

# Constitution & By-Laws

# LIFE JOURNEY

 community church

Milwaukie, Oregon 97267

## **INTRODUCTION:**

It seems to be a journey without end. Regardless of all of the advances in education and technology we make, in spite of all the tragic testimony of humanity through the centuries, we have yet to come to grips with the reality of Jeremiah 17:9 - that within each of us lies a heart that is not to be trusted because, in the words of the prophet, it is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

The human heart, even of born-again Bible believers, will lead you into believing something is good or true or right when it really isn't. Proverbs 28:26 puts it bluntly when it says, "he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." Left to itself the heart of the staunchest Christian, be he a pastor, a missionary, a church planter or an ordinary believer, will seek dominance and control. Each of us inherently believes that our opinions are superior to those of others. We think we know which option; solution, action, program or decision is best. Rarely do we stop to contemplate the possibility that we might be wrong.

The resulting carnage is often witnessed in our churches. Rather than being places of sweet fellowship, peaceful unity, mutual care-giving, and spiritual growth, too many churches resemble battlefields in which we destroy our leaders, shoot our wounded, and take no prisoners. Ample abuse is found in both the pulpit and the pew.

Some pastors, ignoring Peter's admonition not to "lord it over God's heritage" (Peter 5:3), exercise dictatorial control over every aspect of the church's ministry. In some churches it is the deacons themselves who have usurped an unbiblical authority and now "run the church" as they see fit. The pastor is only a hireling who serves as a chaplain to fill both the pulpit and the pew, and to hatch (dedicate babies), match (marry) and dispatch (bury) members of the congregation.

Other times churches function with little rhyme or reason. As in the days of old, "every man does that which is right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). There are endless business meetings dealing with minutia, turf wars erupt, innovation and creativity are stifled, growth is undermined, and a suffocating inertia settles in like a wet blanket.

The cycle is repeated in church after church, generation after generation. We never seem to learn that the human heart, even when regenerated, is not to be trusted. It must be regulated.

The framers of the U.S. Constitution understood that simple fact. So, when they brought this nation to birth they devised a document designed to protect our land against the abuse of power that is so often generated by the human heart. They wrote a manuscript called "The Constitution" that set forth the principles by which this country was to be governed, and instituted a set of checks and balances to minimize potential misuse of authority.

What is true of civil government is also true of the local church. The heart is not trustworthy and must be checked...

God's Word admonishes us to "let all things be done DECENTLY and in ORDER" (I Corinthians 14:40). The only way for that to be done is for people to agree in advance on what is to be done, when it is to be done, and how it is to be done. When written down (that's the only way it will work), the resulting document is known as a "church constitution."

Written by Roger McNamara, *How to Write a Church Constitution*, 2006.

## **CONSTITUTION -**

### **Introduction**

As God challenges us as His followers, kids and heirs in the Kingdom of God to do all things decently and in order, the purpose of this document is to provide general guidelines for corporate church life.

### **Article I – Legal Name**

The name of this local church is Life Journey Community Church of Milwaukie, Oregon.

### **Article II – Purpose of/ Vision / Heart of Ministry**

To be witnesses of the good news of Jesus Christ in Milwaukie, the greater Portland area and then as God would enable us, to the ends of the Earth.

- Jesus was the One with the vision & appeal...we simply *desire to be obedient* in living it out (see Acts 1:8; also Matt. 28:19-20).

### **Article III – Core Beliefs**

#### **The Scriptures –**

We believe that the Bible (the 66 books of the Old and New Testament) is the complete and fully inspired Word of God. Fully inspired and without error in its original writings and that it has supreme and final authority in faith and life (Jn. 16:12-13; 17:17; Rom. 15:4; Gal. 1:11-12; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21). It is only through God's own personal and gracious revelation that any man has the opportunity to know Him and to enter into a personal, growing and effectual relationship with Him (1 Cor. 2:9-11).

#### **The Godhead –**

We believe that there is one God (Deut. 6:4; Is. 44:6; 1 Cor. 8:4-6) and that He has always existed, coeternally, in three distinct and yet equal persons (Gen. 1:26-27; Matt. 3:16-17; 28:19; Jn. 1:1-14; 14:26). God the Father being the source (Gen. 1:1) and the giver of the Son (Jn. 3:16), God the Son being the mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5), Savior (Lk. 2:11; Acts 5:30-31) and the provider of life (Jn. 10:10; 14:6; Col. 1:15-17) and the Holy Spirit as enabler, helper and God in us (Jn. 14:15-26; 16:7-16; Eph. 1:13-14). These three persons of the Godhead, although they are equal in essence and are distinguishable in their actions, role and relationship with one another (Jn. 14:15-26; Rom. 8:1-4; 2 Thes. 2:13-14; Tit. 3:4-6) are never separable.

#### **Person & Work of Christ –**

We believe that the divine Word of God became a man by taking on flesh and stepping into our world as the man known as Jesus (Jn. 1:1-3; 14). He existed before this incarnation and before the creation of the world (Gen. 1; Psa. 33:6-9; Jn. 8:58; Col. 1:17-18), is the Son of God (Matt. 3:16-17; Mk. 5:7; Lk. 70-71), affirmed and stated His position as Messiah (Matt. 16:13-17; Mk. 14:61-62; Lk. 4:16-21; Jn. 4:25-26) and is the second member of the Trinity (Jn. 10:30; 14:9). Jesus Christ is both fully God (Jn. 8:58; Col. 1:15-20; Tit. 2:13) and fully man (Mt. 1:18-25; Lk. 19:41; 1 Tim. 2:5; 1 Jn. 1:1-3). One person with two unconfused, unchangeable and inseparable natures (Col. 2:9; 1 Tim. 3:16).

We believe that Jesus Christ was miraculously conceived, being born of a virgin through the empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit (Is. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25; Lk. 1:26-37). He walked this Earth as the God-man, displaying the full image and glory of the Father. To know Jesus is to know God Himself (Jn. 14:6-8; 17:22). During Jesus' earthly life He was tempted in every way, just as we are (Heb. 2:18; 4:15), yet did not succumb to any of it. He lived a sinless life in everyway (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:14-15; 1 Pet. 2:21-23) and was therefore able to pay the penalty for sin as the perfect Lamb of God (Jn. 1:29; Rom. 3:21-26; Heb. 4:15-16; 1 Pet. 2:24). Jesus died but death could not contain Him, triumphing over it through His resurrection (Matt. 28:5-7; Lk. 24:1-8; 1 Cor. 15:4). His victory over death was seen and witnessed by many people over a 40-day span (Jn. 20:10-29; Acts 1:3; 1 Cor. 15:4-8) and at the close of this resurrected ministry He ascended into Heaven (Lk. 24:51; Acts 1:9) where He sits exalted at the right hand of God (Lk. 22:69; Eph. 1:20-23).

### **Person & Work of the Holy Spirit -**

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person in the Trinity of God (Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 13:14) and as such is fully divine, sharing in the full nature (Acts 5:3-4), attributes (1 Cor. 2:10-12; Psa. 139:7-10) and responsibilities (Acts 13:4; 1 Cor. 12:4-11) as the Father and the Son. After Pentecost (Acts 2), the promised Spirit (Jn. 14:16-26; 16:7; Acts 1:8) was sent to convict the world – believers and nonbelievers alike – of sin, righteousness, judgment (Jn. 16:8-11) and to open the eyes of believers (2 Cor. 4:4-6). He is at work in regenerating and making believers “new” (2 Cor. 5:17; Tit. 3:5-6) and coming and dwelling within them in this new birth (Jn. 3:3-8; Rom. 8:9; Gal. 5:16-26). Once the Spirit takes up residence in a believer, He is there to stay and the individual has a hope (Rom. 5:5-9; Heb. 10:23) that remains past this life without fear of Him ever leaving (Rom. 8:9; Eph. 1:13-14).

### **Sin & the Depravity of Man -**

We believe that from the beginning mankind was created in a perfect, harmonious relationship with God (Gen. 1:31; 2:15-25). Through the temptation of Satan – the great deceiver (Gen. 3:1-6) – Adam and Eve, of their own accord, chose to turn their backs on that perfect relationship and attempt to live life by deciding on their own what was right and wrong, good and evil (Gen. 3:6-7). The outcome of man and woman choosing willfully to go on their own resulted in death, both physically (Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:21-22) and spiritually (Eph. 2:1; Rom. 5:14), as well as eternal separation from their Creator (Rom. 5:18; 6:23). This is a separation and condemnation that God Himself did not create, but came about as man chose to be disobedient and to reject the perfect will of God. The resulting consequence was immediate (Gen. 3:7-12) and the effect had forever implications on all of mankind (Gen. 3:16-19; 23).

We believe that death and condemnation originated in Adam and as his descendants we all inherit the consequences and guilt of his actions (Rom. 5:12; 15-19). There is nothing that we can do, in and of ourselves, to change that (Rom. 3:10-20). Though we are all born into the sinful state of Adam, it is because of our own personal sin that we will stand before God to be judged (Rom. 2:5-9). Despite the ugliness of the state in which we are now in, man still remains in the image of God, though this state is now marred and stained by our imperfection (Gen. 9:6).

### **Salvation –**

We believe that mankind had a problem and there was nothing that we could do to fix it (Rom. 5:6) but our God is One that desires for all to have a second chance (Jn. 3:17, 1 Tim. 2:4). Therefore God sent His son, (Rom. 8:3; Gal. 4:4) Jesus Christ, to Earth to pay the price required to cover our sin debt (Rom. 3:25; 5:18-19; 1 Jn. 4:9-10). By our faith in that atonement alone can we realize the ultimate reality of God's saving grace (Eph. 2:8-9) through which we are embraced and welcomed into God's family as His sons and daughters (Rom. 8:14; Gal. 3:26-29). This grace is abundant (Ps. 86:15; Rom. 5:17), sufficient (2 Cor. 9:8; 12:9) and by definition – free (Rom. 5:15). We believe that it is God's heart and desire for all of mankind to choose Christ and be delivered from sin (Jn. 1:12; 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:1-4; Titus 2:11-14).

We believe that to be in Christ is to be justified – to be declared righteous – before God (Rom. 3:24; 4:22-25; 2 Cor. 5:21). This means that at salvation the believer's sin is imputed (transferred or moved) to Christ (Jn. 1:29) and Christ's righteousness is imputed to the believer (2 Cor. 5:21). Therefore, the believer can not stand on his/her own merit, but is acceptable only because of Christ's righteousness (Rom. 5:1-2; Gal. 2:16). The results of justification for the believer are forgiveness of sin (Jn. 5:24; Rom. 8:1), real and full life – both now and forever (Rom. 5:18; Titus 3:7), reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:20-21) and adoption into the family of God (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5).

We believe that salvation is a gift received by the believer from God and is based on nothing that we can do on our own. Therefore once we are “in Christ” we can never lose that “in Christ-ness,” as we did nothing to receive it in the first place – other than having faith (Rom. 8:35-39; Eph. 2:8-9). Consequently in Christ we have confidence and are assured of our eternal security (Rom. 8:28, Eph. 1:13-14) as we know our God to be a God of consistency (meaning He does not change) and love (Heb. 13:8, Jms. 1:17; 1 Jn. 4:7-16).

### **Christian Growth –**

We believe Christian growth happens when a believer, in light of what Christ has done and through the power of the Holy Spirit, engages in an ongoing process of offering themselves in a greater and fuller way to God and to His service, being made more and more into the likeness of Christ (Rom. 6:19; 12:1-2; 1 Thes. 4:3-7). This growth (sanctification) is a work of God in us and is not instantaneous or automatic nor is it ever completed in this life (2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 5:25; 2 Pet. 1:3-7).

### **The Church –**

We believe that the universal church is made up of all believers in Christ who have been sealed by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13; Tit. 3:5) regardless of time, race, gender or other (Eph. 4:4-6; Gal. 3:26-29). This universal church manifests itself as organized assemblies of believers gathered together in local communities (1 Cor. 1:2; Philem. 2; Rev. 2-3). It is far more than a building or a location, the church is people (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19-20). More specifically, it is the gathering of Spirit indwelt individuals meeting together for the common purpose of worshipping God and encouraging and challenging one another in their walks with Christ (Col. 3:15-17; Heb. 10:24-25; 1 Pet. 4:1-2). We believe that the church is more than just a gathering but that God has placed us here for a very specific purpose and that purpose is to offer the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:7-8; 2:38-40; 2 Cor. 2:14-17). Every believer that is living in

obedience is participating regularly and actively as a member of one of these local assemblies (1 Cor. 1:2; Heb. 10:25). Only those who believe in Christ and have been born again are qualified to become members (1 Cor. 1:2; 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 11:2).

We believe that the local church should regularly practice the sacraments of baptism (Matt. 28:19-20) and the Lord's Supper (Lk. 22:17-20), both of which were established and laid out for us by Christ. Baptism is a believer's way of proclaiming to the church and the world about their identification and commitment to Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:41; 8:36). Baptism, in no way, saves an individual. It does not regenerate or convey any kind of future grace. It is an outward picture of a reality that has already taken place on the inside of the individual as well as a visual proclamation of the Gospel and of the union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection (Rom. 1-11). The Lord's Supper is a symbolic reminder of the redemptive work of Christ that we repeat over and over again (Lk. 22:17-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-34). We have come to put our life and hope in Christ and what He has done for us and this is a way of remembering that on an ongoing, regular basis. It also serves as a sobering reminder, a celebration of our salvation, a participation and connection with God and His people (1 Cor. 10:16-18) and an anticipation that one day He will come back and take us to be with Him (1 Cor. 11:26).

### **Partnership in the Church**

We believe that God has called us to work together in partnership within the body of Christ and that this call extends beyond the people that make up our local church. This call is to work together with other bodies of Believers for the cause and sake of the Gospel (Jn. 17; 1 Cor. 1:10-17). Our heart and desire should not be for competition with these other brothers and sisters but for partnership, unity and love to be the message that we send through our actions and speech (Rom. 12:9-21; 1 Cor. 3).

### **Ministry & Gifts of the Spirit -**

We believe that the local church is a diverse gathering of uniquely gifted individuals (Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12) that are all needed in using their personal giftedness for the health and wellbeing of the church, to fulfill its purposes and to serve one another (1 Cor. 12:4-7; 1 Pet. 4:10-11). As we use these gifts that have been blessed to us, we should not seek glory for ourselves, but all should go to Christ (Rom. 12:3-8; Jms. 1:17). Therefore, in regard to the Spirit's gifting, He has the ability to give whatever gift He desires but as those gifts are played out in our lives, it is our duty to make sure that the gifts are biblical and used in proper biblical ways (1 Cor. 14:39-40; 1 Thes. 5:19-22; 1 Jn. 4:1-4).

### **The Future -**

We believe that one day Jesus will return again to gather His faithful to Him (Acts. 1:10-11; 1 Cor. 15:20-57; 2 Thes. 1:7-10; Rev. 22:12-14), to judge and condemn the disobedient to an eternity apart from the presence and goodness of God (2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Thes. 1:6-9; Rev. 22:15) and to establish His eternal Kingdom (1 Thes. 4:13-18; Rev. 19:1-5). As believers in Christ, we eagerly anticipate that the final confidence of our salvation is in the reality that death has no hold on us in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1-10; 1 Cor. 15:50-52). This life now with its trouble and hardship is nothing in comparison to how amazing our future glory will be through the gracious gift of our Savior (Rom. 8:18). One day we (as those who have put their faith in Christ Jesus) will stand before God, in His presence, for all of eternity, with all

of the other saints who have come before us, and those that follow us and live forever in perfection (Jn. 6:39-40; 14:2-3; Col. 1:22).

#### **Article IV – Membership**

At Life Journey, we do not take “membership” lightly. Understanding that if the church (universally, but more importantly for us here as Life Journey – as set forth in this document) is going to function effectively (relationally & functionally) we all need to be united in our understanding of what we are. As we look at God’s Word, we do not see any explicit Biblical command for church membership. But we do believe that the Bible does speak to membership in relational terms: that we are members of “one Body” & each members of the household of God (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 2:18-19; 3:6; 4:25; 5:29-30.) We also see evidences of something like church membership as early on as the first church and throughout the New Testament:

- **Acts 2:41/4:4** – Believers in Christ began to be noticed and accounted for.
- **Acts 6** – The church was not feeding the whole city, they were specifically serving those that were connected to them.
- **1 Cor. 5:12-13/Matt. 18:15-20** – Church discipline assumes church membership since you engage in discipline with people who are connected to your body.
- **Heb. 13:17/Acts 20:28** – Elders are to care for their flocks. You can’t be held accountable to lead those who aren’t a part of “you.” For those who are part of the church, there is a submission to leadership piece involved.
- **The New Testament** – The New Testament church assumes membership & knows of no believer who is not a part of the local Body.

Therefore, we believe it is of fundamental importance to determine who shall be members of this church & the conditions of such membership. The people that are included in membership are Life Journey Community Church.

#### **Article V – Government**

Biblically we see that there are 2 God-appointed offices that Believers currently hold in the church: the office of Elder (Acts 14:23; 20:28-32; 1 Tim. 3:1-10; Tit. 1:6-9; Heb. 13:17; Jam. 3:1; 1 Pet. 5:1-4) and office of Deacon (Acts 6:1; Rom. 16:1; ; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-13). Both of these offices are under the Lordship of Jesus Christ as the Head of the church (Matt. 16:13-18; Eph. 1:22; 5:23; Col. 1:18) and both offices primarily seek to serve Him in obedience and desire the best for the individuals that make up the local church, for the community that surrounds and the world (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:7-8).

#### **Article VI – Dissolution**

This means the complete disbanding of Life Journey Community Church, so that it ceases to function as a gathering of regenerated Believers (with the purpose of, see Article II of this document) or a corporate entity. Upon dissolution of this church and after paying or making full provisions for payment of all debts and liabilities, the net assets of Life Journey shall be distributed as determined by the Elder Board to a non-profit organization or organizations of their choosing. Those organizations must be in agreement with the Core Beliefs (found in Article III of this document) contained herein.

## **Article VII – Amendments & Purpose of Document**

This constitution and by-laws has been established to provide guidelines for the local body of believers of Life Journey Community Church, as we seek to be obedient to Jesus Christ in our lives. Amendments should be made without hesitation should anything unbiblical be found to be contained herein. Changes should also be made, which do not violate God's Word, if they would enable the church to be more effective in fulfilling its purposes. Changes to this constitution or by-laws may be changed upon a 75% (3/4) majority recommendation of the Elder board and a 67% (2/3) majority approval by the church (see Article I of by-laws.)



## **By-Laws -**

### ***Article I.) Membership***

#### **Section 1 –Qualifications for Membership**

- 1) Know Jesus Christ as their Personal Savior
- 2) Believers Baptism (unless postponed by the “Jillian Clause”)
  - a. The Jillian Clause states that although physical baptism is the preference we understand & believe that there is nothing saving about the act itself. Baptism is an outward picture of what has already happened in the heart of a Christian.
  - b. As a result, there may arise some extenuating circumstance that would keep the potential member from immediate baptism, the elder board could accept that individual into membership with a 100% agreement.
  - c. The member would commit to the act of baptism as soon as this extenuating circumstance is overcome.
  - d. The value being applied here is on the fundamental purpose of baptism and not the action itself. The value is placed on the BELIEVING individual and what has already transpired in their life and their essential place of belonging within the Body of Christ. This, we believe, to be God’s heart in this matter (Lk. 23:40-43; Rom. 2:28-29; 3:21-4:25).
- 3) Understand & agree with the core beliefs & expectations of members of Life Journey
- 4) Complete the Church’s Membership Class

#### **Section 2 – Member Expectations & Privileges – Church Covenant**

These are commitments and agreements not just from each member to the church BUT ALSO from the church to each member.

- 1) **Expectations** – The INTENT & HEART behind these expectations is to maintain and further the unity and mission of Life Journey. In no way is it a “To-Do-List” that should strike fear or result in legalism. The heart behind this is for purpose of clarification, togetherness and obedience NOT for divisiveness. For all of “us” – from the very beginning – to be on the same page and to each carry the load that God has given us, together.
  - a. Active in their involvement within our Body
    - i. Attend REGULARLY the service & are active participants
    - ii. Regular attendance in a small group
    - iii. Regularly take part in communion
    - iv. BE a member of only this local Body
  - b. Active in their pursuit of Christ
    - i. Daily personal times w/ God...
    - ii. Reading & meditating on God’s Word
    - iii. An active prayer life
    - iv. Pursuit of other Spiritual Disciplines (i.e. – quiet, solitude, fasting, etc...)
  - c. Active, faithful & obedient givers financially  
We understand that the Bible & specifically Jesus spoke repeatedly about the values that we should have concerning money (Matt. 6:1-4; 19-24; 25-34;

19:16-30; Mk. 12:41-44; Lk. 16:13-15; Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-5:11; 1 Tim. 6:10; Heb. 13:5) and we see this as a vital area in obedience and spiritual growth.

- i. Giving is something that we do voluntarily & with a joyful heart not under compulsion or out of duty.
  - ii. We give in such a way and in direct proportion to our ability and calling. This is not a “tithe” but a New Testament “generous giver” lifestyle (see Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-5:11).
  - iii. We realize this will change with time, circumstances and in obedience to God’ direction.
  - iv. The elders reserve the right to ask members for yearly financial commitments & to send out updates regarding this. This allows Life Journey to set an annual budget and to use our resources the most effective way possible.
- d. Active, faithful & obedient in ministry and serving Christ with your life & gifting
- i. Understanding that your gifts were given to bless others and bring Glory to God – not simply to advance the individual’s own selfish gain and glory.
  - ii. This means not just serving the Body but it also means serving the World with the ability that God has given you.
- e. Live within and are intentional in this community – Milwaukie
- i. This concept stems from the reality that the decisions that we make on an individual basis impact significantly the function and effectiveness of the church and we want to be intentional with our lives...even down to where we live.
  - ii. We understand and are willing to give up some of our own personal freedoms for the benefit of the church and the kingdom of God.

2) **Privileges** – It is a blessing to be a part of the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12) and it especially beneficial for us to be relationally and accountably linked in a local Body of Believers (see Article IV of Constitution.)

- a. All members shall have the right to vote on all matters submitted to the church.
- b. Any member is eligible to serve in an elected church office (see Article II of by-laws) for which he/she is qualified.

### **Section 3 – Membership Procedure**

This is the process that each prospective member will go through:

- 1) Attend & complete the membership class (unless signed off by the Elders)
- 2) Read and agree with the Core Beliefs (see Article III of Constitution), qualifications (see Article I, section 1 of by-laws) & covenant of Life Journey (see Article I, section 2 of by-laws).
- 3) Be received into membership through affirmation by the Elders.

### **Section 4 – Family & Age of Members**

Any person – regardless of age – who is mature enough and meets that membership qualifications (Article I, section 1 of by-laws), expectations (Article I, section 2 of by-laws) and completes the membership process (Article I, section 3 of by-laws) has proven themselves able and worthy to be a member of Life Journey, with all of its privileges and expectations.

- 1) Age does not hinder membership; we encourage all to follow the process above.
- 2) Familial connection does not guarantee membership
  - a) Our heart & desire is to help our kids understand the mission of the church (local and universal) and to understand their place within it.
  - b) At any point, regardless of age, that they feel and desire this privilege, they may follow the process above.

### **Section 5 – Church Discipline**

The goal of “church discipline” is the restoration & reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:11-21; Gal. 6:1-2) of the believing member. If there is a time when a member’s life & conduct falls outside of Biblical parameters it is the church’s opportunity and responsibility to come alongside that individual, help them see their error and help them receive the help they need. Sin is something that God does not take lightly and it is something that we do not take lightly. As such we will take the required steps to see that this behavior, action or unhealthy condition is not misinterpreted as being acceptable (1 Corinthians 5). The process of discipline will be the one outlined in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Corinthians 5 (see also Galatians 6:1-2; 2 Thessalonians 3).

- 1) If these steps of discipline do not result in a member’s repentance and move into the process of correcting and overcoming the error or conduct, their membership shall be terminated by a vote of the Elders. After which, the Elders will communicate with the rest of the church.

### **Section 6 – Termination of Member**

- 1) By death of the Member
- 2) At that member’s request
- 3) When a member joins another church
- 4) As part of discipline as outlined in Article I, Section 5 of By-Laws.

### **Article II.) Officers**

The individuals commissioned with the power, influence and authority of the offices that follow will make it their privilege, honor and responsibility to labor, work and strive toward the ends outlined in Article V of the Constitution.

#### **Section 1 – Elders – Pastor**

This is the highest office within the church and these two terms are essentially synonymous. They are referring to the same office; similarly as a man is called both “father” & “dad” in reference to the one position.

- 1) Qualifications – An Elder is...
  - a. A willing, Godly Christian male (1 Tim. 2:12; 3:1-7) whose life has a pattern of faithfulness & service of Jesus (1 Tim. 3:6; 1 Pet. 5:2)
  - b. A Godly Husband (1 Tim. 3:2-4; Tit. 1:6)

- c. A Godly Father (1 Tim. 3:4; Tit. 1:6)
  - d. A Godly man in the other areas of his life (character) (1 Tim. 3:1-7). These include: work, time, talents and reputation in the community.
  - e. Able to teach & have God-vested authority to lead (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:9; Heb. 13:17)
- 2) Specific Duties and Responsibilities
- a. Prayer and seeking God for His church
  - b. Teaching the church
    - i. Oversee doctrinal soundness & spiritual health (Acts 15: 20:28)
    - ii. Proclaiming the Gospel & encouraging the church to do the same (Acts 6:2; 2 Tim. 4:1-2)
  - c. Leadership of the church
    - i. Protecting it ...always with the church's best interest at heart (1 Pet. 5:2)
    - ii. In hard times & through divisive issues (Acts 6:1-6; 15)
    - iii. Providing direction & continued focus and purpose to the church (Acts 6:1-6; 15; 20:28-31)
    - iv. He is a living example and model for other believers to follow (Acts 20:18-24; 1 Pet. 5:3)
    - v. He gives account to God for the church (Heb. 13:17)
    - vi. He is charged with raising up and training the development of the next generation of elders and leaders in the church.
- 3) Election of Elders
- The election of an individual to the position of elder will be carried out:
- a. By the current group of elders bringing forth the name of an individual and submitting them to the church for approval
  - b. The church will then vote on the submitted individual for ratification.
  - c. The ratification of an elder requires an 80% (4/5) approval vote of the members to be placed into office.
    - i. If there is reason for a member to vote "No" on an Elder candidate, it is required that they explain their vote and why they are voting in the negative.
    - ii. A general answer is not acceptable; the concern must have some Biblically sound reason to be valid.
    - iii. If a member gives a non-valid "no" vote – that vote will be thrown out and not count against the total vote.
    - iv. If a valid "no" is brought forth, the elders will meet to reevaluate and determine the next step.
- 4) Terms of Office
- a. The Elders term of office will be two (2) years. They may serve for two (2) consecutive terms of office. Upon completion of the first term, the elder will come up for reaffirmation by vote of the members (as outlined in Article II, section 1.3 of by-laws.)
  - b. After serving two (2) consecutive terms of office each elder must take a minimum of a 6-month sabbatical. Exceptions to this provision include times of emergency, crisis or lack of qualifying candidates.

- c. The Number of Elders shall not be less than 2
- d. If there is an Elder who is being paid by Life Journey to perform the responsibilities of the office, then the terms of office found above (Article II, Section 1.4 of by-laws) will be waived.

## **Section 2 – Deacons**

### 1) Qualifications –

A Deacon is a willing, Godly Christian (either male or female) (Rom. 16:1) whose life has a pattern of faithfulness & service of Jesus (1 Tim. 3:8-13; 1 Pet. 5:2). This is a position of honor, importance and service.

### 2) Specific Duties and Responsibilities

- a. To serve in the church and help lead service to the community (see Stephen & Philip in Acts 6:5-8:40).
- b. Work closely alongside elders, empowering others in the body for service (Acts 6-8; Phil. 1:1).

### 3) Election (Acts 6:2-6)

The election of an individual to the position of deacon will be carried out:

- a. By the current group of elders bringing forth the name of an individual and submitting them to the church for approval
- b. The church will then vote on the submitted individual for ratification.
- c. The ratification of a deacon requires an 80% (4/5) approval vote of the members to be placed into office.
  - i. If there is reason for a member to vote “No” on a Deacon candidate, it is required that they explain their vote and why they are voting in the negative.
  - ii. A general answer is not acceptable; the concern must have some Biblically sound reason to be valid.
  - iii. If a valid “no” is brought forth, the elders will meet to reevaluate and determine the next step.

### 4) Terms of Office

- a. The Deacons term of office will be two (2) years.
- b. Upon completion of the term, the deacon will come up for reaffirmation by vote of the members (as outlined in Article II, section 2.3 of by-laws.)

## **Section 3 – Termination**

- 1) Any officer of the church, having received that honor may be terminated if he/she is found to be partaking, indulging or living in any of the following ways:
  - a. When he/she is found to be living a life that is un-Christian, unbiblical or resulting in questionable character and integrity.
  - b. When he/she is found to deviate or disagree with the Core Beliefs and practice of Life Journey.
  - c. When he/she deliberately neglects the duties and responsibilities of his/her office – despite the approaches of the Elders and/or other officers to help and call this individual to accountability, repentance and change.
- 2) All actions to terminate an officer – who has received that honor will be referred to the Elder Board who shall consider the issue before any other action is taken.

- a. If an action for termination is necessary, then that action will be taken by the Elders.
- b. There must be unanimous (100%) approval of the Elders – minus the Elder in question (if it is an Elder) – to remove the officer from their position.
- c. The Elders will then inform the church of their decision and action.

### ***Article III.) Meetings***

These are special gatherings/meetings of the whole church and are not the weekly worship service/gathering of the church.

- 1) Special gatherings/meetings of the church are open to current Life Journey members as defined in Article I of the by-laws of this document.
- 2) A Special Meeting of the church can be called at anytime by 3/4 of the Elder Board or by a member of the church and 3/4 agreement by the elders.
- 3) All church related meetings/gatherings will be led by the Elders or by someone the Elders appoint to give direction to the meeting.
- 4) All church meetings require a majority of the Elders and Deacons to be in attendance for a valid meeting.

### ***Article IV.) Legal Action & Grievances***

- 1) The members of Life Journey, will agree not to pursue legal action or sue the Pastor(s), Elder(s), Deacon(s) or any other church leaders or staff in connection with the performance of their official duties. This is in obedience to the teaching of scripture (1 Cor. 6:1-8 and others).
- 2) In all cases of grievance between members or members and leaders should be dealt with through Biblical means (see Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5; 2 Cor. 5:11-19).