



Official By-Laws

An imperfect system filled with men and women of integrity will function far better than a perfect system filled with men and women who lack integrity. *The people we choose are as important as the system we use.* Furthermore, the imperfections in any system will stand out larger than life when the system is put to the test.

The Newsong Fellowship government is built around four teams of people:

1. The Ministry Team Representatives
2. The Stewardship Team
3. The Staff Leadership Team
4. The Board of Elders

Ministry Team Representatives

A Ministry Team Representative (MTR) is an individual chosen by a particular ministry or team to represent that group. MTR's will serve as a channel of communication to and from the various ministries of the church. MTR meetings are a time for an open exchange of ideas and information. Ministries have an opportunity to give general updates. Staff can use this time to present new ministry ideas and opportunities. Each meeting includes a time for Q&A.

MTR's are selected by the members of each ministry area, or team, in the church. Each area, or team, will choose several representatives depending on the size of the ministry, or team. The Staff Leadership Team determines which ministry areas are represented, as well as the number of representatives needed. The MTR's will meet quarterly with the Senior Pastor and representatives from the board of Elders. Their purpose is to represent their area of ministry within this group that represents every area of ministry.

The MTR's qualifications to serve match those of the general lay leadership. They serve one year terms with an option to be re-elected for a second consecutive term. An MTR can serve another set of terms after rotating off for at least one year.

An MTR meeting is not an official business meeting of the church. However, the MTR's can call for a special business meeting of the church by a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote, assuming a quorum of three-fourths (3/4) of all members present.

Stewardship Team

The Stewardship Team oversees all financial and personnel matters. The Senior Pastor is accountable to the Stewardship Team in all matters relating to finances and personnel.

Personnel recommendations originate with the Staff Leadership Team. The Staff Leadership Team may not create staff positions without the approval of the Stewardship Team. The Stewardship Team may not hire a staff member without the consent of the Senior Pastor and Elders. The Stewardship Team may not dismiss a staff member. This is the responsibility of the Senior Pastor. The Stewardship Team's primary function is to insure that the Staff Leadership Team does not compromise the church financially. Their role is not so much the selection of personnel, as much as it is the stewardship issues related to any hiring decision.

The Stewardship Team will consist of no more than 6 members. Initially, this group is selected by the Elders. Subsequent team members are selected by the existing members of the Stewardship Team. All members need the approval of the Elders. One Elder, other than the Senior Pastor, may be appointed to the Stewardship Team.

The qualifications for Stewardship Team members are the same as those outlined for general volunteer leadership. In addition, Stewardship Team members are required to have the professional skills necessary to perform their assigned tasks. Members serve one three-year term. Former members are eligible to serve again after being inactive for two years.

The Stewardship Team is ultimately accountable to the Elders of the church. The Elders have the authority to override any decision made by the Stewardship Team. However, if such an occasion should arise, it will be necessary for the Elders to meet with the Stewardship Team and discuss the matter fully.

Staff Leadership Team

The Staff Leadership Team consists of staff members selected by the Senior Pastor. The purpose of this group is to determine programming, give vision to the various ministries of the church, and oversee the day to day operations of the church. The Staff Leadership Team is accountable to the Senior Pastor. Members of the Staff Leadership Team are required to meet the character qualifications as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

Elders

The Board of Elders is comprised of 8 men, including the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor is a permanent member of the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders may include two staff members, in addition to the Senior Pastor.

The Purpose of Elders

Elders function primarily as *discerners* and *shepherds*. They are the conscience and guardians of the church. They are not expected to oversee specific projects or ministry areas in their capacity as Elder. They function as overseers for the entire church. The Elders evaluate everything taking place in the church according to four criteria:

1. The Word of God
2. The church's mission
3. The church's resources
4. The church's doctrinal statement

Elders do not determine programming. This responsibility falls to the Staff Leadership Team. However, the Elders are responsible for evaluating programming based on its appropriateness and effectiveness in furthering the overall mission of the church.

The Senior Pastor will meet with the Elders on a regular basis to update them on the state of the staff and church in general. At least one Elder besides the Senior Pastor is expected to attend the quarterly MTR meeting.

The Authority of an Elder

For all practical purposes, the Elders have final say in any and all matters concerning the overall direction of the church. Anything voted on by the Elders requires 3/4 approval in order to pass. This assumes a quorum of three-fourths (3/4) is present at the time any vote is taken. There are only five decisions that the Elders may not make without congregational approval.

1. Elders may not appoint a new Senior Pastor.
2. Elders may not sell church property purchased with donations from the general membership.
3. Elders may not approve debt for the church in excess of one twelfth (1/12) of the annual operating budget.
4. Elders cannot change the denominational affiliation of the church, or associate the church with any particular group, movement, or association.
5. Elders may not change the Articles of Incorporation, the Church Constitution, or the Church By Laws.

Elders do have the authority to call for a special meeting of the church.
Elders do have the authority to dismiss the Senior Pastor.

The Election of Elders

At a time as set by the Elders, but no less than annually, each member of the congregation will be given the opportunity to nominate any man from the church membership as a candidate for Elder. All nominations will be gathered and evaluated by the Elders. The evaluation will include an interview, a background check, and a review by the Staff Leadership Team.

The Appointment Team is comprised of Elders who are rotating off the current Elder board, along with three MTR's. The MTR's will be elected by the general team of MTR's. The Appointment Team will have either five (5) or six (6) members, depending on how many Elders are rotating off.

The Appointment Team will conduct a successive series of votes, wherein each member of the team will vote for their top three or four candidates from the slate of approved candidates under consideration. A super majority of three fourths (3/4) is required to elect an Elder. For example, if five people are voting, a candidate needs to receive four (4) votes to be approved. If six people are voting, a candidate needs to receive five (5) votes to be approved. If suitable replacements are not found, the position(s) will be left unfilled until such time as the Appointment Team is able to find and agree upon a candidate.

The decision of the Appointment Team is final. Current Elders may not overrule the appointments of the Appointment Team. However, the current Elders have the option to elect one Elder per year independent of the selection process outlined above. Newly appointed Elders will be presented to the church and confirmed by the laying on of hands by current Elders and pastors.

Elders, other than the Senior Pastor, but including other staff members, serve one three-year term. After serving one term, Elders are required to rotate off for at least two years before becoming eligible for another term.

The Qualifications of an Elder

A candidate for Elder must have been a member of the church for at least one year prior to his election to office. Furthermore, all Elders are required to meet the qualifications for Elder/overseer as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-11, Titus 1:5-9.

It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or

pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

1 Timothy 3:1-11

For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint Elders in every city as I directed you, namely, if any man be above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

Titus 1:5-9

The Dismissal of an Elder

If it becomes apparent that a certain Elder should not serve in the office of Elder, he may resign, or by unanimous vote of the other Elders, be immediately retired from the office. His position will remain vacant until the next regularly scheduled election. If the Elder being dismissed wishes to appeal the dismissal, he will be allowed a meeting with the entire board of elders to state his case and ask for another vote. He may bring 2 witnesses to the appeal as a part of his appeal.

Church Business Meetings

A church business meeting will be scheduled every quarter. This quarterly review meeting will provide a forum for handling the business of the church not otherwise reserved for the Elders. These meetings will also facilitate the dissemination and exchange of information. A Q/A time will be included as well.

An agenda for the meeting will be developed by the Elders and mailed to the membership prior to each meeting. At the meeting, church members will be given an opportunity to make motions related to the direction or programs of

the church. However, motions introduced from the floor not pertaining to the published agenda may not be voted on until the next meeting. This will ensure that there is sufficient time for the issues raised by the motion to be considered by the appropriate leadership team before bringing their recommendation to the church. Motions dealing with issues that fall within the jurisdiction of the Elder's authority will not be voted on. Instead, the Elders will discuss these issues and report on them in the next regularly scheduled meeting.

The quarterly review meetings shall be scheduled by the Elders. Those members present and voting at a meeting duly noticed and called shall constitute a quorum. Official votes taken in the quarterly review meeting, as well as any churchwide business meetings, require a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote to pass.

The Elders will appoint a moderator for all church business meetings. Matters properly before and passed at business meetings shall be binding on the church.

Senior Pastor

Electing a new Senior Pastor

When the Senior Pastor's position is vacated, the Elders will appoint a Pastoral Search Committee. The Pastoral Search Committee will make recommendations to the Elders. The Elders in turn will make recommendations to the congregation. A two thirds (2/3) affirmative vote by the membership in an official business meeting of the church is required to elect a new Senior Pastor.

The Qualifications of a Senior Pastor

A candidate for Senior Pastor must meet the Biblical qualifications for Elder/overseer as outlined above.

The Roles and Responsibilities of Senior Pastor

1. Preach the Word of God
2. Conduct the services of the church
3. Shepherd and protect the church family
4. He shall be a permanent voting member of the Board of Elders
5. He shall lead the church in the fulfillment of its sacred task in accordance with the constitution and bylaws.
6. He shall maintain at all times a godly deportment so that no reproach may come through him upon the Body of Christ

Pastor Accountability Team

The Pastor Accountability Team is a group of men to whom the Senior Pastor is accountable regarding issues relating to his qualifications to serve. The Pastor Accountability Team will be given access to the Senior Pastor's calendar and schedule. Their primary function is to serve as an avenue of appeal for members who are concerned about the Senior Pastor's qualifications. The members of this group will be selected by the Senior Pastor and approved by the Elders. They may be church members, or non-church members. The members of the Pastor Accountability Team do not serve a pre-determined term. However, each member must be reaffirmed by the Elders each year.

If a church member has a question or concern regarding the Senior Pastor's qualifications, and has not received a satisfactory answer after talking to the Senior Pastor, the member can go to a member of the Pastor Accountability Team and explain his or her concern. That team member then has the option to bring the matter before the entire team. If they deem it necessary, the Accountability Team can meet with the Senior Pastor about the matter at hand. If the members of the Pastor Accountability Team believe there are grounds for discipline, they will take their complaint and a recommendation to the Elders, who would then determine a course of action with a three fourths (3/4) vote.

The Pastor Accountability Team serves as an avenue of appeal to deal with the Senior Pastor's qualifications to serve, not his decisions as they relate to programming or general leadership in the church.

The Dismissal of a Senior Pastor or Staff Member

If it becomes apparent that the Senior Pastor or staff member should no longer serve in their capacity, he may resign, or by unanimous vote of the Board of Elders, be immediately retired from the office. If the Senior Pastor or Staff Member being dismissed wishes to appeal the dismissal, he will be allowed a meeting with the entire Board of Elders to state his case and ask for another vote. He may bring 2 witnesses to the appeal as a part of his appeal.

Amending the By Laws

For the By Laws to be amended, the Elders will appoint a committee to study the issue in question. The study committee will present a written recommendation for a By Laws amendment to the Elders. The Elders will vote on the recommendation or amendment. If an amendment is approved by a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote by the Elders, it will then be presented to the

membership for a vote. If the Elders do not approve the recommendation or amendment, the issue would either go back to the study committee for further work, or dismissed. A simple majority vote by the membership is required to amend the By Laws.

Parliamentary Procedure

Church business meetings will be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order, except as the constitution conflicts.

Standing Committees

The Elders have the authority to establish and dissolve all church committees. A quorum for all church committees is three fourths (3/4) of membership. Any vote taken by a committee of the church requires an affirmative vote of three-fourths (3/4) of those present to pass.

Budget

The budget will be developed by the Stewardship Team in conjunction with the staff. The Stewardship Team will present the budget to the Elders for approval.

Salaries

Individual staff salaries are established by The Stewardship Team and are not published or discussed in church business meetings. Questions regarding an individual staff member's salary may be addressed privately with the Senior Pastor. Questions regarding the Senior Pastor's salary may be addressed privately with an Elder.

Specially Called Business Meetings

The Ministry Team Representatives may call for a special congregational business meeting. Assuming a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote to call the meeting and assuming a quorum of three-fourths (3/4) of total MTR membership, the MTR's will present their request to the Elders. The Elders will schedule the meeting, as well as publish the agenda one week in advance. The agenda will include the issues the MTR's have given for calling the special meeting.

Dissolution and Liquidation of the Church

Dissolution

The Elders may cease corporate activities and dissolve and liquidate the corporation, by a three- fourths (3/4) vote. Upon dissolution of the corporation, the Board of Directors shall pay or make provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the corporation, and shall thereafter dispose of all of the assets of the corporation exclusively for the purposes stated in Article VIII of *Articles of Incorporation of Newsong Fellowship, INC.* or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or the corresponding provision of any future United States internal revenue law), as the Elders shall determine.

Contingent Provision

If any such assets are not so disposed of, the appropriate court of the county in which the principal Illinois office (or in none the Illinois registered office) of the corporation is then located shall dispose of such assets exclusively for the purposes stated in Article VIII of *Articles of Incorporation of Newsong Fellowship, INC.*, and exclusively to such organization or organizations which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes and at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3), as said court shall determine.