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Policies and Procedures

1.1 Open Door Policy

Ebenezer Baptist Church has an open-door policy and takes all membership concerns and problems seriously. The ministry values each member and strives to provide a positive worship experience. Members are encouraged to bring any ministry concerns or problems they might have or know about to their ministry leaders or some other member of Ebenezer Baptist Church.

1.2 Purpose of this Handbook

This handbook has been prepared to inform our current and future members of the policies and procedures of this ministry and to establish the ministry's expectations. It is not all inclusive or intended to provide strict interpretations of our policies; rather, it offers an overview of the work environment. This handbook is not a contract, expressed or implied, guarantying membership for any length of time and is not intended to induce a member to accept membership with the ministry.

The ministry reserves the right to unilaterally revise, suspend, revoke, terminate or change any of its policies, in whole or in part, whether described within this handbook or elsewhere, in its sole discretion. If any discrepancy between this handbook and current ministry policy arises, conform to current ministry policy. Every effort will be made to keep you informed of the ministry's policies; however, EBC cannot guarantee that notice of revisions will be provided. Feel free to ask questions about any of the information within this handbook.

This handbook supersedes and replaces any and all personnel policies and manuals previously distributed, made available or applicable to members.

1.3 At-Will Membership

Membership at the Ebenezer Baptist Church is at-will. An at-will membership relationship can be terminated (excommunicated) at any time, with or without reason or notice by either the church or the member. This at-will membership relationship exists regardless of any statements by ministry personnel to the contrary. Only [Official board] is authorized to modify the at-will nature of the member relationship, and the modification must be in writing.

2.1 Equal Opportunity Membership

Ebenezer Baptist Church is an equal opportunity ministry and does not unlawfully discriminate against members or applicants for membership on the basis of an individual's race, color,

religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, veteran status or any other status protected by applicable law. This policy applies to all terms, conditions and privileges of membership, including discipleship, placement, mission, promotion, discipline and excommunication.

3.1 Professional Conduct

Ebenezer Baptist Church expects its members to adhere to a standard of spiritual and professional conduct and integrity. This ensures that the worship environment is safe, comfortable and productive. Members should be respectful, courteous, and mindful of others' feelings and needs. General cooperation between lay members and leaders is expected. Individual members who act in an unprofessional and spiritual manner may be subject to ministry disciplinary action.

3.2 Dress Code

All ministry leaders and or personal appearance and hygiene is a reflection on the ministry's character. Ministry leaders are expected to set the spiritual tone and dress appropriately for their individual ministry responsibilities and position. When required or expressed certain uniforms or colors make be required. All church clothing should be ironed, cleaned and neatly worn.

3.4 Ministry Property

Ebenezer Baptist Church property, such as equipment, computers, and banquet equipment is not for private use. These forms of equipment are to be used strictly for ministry business, and are not permitted off grounds unless authorized. Ministry property must be used in the manner for which it was intended. Upon excommunication, or departure members are required to surrender any ministry property they possess.

Ministry computers, internet and emails are a privileged resource, and must be used only to complete essential ministry-related functions. Members are not permitted to download any "pirated" software, files or programs and must receive permission from an official board member before installing any new software on a ministry computer. Files or programs stored on ministry computers may not be copied for personal use.

Phones are provided for business use. The ministry requests that members not receive personal calls while at church. If urgent, please keep personal calls to a minimum and conversations brief. Personal long-distance calls are not permitted. Members are reminded that they should have no expectation of privacy in their use of ministry's computers or other electronic equipment.

Violations of these policies could result in disciplinary action.

3.5 Privacy

Members and leaders share a relationship based on trust and mutual respect. However, the ministry retains the right to access all ministry's property including computers, desks, file cabinets, storage facilities, and files and folders, electronic or otherwise, at any time. Members should not entertain any expectations of privacy when on ministry grounds or while using ministry property.

All documents, files, voicemails and electronic information, including e-mails and other communications, created, received or maintained on or through ministry property are the property of the ministry, not the member. Therefore, members should have no expectation of privacy over those files or documents.

3.6 Personnel Files

The ministry maintains a personnel file on each member. These files are kept confidential to the extent possible. Members may review their personnel file upon request.

It is important that membership personnel files accurately reflect each members personal information. Members are expected to inform the ministry of any change in name, address, home phone number, home address, marital status, number of dependents or emergency contact information.

Section 5 – Attendance Policies

5.1 General Attendance

The ministry maintains normal worship hours of 10:15 a.m. to 1 p.m. every Sunday. Hours may vary depending on worship activity's location and ministry responsibilities. The Senior Pastor will provide the membership with the ministry schedule for worship. Should a member/leader have any questions regarding the ministry's worship schedule, the members should contact their respective ministry leader.

The ministry does not tolerate leadership absenteeism without excuse. Leaders who will be late to or absent from worship should notify the COS in advance, or as soon as practicable in the event of an emergency. Chronic absenteeism may result in disciplinary leadership action.

Members who need to leave early, for illness or otherwise, should inform the COS before departure. Unauthorized departures may result in disciplinary action.

5.2 Tardiness

Leaders are expected to arrive on time and ready for worship. Any leader who arrives 5 minutes after worship has started is considered tardy. The ministry recognizes that situations arise which hinder punctuality; regardless, excessive tardiness is prohibited, and may be subject to disciplinary action.

5.3 Breaks (Pertains to Ministry workers, musicians and paid staff only)

When worship conditions permit, and pending the Bishop's approval, membership (musician's and worship leaders) are entitled to a brief five-minute break before the sermon and must be approved by the senior pastor. Any extensive breaks will result in fines and or further discipline.

6.4 Holidays

The ministry observes the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Memorial Day - Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day

Holidays are observed on a [unpaid] basis for all ministry workers. [Full time ministry workers are eligible for paid holiday benefits.]

6.7 Ministry Leave /Absence

Ministry leave is granted and will be determined on an individual basis. Upon returning from an approved leave of ministry duties and activities, a ministry leader or member may be entitled to reinstatement and any applicable ministry roles and membership they would have occupied if present, to the extent provided by the ministry By-laws.

Section 7 – Worship Performance & Expectations

7.1 Expectations

Ebenezer Baptist Church expects every ministry leader and its members to act in a professional and spiritual manner. Satisfactory performance of ministry duties and responsibilities is key to this expectation. Ministry leaders/members should attempt to achieve their ministry objectives, and act with diligence and consideration at all times. Poor leadership performance can result in disciplinary action, up to and including demotion of leadership position and or role.

7.2 Reviews

The ministry may periodically evaluate an members/leader's performance. The goal of a performance review is to identify areas where an members/leaders excels and areas that need improvement. The ministry uses performance reviews as a tool to determine ministry needs, promotions and/or corrections.

All performance reviews are based on spiritual merit, achievement and other factors may include but are not limited to:

- Stewardship (Time, talent, tithes and offerings)
- Attitude
- Knowledge of ministry role
- Ministry skills
- Attendance and punctuality
- Teamwork and cooperation
- Compliance with ministry policy
- Past performance reviews - Improvement
- Acceptance of responsibility and constructive feedback

7.3 Insubordination

Leaders and membership should interact with mutual respect and common courtesy. Members/leaders are expected to take instruction from the Pastor's or other persons of authority. Failure to comply with instructions or unreasonably delaying compliance is considered insubordination and biblical disobedience. Acts of insubordination are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including (excommunication).

These acts include but are not limited to:

- Walking out of a meeting without permission
- Threatening others on any level
- Intentional lying or deception in any form
- Stealing
- Profanity
- Belligerency
- Profanity
- Blatant Disrespectful
- Insubordination
- Blatant disobedience
- Refusal to comply with a direct command
- Disruptive behavior
- Conduct Unbecoming

If a member/leader disagrees with a ministry leader, the member should first try to mediate the situation by explaining their position. If possible, a compromise might be met and accusations of insubordination avoided.

Section 8 – Discipline Policy

8.1 Grounds for Disciplinary Action

The ministry reserves the right to discipline and/discipline any member who violates ministry policies, practices or rules of conduct. Poor performance and misconduct are also grounds for discipline or excommunication.

The following actions are unacceptable and considered grounds for disciplinary action. This list is not comprehensive; rather, it is meant merely as an example of the types of conduct that this ministry does not tolerate. These actions include, but are not limited to:

- Engaging in acts of discrimination or harassment in the ministry.
- Dating married members
- Possessing, distributing or being under the influence of illicit controlled substances.
- Being under the influence of a controlled substance or alcohol in worship, on ministry premises, or while engaged in ministry business.
- Unauthorized use of ministry property, equipment, devices or assets;
- Damage, destruction or theft of ministry property, equipment, devices or assets;
- Removing ministry property without prior authorization or disseminating ministry information without authorization.
- Falsification, misrepresentation or omission of information, documents or records;
- Lying;
- Creating a hostile environment;
- Walking out of any service or meeting without prior authorized consent;
- Insubordination or refusal to comply with directives;
- Failing to adequately perform job responsibilities.
- Excessive or unexcused absenteeism or tardiness;
- Disclosing confidential or proprietary ministry information without permission;
- Illegal or violent activity;
- Falsifying ministry reports or reasons for benefit or gain.
- Possessing unauthorized weapons on premises;
- Disregard for safety and security procedures;
- Disparaging or disrespecting leaders and/or members; and
- Any other action or conduct that is inconsistent with ministry policies, procedures, standards or expectations.

This list exhibits the types of actions or events that are subject to disciplinary action. It is not intended to indicate every act that could lead to disciplinary action. The ministry reserves the right to determine the severity and extent of any disciplinary action based on the circumstances of each case.

8.2 Procedures

Disciplinary action is any one of a number of options used to correct unacceptable behavior or actions. Discipline may take the form of oral warnings, written warnings, probation, suspension, demotion, discharge, removal or some other disciplinary action, in no particular order. The course of action will be determined by the ministry at its sole discretion as it deems appropriate.

8.3 Termination

Membership with the Ebenezer Baptist Church is on an at-will basis and may be terminated voluntarily or involuntarily at any time. Upon termination (excommunication), a member is required: to turn in all report, resources (finances and financial) and paperwork required to be completed by the member when due; to return all files, documents, equipment, keys, access cards, or other property belonging to the ministry that are in the members possession, custody or control, and turn in all passwords to his/her ministry leader; to participate in an exit interview as requested by Bishop when and where applicable.

Section 9 – Health and Safety

9.1 Worship Safety

The ministry takes every reasonable precaution to ensure that members have a safe worshipping environment. Safety measures and rules are in place for the protection of all members.

Ultimately, it is the responsibility of each member to help prevent accidents. To ensure the continuation of a safe worship, all members should review and understand all provisions of the ministry worship safety policy. Members should use all safety and protective equipment provided to them, and maintain worship areas in a safe and orderly manner, free from hazardous conditions. Members who observe an unsafe practice or condition should report it to an official board member or ministry leader immediately.

Members or leaders are prohibited from making threats against anyone in connection with his/her ministry or engaging in violent activities while in the service of Ebenezer Baptist Church. Any questions regarding safety and safe practices should be directed to an official board member or ministry leader immediately.

In the event of an accident, members must notify an official board member or ministry leader immediately. Report every injury, regardless of how minor, to an official board member or ministry leader immediately. Physical discomfort caused by repetitive tasks must also be reported.

Members/Leaders should recognize any potential fire hazards and be aware of fire escape routes and fire drills. Do not block fire exits, tamper with fire extinguishers or otherwise create fire hazards.

9.2 Worship Security

Members must be alert and aware of any potential dangers to themselves or their leaders. Take every precaution to ensure that your surroundings are safe and secure. Guard personal belongings and ministry property. Guest should be escorted at all times. Report any suspicious activity to an official board member or leader immediately.

CHURCH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

10.1 ACCEPTING MEMBER

1. Baptism – Confession of Faith
2. Letter – From another church
3. Experience – From another church
4. Watch Care - interim church for members worldwide and hybrid
(*e.g., college students*)

10.2 EXTENDING THE RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP

(Formality granting all rights and privileges of any other member)

10.2 DISMISSING MEMBER

1. Letter – To another church
2. Exclusion – To withdraw right hand of fellowship for reasons
Matthew 18:15-17
3. Death

10.4 RESTORATION

To be admitted again to fellowship, an excluded member must acknowledge the justice of his exclusion, and give evidence of his repentance by assurance of discontinuance of his offense, and having thus vindicated the church's action may apply for restoration to membership. The church should always be willing and even anxious to forgive and restore an excluded member who has repented (Galatians 6:1).

10.5 DUTY OF THE CHURCH

The church should consider that each member is a soul entrusted to it for protection, development, and preparation for the Kingdom of Heaven. The church, therefore, is in duty bound to furnish the best possible public instruction in the gospel, and the best training for service; to exercise a tender, loving, patient watch care over the member, and to use the utmost diligence and effort for his enlightenment, sanctification and usefulness, with the view that he attain perfection in Christ Jesus. If it should happen that a member departs from the faith of the church, or violates the New Testament standard of conduct, it is both the privilege and the duty of the church to place him under discipline and deal with him according to the laws Christ has given in the New Testament.

Sufficient proof of guilt having been given, the church may admonish him, or withdraw the hand of fellowship from him.

10.6 DUTY OF THE MEMBER

Every member is required to fulfill, to the extent of his ability, all of the covenanted obligations he assumed on becoming a member. The church, thereby, is entitled to the service thus promised, together with every member's good will, sympathy, influence, and finances for the advancement of the cause of Christ within the local body of Baptized believers known as Ebenezer Baptist Church.

10.11 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1. Perform all corporate matters subject to state and federal statutes or other function delegated to it by the conference.
2. Responsible for mortgaging and selling all real and/personal property of the church
3. Responsible for ensuring that the church adheres to and complies with section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provision of any future US Internal Revenue law.
4. Oversees the operation of the entire Body of Ebenezer Baptist Church

10.12 ILLNESS

Ebenezer is a caring church, concerned about all of our members including those who are sick. Please notify the church office when you are ill. You will be lifted in prayer and receive visitation.

Please note that the church office can only accept information from relatives of the sick member.

10.13 DEATH

The death of a church member or the death of a member of the immediate family of the church should be quickly brought to the attention of the church office. The Pastor, Deacons and WeCare ministry will be promptly notified. Pastoral contact will follow.

Please note that the church office can only accept notification from relatives of the deceased.

10.14 MEETINGS

All meetings requiring church accommodations must be cleared through the church office and / or the calendar committee. This will enable us to prepare the area needed for your meeting and have the necessary doors unlocked.

10.15 SPECIAL ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS

The church planning director must coordinate all dates with the senior pastor for all activities and programs.

10.16 GRIEVANCES AND CONCERNS

Grievances and other church related concerns should be brought to the Board of Deacons. All conference agenda items must also be presented to the Board of Deacons.

10.17 CHURCH HANDBOOK

All members are encouraged to obtain a copy of the official Ebenezer Baptist Church Handbook by contacting any official board member.

Disclaimer:

These policies cannot cover every possible situation. Other obviously distracting, immodest or giving-a-wrong-message types will also be prohibited.

Dealing with non-compliance

- A member in violation will not be allowed to function in the ministry position during the specific church service or event for which he/she has arrived.
- If there is a repetitive pattern of non-compliance or a pushing-of-the-line of the regulations by an individual, that individual will be specifically addressed and informed that he/she may no longer serve in the ministry position or positions to which the policy code pertains.
- Upon repentance and the demonstration of a genuine change of heart, permission may be granted to again serve in the same or similar service capacity which was lost. Such permission may only be given by the pastor or official board.

EXCEPTIONS

Within the bounds of discretion, some policy regulations will not be required for some church services or events concerning which different regulations may be deemed appropriate. The different regulations in such cases will be communicated to the affected persons by the person in charge of the particular service or event.

THE PASTOR

While the pastor is an ordained officer of the church, you should understand what ordination does and does not do. Gaines S. Dobbins in his book “The Churchbook, A Treasury of Materials and Methods” writes: “Ordination, in the New Testament view, confers no grace, no ecclesiastical power, no special rights of office not possessed by any other devout and trusted member of a church by its authorization. Ordination is simply recognition and confirmation by a church of one of its member’s evident call of God to the gospel ministry” (pg. 51). While it is the special duty of the pastor to preach the gospel, Baptists believe that the Bible teaches very plainly that every Christian man has the right to preach Christ to lost sinners.

After the death of Stephen, it is said, “And they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles” (Acts 8:1). Yet, the office of pastor is a special set-aside office designed by the Lord for the preaching of the gospel.

In the New Testament the pastor is called a bishop (1 Tim. 3:1-7) which means an overseer and is a description of his work. He is also called elder (Tit. 1:5-7) which has reference to the dignity of the office, having been derived from the Jewish synagogue where the word elder was used in reference to an aged person. He is also called a minister (Eph. 6:21; Col. 1:7), which means a servant, showing that he is to serve in spiritual matters. The term pastor (Eph. 4:11) which is more commonly used today signifies a shepherd, and this shows the primary relation that he sustains with the church.

The pastor, being the bishop or overseer is to take the oversight of the church (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2). Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary defines the word overseer as “superintendent, supervisor.” He is responsible for the pulpit and all preaching and teaching of the church and is accountable to the Lord. He also administers the ordinances and has the responsibility for carefully instructing and guiding the spiritual interest of his flock (Eph. 4:12). The pastor has an authority not belonging to other church members. Edward T. Hiscox in his book “The Baptist Directory, A Guide to the Doctrines and Practices of Baptist Churches” says concerning this:

“Though pastors cannot rightfully assume authority as being ‘lords over God’s heritage,’ yet there is a sense in which the ministerial office should command and receive a deference

rendered to no other. The Apostle enjoins that ‘the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour’ (1 Tim. 5:17) and, also, to ‘obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves’ (Heb. 13:17). Here is a sense, therefore, in which they are to rule, and the people are to obey” (pg. 21).

The pastor is placed “over” the church (1 Thess. 5:12). There is a sense in which he “rules” in the church (Heb. 13:7; 1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:24). He is made the “overseer” by the Holy Ghost (Acts 20:28). The word “double honour” as used in 1 Timothy 5:17 has reference to the pastor’s salary, the word “honour” coming from the Greek word meaning “honorarium” and could be so translated. Your pastor is worthy of generous pay or “double salary” is what Paul is saying.

Because of the position of the pastor, there are certain responsibilities placed upon the membership of the church. The pastor is to be followed (Heb. 13:7). There is an “obedience” and a “submission” to the leadership of the pastor (Heb. 13:7). This does not mean dictatorship, although pastors are often accused of this (1 Pet. 5:2-3). At times their scriptural place in the church may be challenged. If so, the pastor must “take” the oversight of the church when challenged (1 Pet. 5:2). Paul issued some special warnings to the churches which were directed primarily through the pastor of the church.

In Acts 20:28-31 Paul warned that problems could arise from the outside (Acts 20:29) but that the more serious problems with much greater danger to the church would arise from the inside of the church. This danger would be revealed by men (or women) “speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:30). God has given us warnings about such men (or women) and told us what we are to do in regards to them. We are to “beware of them” (Col. 2:8-10); “have no fellowship with them” (2 Thess. 3:6); “mark them” (Rom. 16:17-18), etc. In First Corinthians Paul issues a severe warning concerning those who would destroy the church by causing divisions. He says temple (church) defilers shall be destroyed (1 Cor. 3:17).

That he is referring to the church of Corinth is seen by his reference again to the divisions of the church (1 Cor. 3:22) which had previously been mentioned in the first chapter (1 Cor. 1:11-13). God promises to destroy that individual who defiles, injures or destroys one of His

churches. How these men are to be destroyed is not said, but no doubt it will be in accordance to their effort and effect. The severity is such because of the indwelling Spirit in the church. Paul warns that divisions hinder the full and complete blessing of the Holy Spirit, because the church is God's dwelling place or "an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:22).

We cannot minimize the seriousness of this offence, for God hates "a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among the brethren" and says it is "an abomination unto him" (Prov. 6:16-19). The pastor occupies the unique position as God's spokesman in the church. His position is also unique in that he has a divine call from the Lord. No other officer in the church has the divine call whether that office be that of Youth Director, Music Director or Deacon.

Only the pastor has the divine call. However, there is a sense in which God does direct certain ones into the field of special service, such as a Youth Director, Music Director or some other form of full-time service, but this is not the same, nor should it be considered the same, as that of the call of the pastor. When the Lord directed the letters to the Seven Churches of Asia, they were given to the pastors (angels) of the churches who in turn would deliver them to the church of which they were pastor (Rev. 2 and 3).

The message in each case was directed to the pastor (angel) of the church. What that pastor is to say is what God wants the people to hear, and what the pastor delivers is as from the mouth, lips, heart and mind of the Lord Himself (Ezk. 33:7). He that hears the messenger, hears God; he that obeys the messenger obeys God; and he that despises the messenger, despises God (Lk. 10:16).

It is through the pastor that Christ sends His messages, addresses His judgments, His rebukes and His directions. As long as the pastor keeps himself true to his proper doctrine and work, he should be followed. Yet pastors are all fallible men — none are perfect. We must remember that every church member is also fallible, whether he be a deacon, the oldest member of the church, or the youngest or newest member.

It is easy to take "pot shots" at the pastor, for he stands before all and his life is an open book for all to read. David, the "man after God's own heart" (1 Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22) made

some serious mistakes, yet he was still God's man. The Apostle Peter also made some serious mistakes, not only when he denied the Lord at His trial, but also later, for the Apostle Paul withstood him to his face (Gal. 2:11), yet he was still God's man. Your pastor will also make mistakes, yet he is still God's man. You need not try to "take care of the pastor." He is God's man and God will take care of him.

Regarding the Office of the Pastor 1. First he must be a man who has been called of God to preach the gospel of Christ (1 Tim. 1:12; Eph. 3:7). The Holy Spirit leads His preacher to a particular field of service. The church, also led by the Holy Spirit, extends a call, asking him to consider being their pastor and leader. The preacher accepts or rejects the church's call. Responsibilities of the pastor to the church. a. He is to preach the Word of God, all of it (2

Tim.3:16; 4:12). b. He is to oversee the ministries of the church, to feed the flock of God (the church, all ages in the church), and to guard and protect God's sheep and lambs from the wolves (Acts 20:28-30). He is to care for the spiritual needs of God's people (the church).

By personal counseling; prayer and Scripture helps; being on call 24 hours a day to minister whenever he is needed. Also, to minister to the sick; visit hospitals; minister and comfort the dying and their families, preach funerals; marriage counseling; drug and drink counseling; conflicts between brethren (peacemaker); weddings; etc. d. He is to teach and administer the church ordinances Baptism and the Lord's Supper. e. He is to seek God's will for the direction of the church; to be faithful to pray for the church's needs; to guide the church in the direction God leads as a faithful undershepherd.

He is to formulate the plans to accomplish ministries, then to lead the church in implementing these plans (c/f "Partnership Ministry" "Good-Neighbor Ministry" etc. f. He is to oversee the administration of the church; to call business meetings as the need arises; to moderate the business meetings; to make recommendations and to guide the affairs of the church and see that the will of the people (voice of the church) is carried out as has been voted on by the majority (See above, Acts 20).

The pastor is accountable to God for how he assumes his responsibilities. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that

must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you” (Heb. 13:17) 4. Responsibilities of the church to the pastor. a. The church is to pray for their pastor; for God to give him wisdom to lead the church, and to willingly follow his leadership (Heb. 13:7). b. The church is to submit to his God-ordained authority over the church, so that he may have a joyful ministry in the church (Heb. 13:7). c. The church, especially the men of the flock, are to help him and be supportive of his pastoral ministry (See Exodus 17:8-13 — two men who held up Moses’ hands in battle).

The church is responsible to provide his family needs as well as the expenses of running the operations of the office he holds (1 Cor. 9:7-14; 1 Tim. 5:17-18).

- The church is to protect the pastor and his family from those who would go about sowing seeds of doubt and discord among the membership; casting a shadow upon his ministry and accusing him of misdeeds in the ministry.
- It is a dangerous thing to attack this sacred office; and equally as dangerous to allow others in the church to do so (1 Tim. 5:19-20; Prov. 6:16-19).
- The church should exercise firm church discipline to those who refuse to live in harmony with the other members; who are bent on destroying the fellowship of the church (Mt. 18:15-19). g.
- The church member should always consult the pastor first, on any problem or matter of concern, and not spread talk around until it gets built up all out of proportion (the devil will see to that).
- Most often, when you sit down with your pastor, with an open Bible and prayer, things will be clearly understood and resolved so that peace can continue and that misunderstanding doesn’t create confusion.
- There can be only one leader in a church. The pastor is that man.
- A church cannot survive when it has a divided allegiance towards more than one leader.
- When God is finished with the pastor in a church, He will lead him to another work.
- Unless he is found unfit for the ministry, or is guilty of open sin, he is to be respected for the office he holds by all the members.

- If any member of the church, after serious counsel with the pastor, still cannot follow his leadership, that member should, in the spirit of Christian love, quietly seek another church and pastor where he or she can serve the Lord. If that same member persists in trying to destroy the integrity and ministry of the pastor, he or she should be dealt with in accordance with church discipline as found in Matthew 18:15-19.

In summary, as your pastor, I need your help if I am to be the kind of pastor the ministry wants me to be and that God requires of me. I deserve your respect, as you mine. Paul told the church of Corinth to accept Timothy and to respect him (1 Cor. 16:10).

- You need to trust your pastor. Some put him under a microscope and scrutinize his every word and deed.
- Your pastor also needs encouragement. Tell him how his ministry has helped or benefited you. Offer your services to him and make yourself available for work he might delegate to you.
- When he becomes the object of criticism, don't become a party to it. He has enough problems already without adding to them.
- Defend your pastor against those who criticize him. Criticism, even when the truth, is a way Satan has of getting your pastor "down in the dumps" and worse still, destroying his ministry.
- Remember him on special occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries, and a year-end bonus with a church-wide offering shows him your love and appreciation of his ministry.
- By all means pray for your pastor. This was one of Paul's most frequent requests.
- Your pastor needs men like Aaron and Hur (Ex. 17:8-12) who will pray for him and hold up his hands and support him in order to help him be the kind of pastor God wants him to be.
- God does not want church members to tear down a pastor but to hold him up and build him up with their support and prayers.
- It is then that God's blessings will be poured out upon the church, and your pastor will be a better man of God.

Financing God's Church God

Financing God's Church God is a God of order (1 Cor. 14:40). He has always worked by plans. He had a plan when He made the universe; He had a plan for the making of man and the establishing of the human family on earth; He had a plan for salvation and a plan for the work of His church. It would seem strange indeed if God should have a plan for everything else, and *yet left no plan for the financing of His church.*

- God's plan never authorized churches to use worldly schemes to raise money for the support of His work. Such practices as church-sponsored sales, dinners, raffles, bazaars, garage sales, chili suppers, ice cream suppers, bingo, etc. to raise money is certainly not God's plan.
- There is no such system found in the Bible as high-pressure campaigns, nor did God intend for His churches to become beggars, going out into the world to beg for funds. Such schemes and practices are a disgrace to the church and certainly are not pleasing to the Lord.
- God has given us only one plan for financing His churches and that is by the tithes and offerings of His people.

Tithing may be a strange word to some, but it is a Bible word. The tithe is the tenth, meaning that God's people are to bring a tenth of their incomes to the Lord for His work. It is the practice today for deductions to be made from the income for most people before they receive their paycheck.

- Let us remember that your salary or income is the total or gross amount you make before the deductions are made, and the tenth or tithe should be paid on the gross amount. Offerings are the amounts that are given over and above the tithe.
- This is the plan that God teaches all through His Word and it is the only Scriptural plan of church finance.
- The key verse on New Testament church finance is found in 1 Corinthians 9:13-14 which reads thus: "Do you not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?"

- Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.”
- Paul here refers us back to Numbers 18:21-28 which describes for us the manner in which the temple worship and the Priests and Levites were supported through the tithes and offerings of the people.
- God commanded all the people to bring their tithes and offerings to Him and these were used for the support of the Lord’s work. Paul’s next words are even so, which means in the same manner.

So, Paul says that the work of a New Testament church is to be supported in the same way that the temple was supported, that is by the tithes and offerings of the people. Even as all the people back there were to bring their tithes and offerings unto the Lord, so are we today.

Summary

This plan of church finance would meet all of the financial needs of a church if every member would tithe. This would make possible the payments of our debts, a greater expansion of all phases of our local church work, and at the same time provide far more money for missions.

- If every Christian would join one of God's New Testament churches and tithe to it, we would not see the financial difficulties that plague so many churches today.
- The great blessings on the members for their faithfulness as stewards of the Lord would be immeasurable.
- We need the church if we are to tithe to it.
- It is wrong to hold back that which God says is His. He says that the tithe is His, and to keep it back is to rob Him (Mal. 3:8-10).
- It is wrong to be saved and not belong to a good church where you can bring your tithes into the storehouse as God desires.
- We need the church in order to be able to give correctly. From all this, one can see how God's plan for a new Christian from the very first, involves the church.
- We need it to be baptized, to observe the Lord's Supper, and to properly give to the Lord. God's way is the best way.
- Let every member resolve now not only to live right, but also to give right.

A person from a foreign country visiting with a friend in this country noticed his friend placing an offering in the offering plate at church. He asked, "Do you have to pay to go to church?" "No," was the reply, "but I give 10% of my income to the church for God's work. Sometime later, after eating a meal at a restaurant, the visitor also saw his friend placing money at his plate and asked about it. He was told, "it is customary to leave a 15% tip for the waitress." The visitor then said, "Oh, then you think more of her service than you do of God's!" Do you tip the waitress more than you give to God?

12.1 TITHING

The Christian steward is a joyous giver. Just as God is a giving Being and Christ is a self-giving Savior, so his followers give to express their new nature and life in Christ and to provide the means for fulfilling Christian purposes. The give of both self and possessions.

- How much should one give? The Old Testament tithe law required then percent of animal and agricultural produce. The giving of alms, first fruits, sacrifices, and vow and freewill offerings was also prominent in the Old Testament.
- Giving reaches its noblest expression, however, in the life that centers in Christ, following the spirit of giving that He taught and exemplified.
- As one guiding principle, Paul called for giving measured by how one has prospered (1 Cor. 16: 1-3). Certainly, the Old Testament guideline in the minimum. The New Testament calls for giving that is regular, generous, worshipful, and growing as one grows in Christian love and grace.

A. Merriam – Webster: Tithe-verb tense 1. *To pay or give a tenth part of, especially to the church.* **2.** *To tax to the amount of a tenth.*

Noun 1. A tenth part or, loosely a small part. 2. a tenth (or now often, a smaller) Part of one's income, produce or the like, paid as a tax or contribution to church or Charity, hence, any small tax or levy.

Biblical Practices of Giving

1. Tithe – means a tenth. Here we see the examples of Abraham a Jacob giving God their tithe even before God established the Tithe as part of the Old Testament heritage of required tithes and offerings enriches the Christian understanding of giving.

Gen. 14: 20-24; 28:22 _____

Num. 18:21-32; Deut. 12: 6-18; 14: 22-29 _____

Mal 3: 6-12 _____

Mt 23: 23-24; Luke 11: 42 _____

Luke 18: 12; Heb. 7:1-10 _____

TITHE - What – First fruit offering

Lev. 27:30-33; Deuteronomy 26:2; Proverbs 3:9; Romans 11:16.

WHEN -When you come into the Lord's Promise Deuteronomy 26:1; John 1:12, 13; 1 Peter 2:9-10.

WHERE -Where the Lord's name is.

Genesis 28:22; Deuteronomy 26:2; Malachi 3:10

HOW - With a sincere heart

Deuteronomy 26:13; Matthew 10:8; Luke 18:9-14; 2 Corinthians 9:7

WHY - Obedience

Malachi 3:7; 1 Samuel 15:22

Thankfulness Genesis 14:20

Because of His many benefits: Psalms 103; Malachi 3:10-12

NEW TESTAMENT GIVING

Shared wealth, all things common: Matthew 19:21; Acts 2:44, 45 Reaps great benefit: Proverbs 3:9 -10; Luke 6:33

REWARDS FOR FAITHFUL TITHING

AND STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship is not an attempt to bribe god and ensure our own wealth. It is a committed response to the god who never forgets the needs of His people. Greatest reward to the faithful giver is the joy of participating in Christ's Ministry and seeing the results. Christ taught that rewards are gifts from God. They cannot be earned and are primarily spiritual rather than material.

Good stewardship shown in care for the needy also demonstrates devotion to God. God promises to reward His faithful servants (Pr 3:9-10), but rewards and wealth must not become our major concern in life. Possessing little and being faithful is greater than wealth without devotion to God.

Gen. 14: 20-24; 28:22 _____

Num. 18:21-32; Deut. 12: 6-18; 14: 22-29 _____

Mal 3: 6-12 _____

Mt 23: 23-24; Luke 11: 42 _____

Luke 18: 12; Heb. 7:1-10 _____

The Lord loveth a cheerful giver!!!

2 Corinthians 9:7

YOUR TITHE UNTO THE LORD

If you earned **\$100** your tithe unto the Lord is **\$10**

If you earned **\$200** your tithe unto the Lord is **\$20**

If you earned **\$300** your tithe unto the Lord is **\$30**

If you earned **\$400** your tithe unto the Lord is **\$40**
If you earned **\$500** your tithe unto the Lord is **\$50**
If you earned **\$600** your tithe unto the Lord is **\$60**
If you earned **\$700** your tithe unto the Lord is **\$70**
If you earned **\$800** your tithe unto the Lord is **\$80**
If you earned **\$900** your tithe unto the Lord is **\$90**
If you earned **\$1000** your tithe unto the Lord is **\$100**