - 1. Permitted Offerings
 - a. Golden Offering for Tennessee Missions
 - b. Mother's Day offering for TN Baptist Children's Home
 - c. Father's Day offering for TN Baptist Adult Homes
 - d. Lottie Moon Christmas offering for International Missions
 - e. Annie Armstrong Easter offering for North American Missions
 - 2. Additional Offerings
 - a. Approval process
 - b. Promotion responsibility
 - D. Fundraising
 - 1. Policy
 - 2. Permitted activities
 - 3. Approval process
 - E. Church Debt
 - 1. Policy
 - 2. Approval process

- VI. Church Program Organizations
 - A. Definitions
 - B. Approval process

- VII. Policies and Procedures
 - A. Identification
 - 1. Personnel policy and procedures
 - 2. Church Facility policy and procedures
 - 3. Nominating committee policy and procedures
 - 4. Church Finance committee policy and procedures
 - 5. Preschool policy and procedures
 - 6. Security policy and procedures
 - 7. Vehicle policy and procedures
 - B. Development Process
 - 1. Development process
 - 2. Approval

- VIII. Amendments to bylaws
 - A. Process
 - B. Notification requirement
 - C. Approval requirement