

ARTICLE 1 – STAFF

SECTION 1 – PASTOR

The pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church shall be an ordained or licensed minister, called under the provisions outlined in the by-laws of Cornerstone Baptist Church (Article 4 Section 2 – Pulpit Committee).

Our Pastor shall be a born again believer, and a preacher of the fundamental doctrines of the Bible. He shall state his belief without mental reservation and be in complete agreement with the Constitution, Statement of Faith, and By-laws of Cornerstone Baptist Church. He shall faithfully preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, administer the ordinances of believer's baptism and the Lord's supper, and preside at all prayer meetings and worship services unless otherwise provided for. He shall regularly meet with the board of elders, deacons, and trustees; and perform such other duties as pertain to his position as shepherd of the Lord's people.

Our Pastor shall permit a background check to ensure the safety of those entrusted to his care as a pastor. Of particular concern are a history of domestic violence, sexual crimes against adults or children, and any evidence of financial impropriety.

Our Pastor shall be an *ex officio* member of all church boards and committees, and his job description shall be established by the board of elders. After assuming the duties of the pastorate, he shall be received into membership. He shall serve for no specific term. This pastoral relationship may be terminated by 90 days notice from either the pastor or the church, or sooner by mutual consent. If the resignation is under duress, it will be handled according to the procedure outlined in Appendix 1.

SECTION 2 – ASSOCIATE PASTORS

Any associate pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church shall be a born again believer in the Lord Jesus Christ; stating his belief without mental reservation, believing in the fundamental doctrines of the Bible, and must be in complete agreement with the Constitution, Statement of Faith, and By-laws of Cornerstone Baptist Church.

He shall be extended a call to serve in the intended position by a two-thirds ballot vote of the qualified members present and voting, only after being recommended to the church by the search committee as outlined in Article 4 Section 2.

Associate pastors shall permit a background check to ensure the safety of those entrusted to his care. Of particular concern are a history of domestic violence, sexual crimes against other adults and children, and financial impropriety.

If not already a member of our congregation, after assuming the duties of the above position, he shall be received into membership.

The board of elders shall establish the duties of this person. He shall serve no specific term, and his ministry may be terminated by himself or the church with 90 days notice, or sooner by mutual consent. If the termination is under duress, the severance will be handled according to the procedure outlined in Appendix 1.

ARTICLE 2 – ORDINATION

When in the judgment of the board of elders a man is called to the Christian ministry, it shall be within the power of the board of elders to call a council consisting of ministers and brethren to examine the qualifications of the candidate, and to advise the church as to the suitability of the candidate for public ordination.

The church shall then vote as to whether to proceed with the ordination. The board of elders shall have the power to discipline, even to the revocation of the ordination credentials, any minister ordained under the constitution, who after a fair and impartial trial, is found guilty of heresy or sinful practices clearly forbidden by the Word of God and this constitution.

ARTICLE 3 – OFFICERS

The stated officers of the church shall be active members of this church, in good standing for at least one year prior to being elected to office

SECTION 1 – ELDERS

Because of the variety and breadth of needs in a church, Cornerstone Baptist Church shall be shepherded by a plurality of elders as set forth in the New Testament (Acts 20:28, 1 Tim. 5:7, James 5:14, 1 Peter 5:5).

Under the care and oversight of the pastor, elders are responsible to oversee and serve the congregation under their care. As shepherds of the flock, they serve as examples to the congregation. They have a responsibility to govern well (1 Tim. 5:17), are held accountable to God for their service (Heb. 13:17), and understand that God will judge them with greater strictness (James 3:1).

In addition, they must aspire to this office and live up to the higher moral standard set for them in 1 Tim. 3:1-7. They must be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and “rebuke those who contradict it” (Titus 1:9).

They must be in full agreement with the Constitution, Statement of Faith, and By-laws of Cornerstone Baptist Church. They shall be prepared to preach, teach, and pray in public services as needed, and assist the pastor in any way needed. They shall faithfully attend the stated meetings of the church and be loyal to the pastor and the ministry.

They shall instruct candidates for baptism and membership, and are responsible for the preparation and distribution of the elements of the Lord’s Supper. They shall also appoint one of their members to the board of Christian education, the missions committee, and the nominating committee. They shall serve a term of three (3) years.

SECTION 2 – DEACONS

Deacons shall be chosen for their spiritual qualifications as defined in 1 Tim. 3:8-13. The deacons shall be responsible primarily for the physical needs of Cornerstone Baptist Church. The church shall elect deacons only from the recommendation of the nominating committee. They shall be elected by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting.

There shall be no limit to the number of deacons elected, and they shall serve three year terms. In the event of the death or resignation of a deacon, the board of deacons may appoint a successor to fill the vacancy until the next annual meeting.

The deacons shall faithfully attend the stated meetings of the church and be loyal to the pastor and the ministry. They shall receive and disburse a fund for the relief of the needy in the church and community.

After the annual meeting, the deacons shall elect a chairman who has had at least one year's experience as a deacon in this church.

SECTION 3 – TRUSTEES

The board of trustees of Cornerstone Baptist Church shall consist of the combined boards of elders and deacons.

The board of trustees shall institute and maintain a system of finance consistent with the scriptures (Prov. 3:9-10, 2 Cor. 9, Luke 16). In keeping with this, there shall be no form of commercialism in the church in any department. All funds necessary for the operation and ministry of Cornerstone Baptist Church shall be raised through tithes and offerings only.

The trustees shall receive, hold in trust, and manage the use of the church and all property, bonds, mortgages, investments, legacies and gifts. They shall keep all church property in good repair and maintain adequate insurance. They shall act as the legal representatives of the church and execute legal documents.

The board of trustees shall recommend an annual church budget at the annual meeting. The trustees shall incur no financial obligations in excess of the designated amounts for any category in the annual budget, except by express authority conveyed through a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at a constitutionally called congregational meeting.

As necessary, the board of trustees shall employ and discharge members of the custodial and secretarial staffs, and set the rates of compensation and provide needed supplies. Concerning the work of maintenance and repair, the board shall designate that which is the responsibility of the custodial staff, that which should be done by outside contractors and that which can be done by volunteers.

SECTION 4 – CLERK

The clerk's term shall be one year. The clerk shall keep up to date minutes of all church meetings. The clerk shall notify members concerning the annual meeting by written notice in the church bulletin two weeks in advance. This notice is to be read from the pulpit both Sundays immediately prior to the annual meeting.

The clerk shall keep a record of church membership with the dates of baptism, reception, and removal. The clerk shall issue letters of transfer and preserve on file all related communications, documents, and official reports. The clerk shall preserve on file all necessary correspondence resulting from any church business meeting.

SECTION 5 – TREASURER

The treasurer of Cornerstone Baptist Church shall be a *de facto* member of the board of trustees. The treasurer's term is three years, and shall include the following responsibilities. The treasurer shall pay promptly all bills of regular expenses of the church, and shall keep a correct book of accounts and give a written report quarterly to the church. The treasurer's book of accounts and records shall be audited annually by the audit committee, prior to the annual meeting. The treasurer shall be responsible for the recording of and disbursing of all funds designated for missions giving.

SECTION 6 – FINANCIAL SECRETARY

The financial secretary's term is three years, and shall include the following responsibilities. Receiving, counting, and depositing all offerings for both the general and mission funds. The financial secretary shall keep confidential records of the money received and issue a written statement to each contributor of record at the end of the calendar year.

SECTION 7 – SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

The Sunday School superintendent's term shall be three years. The superintendent shall be a member in good standing of the church and Sunday School. It shall be the duty of the superintendent to direct and oversee the activities of the Sunday School.

SECTION 8 – CHURCH MODERATOR

The church moderator will serve a term of one year commencing immediately after the annual meeting, and will preside over all business meetings of the church. The moderator will call all business meetings other than the annual meeting. The responsibility for appointing the moderator will alternate yearly between the board of deacons and the board of elders.

SECTION 9 – NURSERY DIRECTOR

The purpose of the nursery director is to lead, enhance, and nurture the nursery ministry through prayer, communication, training, organization, and interaction.

She must be a member in good standing for a minimum of one year, and trained in CPR and First Aid. She operates under the auspices of the board of Christian education and answers directly to the elder responsible for this department. She is responsible for all staffing needs, communication, training, and organization; and shall serve a three year term.

SECTION 10 – DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRY

The director of youth ministry has the responsibility of overseeing all facets of the youth program, and serves under the auspices of the Board of Christian Education. He or she shall be a member in good standing of Cornerstone Baptist Church, and has the responsibility of strategizing, planning, and insuring that the youth program is in harmony with Cornerstone's core values and vision.

ARTICLE 4 – BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

SECTION 1 – MEMBERSHIP

The board of Christian education shall consist of the pastor, associate pastors, director of youth ministries, Sunday school superintendent, two elders, and two members of the church elected at the annual meeting who will serve a two year term.

SECTION 2 – RESPONSIBILITIES

Approve and periodically review all curricula to be used in all educational programs of Cornerstone Baptist Church. Meet as necessary with the leaders of the various teaching ministries and provide minutes of all meetings to the board of elders.

The board shall approve all teachers and assistant teachers of the Sunday School. They shall approve the assignment of all individuals who will be teaching in the various ministries within the church, and evaluate annually each education ministry. They shall make recommendations for improvement or other modifications including new ministries and new materials.

They shall recruit new and substitute teachers, and promote the importance of Christian activities, evangelism, and education.

ARTICLE 5 – COMMITTEES

SECTION 1 – MISSIONS COMMITTEE

The missions committee shall consist of the pastor, Sunday School superintendent, one elder, and four church members. The four church members shall serve two year terms, electing two members each year.

The committee shall:

recommend a missionary budget to the church for adoption at the annual meeting,

plan and present an annual missionary conference,

maintain contact with our missionary family and inform the congregation of their spiritual and physical needs,

arrange for our missionaries to share their ministry with our congregation whenever possible so that we can effectively pray for and support them,

encourage and arrange short-term missionary projects, and

inform the board of elders of planned activities before implementation.

The Cornerstone Baptist Church missions philosophy and procedures is in Appendix 2.

SECTION 2 – PULPIT COMMITTEE

When notified of a pastor's termination, the moderator shall call a special meeting to elect a pulpit committee. The church members shall select seven active church members; one elder, one deacon, and five members from the church at large. Nominations may be made prior to and during the meeting with the consent of the nominee.

The pulpit committee shall make a careful and diligent inquiry concerning possible candidates for the pulpit. When at least five members of this committee have agreed upon a candidate, the committee shall ask him to preach at any of the regular worship services of the church. No candidate shall be presented by this committee until final action has been taken upon each former candidate.

A 75% vote by ballot of the qualified members present and voting shall be necessary for the call. When the church has secured a new pastor the pulpit committee shall be dissolved.

SECTION 3 – NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The nominating committee shall consist of three members: one elder, one deacon (each chosen by the respective boards) and one adult member of the church. This committee shall be elected at the annual meeting and will serve a term of one year.

The nominating committee shall:

- secure a current list of church members from the clerk,
- consult with the board of elders concerning prospective nominees for each office,
- inform each candidate of the responsibility of the office being considered, and
- present a slate of candidates to the membership at the annual meeting.

The nominating committee shall act upon any vacancy (other than the boards of elders and deacons), which occurs during the year. This committee shall appoint an officer to fill the vacancy until the next annual meeting. The congregation is invited to suggest names for candidates to the nominating committee for their consideration at least eight weeks before the annual meeting.

SECTION 4 – AUDIT COMMITTEE

The audit committee shall consist of two church member elected at the annual meeting. This committee will serve a term of one year. The audit committee shall provide the congregation with a written report of each audit at the annual meeting or at such other times as may be necessary.

SECTION 5 – ADDITIONAL COMMITTEES

The church may appoint such other committees as deemed necessary to carry on the work of the church.

ARTICLE 6 – MEETINGS

The stated meetings of the church shall be Sunday School, Sunday morning worship service, weekly prayer meeting and Bible study, and the annual meeting.

SECTION 1 – QUALIFIED VOTERS

All voting members (Constitution: Article 6 Section 2) shall be allowed to vote in all church meetings.

SECTION 2 – ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Absentee ballots may be used by members unable to attend a meeting because of physical ailments, military deployment, or temporary relocation. It will be the responsibility of the member solely to obtain the specific ballot from the clerk, mark it, sign it, and return it to the clerk before the meeting commences.

SECTION 3 – VOTING METHODS

The use of a secret ballot or voice vote shall be at the discretion of the moderator of the meeting, except for votes on pastoral staff in which case secret ballots must be used.

SECTION 4 – QUORUM

A quorum shall consist of 60% of the voting membership. If a quorum is not present at the meeting, the meeting will be postponed until a date set by the moderator of the meeting, but must be held within seven days. If a quorum is not present at the subsequent meeting, the members present will constitute a quorum.

SECTION 5 – VOTING PERCENTAGES

All votes taken at Cornerstone Baptist Church shall be carried by a two-thirds vote of the voting membership present and voting at the meeting. This section supersedes all voting percentages established in the Constitution.

SECTION 6 – RULES OF ORDER

Robert's Rules of Order shall be used by the moderator at all business meetings.

SECTION 7 – SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETINGS

Any special business meetings to come before the church shall be announced from the pulpit for two Sundays in advance of the special business meeting. The annual church meeting shall be held in January.

SECTION 8 – ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting shall be conducted for the purpose of hearing annual reports, approving the annual budget, electing officers, and conducting general business.

SECTION 9 – OTHER MEETINGS

Communion service is to be observed the first Sunday in every month, or other times at the discretion of the elders. Such other meetings, including evangelistic meetings, shall be held as the pastor and elders may feel led to recommend to the church.

ARTICLE 7 – AMENDMENT PROCEDURE

The Constitution and By-laws of Cornerstone Baptist Church may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the qualified members present and voting at any annual meeting of the church, or at a meeting especially called for that purpose. The proposed amendment shall be inserted in the call, but no change shall be made in ARTICLES 2 and 3 of Cornerstone Baptist Church Constitution.

The proposed change is to be placed before the church in writing at a business meeting at least one month before the date of the proposed action and read from the pulpit on the Lord's Day following that business meeting.

ARTICLE 8 – CHURCH DISCIPLINE

One of the marks of true conversion in a believer is his holy lifestyle. A person who has submitted himself to the Lordship of Jesus Christ is one who strives to walk according to the teachings of God's Word. This is an ongoing process, and while we acknowledge the successes and failures that accompany the sanctification process, we are not content to overlook one another's sin.

Because of this, Cornerstone Baptist Church shall follow the biblical process of discipline and restoration as outlined in Appendix 3. The essence of this document is that because we love one another, we will be proactive in "stimulating one another to love and good works (Heb. 10:24). This involves the process outlined in Matt. 18:15-20, including the possibility of publicly exposing the sin of the unrepentant member.

ARTICLE 9 – LEGAL DISCLAIMER

For legal purposes, the Constitution and By-laws of Cornerstone Baptist Church shall serve as the governing documents of this corporation.

ARTICLE 10 – DISSOLUTION CLAUSE

No part of the net assets of the corporation shall ever be used to the benefit of any donor, member, officer of the corporation, or any private individual. In the event of the dissolution of the corporation, any assets, after full payment of all debts and obligations of the corporation, shall be distributed among the missionaries or mission organizations supported by the corporation.

The amount given to each shall be in percentage proportion to the yearly amount budgeted to each in relation to the total amount budgeted for that year as recorded in the most recent annual report. If these missionaries or mission organizations no longer exist, then the assets shall be distributed to any organization recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as organized exclusively for charitable, educational, or scientific purposes.

Appendix 1

Cornerstone Baptist Church Pastoral Severance Policy

In the United States, an average of 1300 Christian pastors are forced out of their churches each month! Cumulatively, nearly 30% of all Christian ministers in the United States have been involuntarily terminated or “forced out” of their congregations, and 40% of today’s ministers will someday be in another line of work.¹

When this statistic becomes a reality in the church, many people are hurt. Pastors, and especially their families, become embittered and disillusioned, and many gifted and godly men are not in ministry today because of the hurts received. Likewise, the people of the church are hurt and disillusioned, resulting in cynical parishioners unwilling to entrust their care to their next shepherd. Added to this is the poor testimony to the unbelieving world that is watching it all unfold, and the scandal grows. In short, everybody loses, the body of Christ suffers needlessly, and the cause of Christ loses ground.

Churches and pastors need not go their separate ways with animosity. Even in the presence of “sharp disagreements” as between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:39-40), it is possible for a pastor and the church to part ways amicably because the Bible lays out principles of care for both pastors and their congregations, and reconciliation should be the norm, not the exception.

To that end, Cornerstone Baptist Church has established the following policy for the severance of the pastor / church relationship.

1. The church and pastor agree that if there is a disruptive conflict in the church, the parties involved will attempt to solve the problem in a harmonious manner for mutual satisfaction. This starts with a mutual commitment to the principles of biblical conflict resolution and discussing the matters in person.
2. If unable to resolve the conflict “in house,” Cornerstone Baptist Church will call in a competent fellow-Christian arbitrator from outside the membership to meet with them and assist them in resolving the problem. This mediator should be a person both parties agree to. If after two unsuccessful attempts to find a mediator of mutual agreement, Peacemaker Ministries, or some similar ministry, will be contacted to oversee the

¹ *Albuquerque Tribune*, Oct. 19, 1996.

process. The goal of using such non-binding arbitration is to maintain a harmonious fellowship in the church and to work through matters for mutual satisfaction.

3. If the outside arbitrator is not successful in resolving the conflict to the mutual satisfaction of both parties, the pastor and church agree to work together toward the least disruptive dissolution of the pastor-church relationship. Care will be given to minimize harm to the pastoral family as well as to the church family.

4. The following is the agreed upon protocol in the event the pastor resigns:
 - a. Upon his resignation, the pastor and his wife voluntarily give up their membership at Cornerstone Baptist Church.
 - b. The pastor shall not be expected, nor shall he be allowed, unless by mutual consent between the pastor and elders, to fill the pulpit or perform pastoral ministries during this time.
 - c. The pastor shall have two weeks to remove his personal belongings from the church property.
 - d. The pastor and his wife may attend Cornerstone Baptist Church as non-members as long as their presence contributes to the harmony and unity of the church. The realization of this harmony lies at the discretion of the board of elders.

5. The following is the agreed upon severance package in the event of the pastor's resignation or forced termination:
 - a. The church will pay, as a minimum, two (2) month's salary and benefits package as severance pay. Further payment, if any, will be at the discretion of the church.
 - b. The church also agrees to pay the pastor for any unused portion of his vacation pay.

What is the rationale behind a severance package? It forces estranged parties to address issues instead of avoiding them. There are reasons why churches and pastors have conflict. Those issues need to be addressed, and neither party is helped when they are overlooked or ignored through quick resignations and easy terminations. A severance package forces a pastor to go through the reconciliation process if he wants the package. It really hurts the flock when the shepherd cuts and runs, and anything a church can do to motivate him to address the issues contributing to the conflict is worth it.

But in addition to this, a severance package forces the church to count the cost of releasing their shepherd. When a church has a “we hired you, we fired you” mentality, they tend to go through pastors quickly – which is devastating to the church, since many pastors start to have their most effective ministry around the 10 year mark.² The loss of two month’s salary and benefits may be sufficient motivation for the church to think twice about quickly terminating the pastor / church relationship and pursue reconciliation instead.

Appendix 2

Cornerstone Baptist Church Philosophy of Church Discipline and Restoration

One of the marks of true conversion to Christ is the believer’s biblical lifestyle. A person who has submitted himself to the lordship of Jesus Christ is therefore one who endeavors to walk with integrity and holiness of life. Paul himself enjoined the Corinthians to live in this way: “Beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1).

If these things are expected of anyone who names the name of Christ, the church that names the name of Christ must by necessity seek to preserve holiness among her people. While holiness is commanded and expected of all Christians, it is also a reality that not all who profess to follow Christ will do so. It is therefore the responsibility of the leadership of a local church to examine both the profession and walk of one who rails to obey Christ’s Word. Jesus prescribed principles to follow which make all Christians to some extent responsible for each other’s behavior, and he included disciplinary procedures (Mt. 18:15-17).

Jesus lays out a simple pattern for the church to follow. It consists of four steps.

1. Any believer has the responsibility to confront any other believer when they see that that believer has sinned. If the sinning believer acknowledges his sin and repents of it, the confronting brother has won him to a place of unity and restoration. This first step of discipline is where over 90% of discipline begins and ends. However, if the sinning believer does not repent,
2. Step two demands that the confronting believer has the responsibility to bring two or three additional believers back to the offending one for more confrontation. This step insures that, at the mouth of two or three witnesses, both the facts of the sin as well as the confirmation of the process can be confirmed.
3. Step three says that if the offending believer does not repent from the second confrontation, the sin is to be told to the church. Now, all the members of the

² Cf. Thom Rainer’s book, *Effective Evangelistic Churches*, (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, pp. 43-44), in which he states that the average length of a pastor’s tenure in a Protestant church is 2.3 years!

congregation are enjoined to plead with the offending brother or sister to repent of their sin and come back to a right relationship with God. After a sufficient time (determined by the elders), the sinning brother has either repented, or refuses to do so. If he refuses, then by virtue of Jesus' own pronouncement (via His words in Mt. 18:18-20),

4. step four is to be enacted: he is to be excommunicated or disfellowshipped from the congregation. He is therefore to be treated as one who rejects the gospel of Christ. If he is seen by any member of the congregation, he is to be warned of the consequences of his sin, but is also exhorted to come to a saving relationship with Christ as he once confessed. If the erring individual later repents, and requests reinstatement to the body of believers he once fellowshiped with, he shall meet with the elders who will evaluate the sincerity of his repentance, and if deemed to be genuine shall be restored to the congregation, again at a public meeting. At such time, at the discretion of the elders, he shall be then fully restored to all the rights, duties, privileges, and responsibilities of fellowship and / or membership. This is the four-fold process of biblical church discipline and restoration that Cornerstone Baptist Church follows.

Why would a church want to follow this procedure? It is because biblical church discipline accomplishes six things.

1. It glorifies God because it proves our obedience to His instructions, while at the same time, maintains the proper role of church government.
2. It's goal is to reclaim the offenders.
3. It maintains the purity of the church and her worship.
4. It vindicates the integrity and honor of Christ and Christianity by exhibiting fidelity to His principles.
5. It deters others from sinning.
6. It prevents giving God any cause to set Himself against the church.

Biblical church discipline and restoration, as shown, is a mandate from the Word of God. May God's grace and power be upon our church as we desire to follow His Word in this regard.