



# By-Laws

Revised & Adopted 6-21-11

**BY-LAWS**  
**Sierra Bible Church**  
**A California Nonprofit Corporation**

**Preamble to the Bylaws**

Sierra Bible Church endeavors to be a Church of the Lord Jesus Christ as described, established, and mandated by the New Testament. The purpose of these By-Laws is to help accomplish the task of this Church in a "decent and orderly" manner through the use of effective and efficient means of good stewardship of the body's time, gifts and resources. The ultimate desire is to bring glory to God through the Church. These By-Laws provide general guidance on organization, governance and operation, based upon biblical principles and practices. However, the ultimate authority for Sierra Bible Church's organization, governance and operation is the Bible. When a conflict or ambiguity exists with regard to these By-Laws, deference is to be given by the Board of Elders to the appropriate biblical reference(s) to resolve the conflict or ambiguity.

**Article I**  
**Character**

Sierra Bible Church is an independent local church composed of professing Christians who identify by their attendance, giving, and ministry with this fellowship. This body of believers is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body but is in fellowship with all churches which acknowledge Jesus Christ as their Divine Redeemer and Lord.

**Article II**  
**Covenant**

We, as members of this church, covenant together, God helping us, to live together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully, generously, and regularly to the support of the church for the fulfillment of its stated purposes.

By the aid of the Holy Spirit, we shall feed the inner man daily by reading and meditation upon God's Word and prayer. We shall seek to establish family devotions and to rear our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. We shall endeavor by example, by word, and by prayer to win others to an acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

We shall cultivate brotherly love, praying for one another and giving aid in sickness and distress; being slow to take offense, always ready for reconciliation and seeking it without delay.

**Article III**  
**Purpose**

The purpose of this church shall be:

To worship and glorify God and His Son, Jesus Christ (Romans 15:5-9, Ephesians 4:11-16); to equip believers for Christian living (Ephesians 4:11-16); to evangelize its community and the world (Matthew 28:19, Acts 1:8).

**Article IV**  
**Statement of Faith**

The provisions of this article are to be considered as fundamental, the basis on which this church was founded, and represents the official teaching of the church.

1. We believe in the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments as being the verbally inspired Word of God, completely inerrant in the original writings, and totally sufficient in themselves as our authority for faith and practice (II Timothy 3:16-17, II Peter 1:21, Matthew 5:18).
2. We believe in one God, eternally existent in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who are all equally God. (Deuteronomy 6:4, Matthew 28:19).
3. We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life as true God and true man, in His vicarious and atoning death, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension and personal return in power and glory. (John 1:1-3, Philippians 2:5-11).
4. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, on His return to heaven, sent the Holy Spirit to take His place and to bring into being the church, the Body of Christ; that His ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ; that He convicts the unbeliever of sin, righteousness, and judgment; that He regenerates sinners; that He baptizes all believers into the Body of Christ, sealing them unto the day of redemption; that He indwells, empowers and instructs believers. (John 16:7-14, I Corinthians 12:12-14, Romans 8:9, Ephesians 1:13-14).
5. We believe that man was created in the image of God; that he sinned and thereby incurred not only a physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation from God; that all are born with a sinful nature and, in the case of those who reach moral responsibility, become accountable to God for their sin. (Genesis 1:26, Romans 5:12).

6. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins as a representative and a substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the basis of His shed blood. (Romans 3:21-24, 5:6-8).

7. We believe in the bodily resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ and in His present life in heaven for us as High Priest and Advocate and Head of the Church. (I Corinthians 15:3-16, Hebrews 4:14-16, I John 2:1, Colossians 1:18).

8. We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved into everlasting life and they that are lost unto everlasting torment. (Philippians 3:20-21, Revelation 20:11-15).

9. We believe in that blessed hope, the personal, pre-millennial, and the imminent return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (I Thessalonians 4:16-18, Titus 2:11-13, I John 3:1-3).

10. We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are regenerated by the Holy Spirit, thereby becoming sons of God, a relationship in which they are eternally secure. (John 1:12, Titus 3:5, Romans 8:28-39).

11. We believe that the Lord Jesus instituted the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper to be observed by all believers until His return. Baptism by immersion shall be the mode taught and practiced by this church. (Matthew 28:19-20, I Corinthians 11:23-32).

We recognize that differences exist among professing Christians regarding certain areas of biblical doctrine. In some areas where the biblical teaching is central, clear, and consistent, there is no room for disagreement. Other areas do not demand universal allegiance for the Christians to live and work together in love and unity. In those areas, individual Christians may, rightly, hold strong convictions. But such convictions should not divide them from those of varying viewpoints. When such convictions are held as central, the result is often a wrongful emphasis dividing Christians and distorting the witness of the church.

We understand statements 1-8 to be central to biblical teaching and consistent with the historical understanding of the church. Statements 9-11 are the foundation upon which this church was built, but it is recognized that in these areas legitimate differences in understanding exist between Christians. While we believe they are rooted in and consistent with Scripture, their central emphasis is easily distorted. Neither their teaching nor that of other varying viewpoints should be a cause of division within the Body of Christ.

## Human Sexuality

We also hold that legitimate sexual relations are exercised solely within marriage. Hence, sexual activities outside of marriage, including but not limited to adultery, premarital sex, homosexuality, and pedophilia are inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible and the Church. Further, lascivious conduct, transgender behavior, and the creation and/or distribution and/or viewing of pornography, are incompatible with the biblical witness.

## Definition of Marriage

Marriage has been instituted by God. This church defines “marriage” as the exclusive covenantal union of one man and one woman in which such union is a lifetime commitment. A civil government’s sanction of a union will be recognized as a legitimate marriage by the church only to the extent that it is consistent with the definition of “marriage” found in these Articles.

## **Article V** **Church Membership**

1. Any person who has personally received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and shows evidence in life and conduct that he or she has been regenerated is eligible for membership. This shall be the only requirement for church membership.
2. Membership in the “true spiritual” church is obtained by personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Local church membership in the Sierra Bible Church is a recognition of common faith and commitment by fellow members of this church who unite for purposes stated in Article III of the By-Laws. All applicants for church membership shall be approved by the Board of Elders as to their personal beliefs and experience, and upon the unanimous approval of the Board of Elders, accepted into the membership of the Sierra Bible Church. The new members shall be received publicly into the fellowship of the church.
3. It shall be required of each member in their daily walk and conduct to give loyal obedience to all the moral and spiritual teachings laid down in the Word of God. We shall abstain from such habits and practices as will cause others to stumble, or bring reproach upon the cause of Christ. We assert our conviction that proportionate giving is a positive command in the Word of God, and we pledge ourselves to a systematic contribution for the support of the church.
4. Those persons who are not present at the services of the church for a period of three months shall be considered inactive members. Regular attendance for a period of at least one month shall result in automatic reinstatement of active membership. Inactive members do not exercise the right to vote.

5. Membership in Sierra Bible Church may be terminated in the following ways:
  - a. **by Death**
  - b. **by written resignation**
  - c. **by transfer.** Letters of commendation shall be issued by the Elders upon request of the church with which the member is uniting.
  - d. **by exclusion.** It is right and in harmony with the Scriptures to exclude from this fellowship any person who holds false and heretical doctrine or who lives inconsistently with a Christian profession (Galatians 1:8-9), or in violation of the law of public morals or walks disorderly (II Thessalonians 3:6-11, I Corinthians 5:11), or any person who would disturb the peace or unity of the church. This method of termination is to take place only after due notice and hearing, and earnest effort to produce repentance (Matthew 18:15,17).
  - e. **by inactivity.** The Board of Elders may remove from the membership list of the church any member who has been absent without satisfactory explanation for a period of one year.

The Elders may restore any person who has been excluded (II Corinthians 2:6-8, II Thessalonians 3:14-15).

## **Article VI** **Church Officers**

### **Elders**

1. The management and control of the affairs of this church shall be vested in a Board of Elders. Elders will be chosen through recommendations and input from the congregation and Elder board with a final decision being made by a unanimous vote of the board. The number of Elders should be determined by the areas in which oversight is needed, but shall consist of at least four men and the Senior Pastor. They should be in full agreement with these By-Laws. No man is to be considered who does not meet the standards set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, I Peter 5:1-4.
2. The Elders are directly responsible to Jesus Christ, the head of the church, and are instructed by Him to have the oversight and rule of all matters of church life and practice. Their basic responsibilities fall in the following areas:
  - a. to lead the congregation by their example (I Peter 5:3).
  - b. to feed and protect the believers (Acts 20:28-31).
  - c. to teach the believers the Word of God (Ephesians 4:11).
  - d. to rule the affairs of the church (Hebrews 13:17).
  - e. to equip the believers for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16).
3. The Elders are responsible to seek the mind of God through prayer and the wisdom of

the church family before decisions affecting the whole body of believers are made. On matters affecting the whole church, every effort should be made through careful explanation and prayer to have all in one accord regarding the decision.

4. The Elders shall serve as long as they, along with the congregation, believe it to be the will of God. All actions to dismiss an Elder shall either originate in or be referred to the Board of Elders. If such dismissal is deemed necessary, the individual's responsibilities as Elder shall be terminated immediately by a majority of the remaining Elders. He may be restored to the position of Elder upon recommendation of the membership and approval of the Board of Elders.

5. The Elders shall appoint among themselves a Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary, who will hold those positions for all church business. They shall hold these offices for one-year terms and may serve consecutive terms. They shall appoint from the membership a Treasurer. The duties of the officers shall be as follows:

**A. Chairman** – The Chairman shall be responsible for the chairing of all meetings of the congregation and of the Board of Elders. He shall execute jointly with the Secretary and in the name of the church, all deeds, bonds, contracts, and other obligations and instruments authorized by the Board of Elders or the congregation. He shall be an ex-officio member of all Boards and Committees, and shall be responsible for the leadership of public services in the absence of the Pastor. The Chairman shall also have such duties as may be assigned to him by the Board of Elders.

**B. Vice-Chairman** – The Vice-Chairman shall be vested with all powers and shall perform all the duties of the Chairman in the event of the absence or disability of the Chairman. The Vice-Chairman shall also have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be assigned to him by the Board of Elders.

**C. Secretary** – The Secretary shall keep the minutes of all proceedings of the congregation and of the Board of Elders in books provided for that purpose. He shall attend to the serving of all notices of meetings of the congregation and the Board of Elders. He shall execute jointly with the Chairman and in the name of the church, all deeds, bonds, contracts, and other obligations and instruments authorized by the Board of Elders or the congregation. He shall keep and have charge of the minutes of the meetings of the congregation and of any such other books and papers as the Board of Elders may specify. He shall, in general, perform all the duties incident to the office of Secretary, subject to the control of the Board of Elders.

**D. Treasurer** – The Treasurer shall keep or cause to be kept full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements in books to be kept for that purpose. He shall disburse or cause to be disbursed the funds of the corporation as may be directed by the Board of Elders, taking proper vouchers for such disbursements. He shall render to the Chairman and to the Board of Elders, whenever they may require, accounts of all his transactions as Treasurer and of the financial condition of the corporation. He shall, in general, perform all the duties incident to the office of Treasurer, subject to the control of the Board of Elders.

6. The Elders shall bring before the membership for approval an annual budget and any non-budgeted expenditure or indebtedness in excess of 5% of the current annual budget.

7. The Elders shall meet for business purposes on a regular basis. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of at least 50% of the active Elders and include the Chairman or Vice Chairman.

8. The Elders shall follow the staff selection process as outlined in the Sierra Bible Church operating manual for the selection of additional staff.

9. Staff Elders may not vote on any action pertaining to their employment.

### **Senior Pastor**

1. Selection. A Transition Committee composed of at least two members from the Elders and others selected by the Elders shall consider Senior Pastor candidates. Candidates must meet the same biblical qualifications as that of the Board of Elders, and must be in agreement with these By-Laws.

2. Calling. Upon the recommendation of the Transition Committee and through input from the congregation, the Board of Elders', by unanimous vote may extend the call. The call shall include the salary and benefit package, vacation time, continuing education opportunities and other relevant items. Only one candidate may be brought before the congregation at a time. .

3. Privileges. By virtue of his position, the Senior Pastor shall be a member of the church. He shall be a member of the Board of Elders and ex-officio member of all other boards and committees.

4. Duties. The Senior Pastor shall be devoted to the service of the church, preaching and teaching the Word of God, administering the ordinances, presiding as chief executive over all ministry and office staff and faithfully giving himself to all pastoral work. The Senior Pastor is responsible for the organization's operation according to these by-laws,

the doctrinal statement and the policies of the church. He shall also give an annual report of the work to the church.

5. Dismissal. All actions to dismiss the Senior Pastor shall either originate in or be referred to the Board of Elders. Dismissal of the Senior Pastor shall only be made by majority vote of the board of Elders. In the event of the dismissal of a Senior Pastor, the Elders will make an appropriate notification to the congregation regarding the dismissal.

6. Resignation. The Senior Pastor will submit a letter of resignation to the Board of Elders at least one month prior to his resignation.

### **Article VII** **Business Meetings**

1. The annual business meeting of the church shall be held at a time designated by the Elders, previous to the beginning of each fiscal year. Said date shall be announced in the public services for at least two weeks previously. Special business meetings may be called at the desire of the Elders, but only after public announcement of the same in the public services of the church for two weeks. Motions and supporting materials being considered for adoption during the business meeting will be presented by the elders and made available two weeks in advance. Approval shall be by majority vote of members in attendance.

2. At any church business meeting, a majority of the active Board of Elders must be present to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

### **Article VIII** **Amendments**

The membership may make such amendments to these By-Laws as deemed necessary. Such amendments must be submitted to the membership in writing at least two weeks before the meeting when the amendments are to be voted upon. A two-thirds majority of the votes cast by members in attendance will be required for approval.