

# SAMPLE BYLAWS

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# SAMPLE CELL-BASED CHURCH BYLAWS

## DOVE Christian Fellowship

### ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of the organization shall be \_\_\_\_\_ (herein after spoken of as the church) a partner church of DOVE Christian Fellowship International. Its duration is to be perpetual.

### ARTICLE II : PURPOSE

The purpose of the church shall be to provide spiritual oversight for the membership and to meet spiritual, emotional and physical needs of people through faith in Jesus Christ and by resourcing and networking with the Body of Christ in fulfilling the Great Commission.

### ARTICLE III : OFFICES

The business office of the church shall be located at \_\_\_\_\_

### ARTICLE IV: GOVERNMENT PRIVILEGES

The church shall have self-governing privileges in harmony with the authority and vision of the Apostolic Council of DOVE Christian Fellowship International (DCFI). Local authority in vision, direction and doctrine shall be vested in the Eldership Team. The Eldership Team may appoint others under them as required to assist in spiritual oversight of geographic areas or ministries. This church is a Partner Church with DCFI as evidenced by a Partnership Agreement entered into between the church and DCFI. Within the Partnership Agreement, the Eldership Team members acknowledge that they have read DCFI's Constitution, Bylaws and Handbook and that they are in agreement with the statements therein and agreed to be bound by the statements contained in these documents.

#### GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

4-2A. The governing documents of (the church) are the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. The Articles of Incorporation take precedence over the Bylaws.

4-2B. No amendments or repeal shall be made to the Articles of Incorporation as adopted except by a 2/3 majority vote of the Eldership Team and affirmation by the Senior Elder. Amendments shall be within the guiding principles set forth in the DCFI handbook, Constitution and Bylaws.

4-2C. The Bylaws of (the church) or any portions thereof, may be amended or repealed by a 2/3 majority of the Eldership Team and affirmation by the Senior Elder. Amendments shall be within the guiding principles set forth in the DCFI handbook, Constitution and Bylaws.

### ARTICLE V: DOCTRINE STATEMENT OF FAITH

WE BELIEVE the Bible to be the inspired, infallible, and authoritative Word of God. The Holy Spirit moved upon the writers of the Old and New Testament and inspired them as they wrote the Words of God. God's revelation in Christ and in scripture is unchangeable. Through it the Holy Spirit still speaks today. (II Tim. 3:13-17; Heb. 4:12; Psalm 119:89, 105; I Pet. 1:23-25; Gal. 1:8, 9; Matt. 5:18; Isa. 40:8)

WE BELIEVE that there is One God, eternally existent in three personalities: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God the Father—Creator of all things. By His Word all things were created and through the power of His Word all things are held together. He sent His Son Jesus to redeem mankind unto Himself. A relationship with God only comes through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ—is the only begotten Son of God, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of a virgin. He lived a sin-less life, and performed many miracles. He redeemed us by His atoning death through His shed blood, He ascended to the right hand of the Father, and He will personally return in power and glory. There is no other name given under heaven by which man must be saved. Holy Spirit—inspired the writers of the Bible, convicts the world of sin, teaches us all things, and brings to our remembrance the Word of God. (Deut. 6:4; Isa. 44:6-8; Isa. 43:10; Matt. 3:16, 17; Matt. 28:19; I Cor. 12:4-6; John 14:23, 25; I Tim. 6:15, 16; I John 5:7)

WE BELIEVE that mankind is perishing because of sin, which separates him from God. But God loves all mankind, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should repent. Mankind can only be saved through a complete commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, being regenerated by the Holy Spirit. (Gen. 1:26, 31; Psalm 8:4-8; Gen. 3:1-7; Rom. 5:1, 12-21; Eph. 2:8, 9; Acts 3:19-21; I Cor. 15:21, 22; Gal. 6:14, 15; II Cor. 5:17)

WE BELIEVE in the present infilling of the Holy Spirit to all believers who desire it. The Holy Spirit's ministry to the body of Jesus Christ gives power to live, witness, proclaim the gospel and to make disciples. The Holy Spirit gives us power to cultivate a Christ-like character through the Fruit of the Spirit and to build up and mature the church through the miraculous gifts and ministries in this present day. (John 15:8-10; I Cor. 12:13; John 3:5, 6; Acts 1:4-8; Acts 2:1-4; Acts 2:38, 39; Luke 11:9-13; Joel 2:28, 29; I Cor. 12-14; Heb. 2:4)

WE BELIEVE that the local church is a body of believers brought together by the Holy Spirit as a visible part of the body of Christ and His church universal. The church is responsible to faithfully proclaim the whole Word of God in fulfilling the Great Commission, properly administer the sacraments, and humbly submit themselves to discipline, all for the glory of God. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Rom. 12:4, 5; I Cor. 12:27; Eph. 2:22; I Pet. 2:5, 9, 10; Titus 2:14)

WE BELIEVE that all mankind shall give an account of their deeds in this earthly life before the judgment seat of Christ. Those with their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life will be eternally with God in His glory, those without their names written will be eternally separated from God and tormented. (I Thess. 5:13-17; Rev. 1:7; Acts 1:11; Rev. 20:10-15; II Cor. 5:10; II Thess. 1:7-10; Rev. 21:1-4)

## **ARTICLE VI: BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **FUNCTIONS AND MEETINGS**

6-1A. The Eldership Team shall serve as the board of directors. They shall be responsible for the overall vision, direction, focus and shall fully control, govern and operate the business affairs of the church. As a Partner Church of DCFI, we submit to the vision, mission, basic values, and guiding principles of DCFI's Apostolic Council.

6-1B. The Eldership Team shall led by the Senior Elder. The Senior Elder shall be the president of the board of directors.

6-1C. The Eldership Team shall meet annually for an official meeting in the month of January. The Eldership Team shall record the minutes of the annual meeting including the election of officers; vice-chairman, secretary, treasurer. The Eldership Team will meet regularly as determined by the Senior Elder.

## APPOINTMENT

6-2A. The Senior Elder shall be called by God, qualified (I Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9) and willing to fulfill this leadership responsibility. The Senior Elder shall be recognized and recommended by both the Eldership Team and DCFI's Apostolic Council. The Senior Elder shall be appointed by a member of the Apostolic Council or an appointed designate. The Senior Elder shall not be appointed unless there is unanimous agreement with the Eldership Team, recommendation by DCFI's Apostolic Council and general affirmation of the Partner Church's cell group leaders.

6-2B. The Eldership Team members shall be called by God, qualified by scripture (I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9) and willing to fulfill this leadership responsibility.

6-2C. The Eldership Team members are discerned through fasting and prayer, then nominated by the Senior Elder and the existing Eldership Team. General affirmation of the cell group leaders of the Church and the recommendation of DCFI's Apostolic Council is required for an individual to serve on the Eldership Team.

6-2D. An Apostolic Council member (or an appointed designate) and the Senior Elder shall install new members as set forth in 6-2B and 6-2C at the annual meeting or as deemed necessary by the Eldership Team.

6-2E. The Eldership Team shall consist of at least two members which includes the Senior Elder.

6-2F. The Senior Elder and each member of the Eldership Team shall be active members of a cell group and involved in the life of the church.

## SPECIFIC DUTIES

6-3A. Appoint and commission Deacons and cell leaders.

6-3B. Appoint persons to serve on an Administrative Committee if the Eldership deems an Administrative Committee is needed.

6-3C. Appoint and oversee specific committees or directors, e.g. Missions Council Representative, Worship, Children, Youth, Singles, as required to resource the spiritual needs of the Partner Church.

6-3D. Recognize, appoint, oversee, protect spiritually and provide accountability to the Fivefold Ministers who serve within the local Partner Church.

6-3E. Train and nurture leaders.

6-3F. Provide oversight and spiritual protection to members.

6-3G. Provide assistance during times of crisis for members in cell group or committees.

6-3H. Approve annual and all modified Partner Church Budgets.

6-3I. Recommend a representative to serve on the DCFI Stewardship Group to be appointed by the DCFI Apostolic Council.

## TERMS - VACANCIES

6-4A. Eldership Team members, including the Senior Elder, shall be willing to serve long term with an annual evaluation.

6-4B. This annual evaluation will first have the Senior Elder and each Eldership Team member mutually discern the call of God on their own life to serve another year.

6-4C. Annual evaluations shall be conducted by the Senior Elder in cooperation with the Apostolic Council, an evaluation team or a combination of both. A written report shall be given to the Senior Elder and the person being evaluated.

6-4D. Evaluations are for the purpose of growth. In the event of a report that one's service is unsatisfactory or that one is no longer suited for the position, the Eldership Team and Senior Elder shall review the specified deficiencies with the member. The Eldership Team and the Senior Elder shall determine whether

it would be best for the member to relinquish their position or continue as a member and work to improve the specified deficiencies.

6-4E. In addition to the evaluations, at any time the Senior Elder and other Eldership Team members may vote to suspend or remove the member if deemed to be in the best interests of the organization. DCFI's Apostolic Council shall be included in the process of suspension or removal. Discipline shall be invoked in accordance with the written Policy of Discipline and Restoration outlined in the DCFI Handbook.

6-4F. The Senior Elder shall be evaluated by members of the Apostolic Council or appointed designates, an evaluation team or a combination of both. A full report shall be given to the Senior Elder and the Apostolic Council and a summary report given to the Eldership Team.

6-4G. In the event of the necessity of termination of the responsibility of the Senior Elder due to failure morally, irreconcilable conflicts, disorderly conduct or apostasy, the Apostolic Council shall give leadership to this process along with the Eldership members. The Apostolic Council, with counsel from the Eldership Team, shall suspend the Senior Elder pending a thorough review and application of the written policy for discipline and restoration. The DCFI Apostolic Council, with counsel from the Eldership Team will appoint an Acting Elder immediately, who will serve until restoration or a replacement is discerned.

6-4H. In the event that the number of persons on the Eldership Team drops below the required two for ninety days, then the longest serving cell group leader of the Partner Church shall immediately begin serving. If more than one replacement is required, then the next longest serving cell leader shall be selected until all vacancies are filled. This is a temporary position with full authority until either the person is confirmed or another person is appointed.

#### Officers

6-5A. At the annual meeting, the Eldership Team shall appoint a vice-chairman, secretary and a treasurer as officers of the Eldership Team. The Senior Elder as the president of the Eldership Team shall oversee the appointment process. Members of the Eldership Team may hold up to two offices. The president shall not serve in the capacity of secretary or treasurer.

6-5B. The designation of officers, except president, shall be by unanimous decision of the Eldership Team. Such appointed officers shall serve in their capacities until such time as the Eldership Team should appoint otherwise.

6-5C. It shall be the duty of the Secretary to keep an accurate record of the proceedings of the meetings of the Board and of Congregational meetings of business, and all such other duties as pertain to this office as may be prescribed by the Board.

6-5D. The Treasurer shall have the care and custody of all funds and securities of the Church and shall deposit the same in the name of the Church in such Bank or Banks as the Board of Directors may select.

### **ARTICLE VII: COMMITTEES**

The eldership team may appoint such additional committees to assist it in the discharge of its duties as it may deem advisable.

### **ARTICLE VIII: MEMBERSHIP VOTING**

The church has a no voting membership. Spiritual decisions affecting the life of the local body of the church are under the care of its Elders.

#### QUALIFICATIONS

The membership of the church shall consist of those persons who meet the following qualifications:

1. They are in agreement with the statements as set forth in Article V.

2. They shall be a member in good standing of a cell group.
3. They shall be involved in the life of the church.
4. They shall recognize and submit to the elder leadership of the church.
5. They shall express commitment to the church with the understanding that biblical church discipline will be used if necessary.

#### ACTIVE CELL GROUP LISTING

The Eldership Team will semiannually update the active cell group listing in accordance with its qualifications for members.

### **ARTICLE IX: DISSOLUTION**

#### SECTION 1 - DISSOLUTION BY ELDERSHIP TEAM

9-1A. In the event that this organization shall be dissolved and liquidated, after paying or making provision for the payment of all liabilities of this organization, the Eldership Team shall distribute or dispose of any remaining property and assets to such organization or organizations established and operated exclusively for religious purposes as, in its judgement, have purposes which are most closely allied to those of this organization; it being provided, however, that each transferee organization, at the time of such transfer, shall:

1. be a tax-exempt, religious Christian organization within the meaning and intent of Section 501 (C) (3) and Section 170 (b) (1) (A) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 or the corresponding sections of any successor Internal Revenue Law of the United States of America;
2. have been in existence for a continuous period of at least sixty (60) months;
3. be an organization to which contributions are deductible under Section 170, Section 2055 and Section 2522 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 or the corresponding sections of any successor Internal Revenue Law of the United States of America.

9-1B. DOVE Christian Fellowship International (DCFI) shall be given first consideration in this dissolution of assets.

#### SECTION 2 - DISSOLUTION BY COURT

Any of this organization's property and assets not disposed of in accordance with ARTICLE IX, Section 1, shall be disposed of by the court having jurisdiction of the dissolution and liquidation of a nonprofit corporation organized and existing under and in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and having jurisdiction in the county of this organization's registered office exclusively to such religious organization or organizations, each of which is established and operated exclusively for such purposes as are most closely allied to those of this organization and each of which, at the time of such disposal, is a qualified, tax-exempt organization as aforesaid, as said court shall determine.

### **ARTICLE X: LIABILITY**

10-1A. No member of the Eldership Team and/or committee shall be personally liable, as such, for monetary damages for any action taken unless:

1. the member has breached or failed to perform the duties of office in good faith, in a manner reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the corporation, and with such care, including reasonable inquiry, skill and diligence, as a person of ordinary prudence would use under similar circumstances; and
2. the breach or failure to perform constitutes self-dealing, willful misconduct or recklessness.

10-1B. This provision cannot by law release a member from liability under criminal laws or for proper payment of taxes.