



**TAICHUNG
INTERNATIONAL
FELLOWSHIP**
台中市國際團契

Constitution and bylaws

How we organize ourselves

The following document outlines the structure that TIF uses to organize itself, define leadership, and outline membership commitments and expectations. We invite our members to understand their roles within this body, to contribute to the life of the church, and to participate in TIF's vision and mission.

Preamble

Since it pleased Almighty God, by His Holy Spirit, to call certain of His servants to unite here in 2016 under the name **Taichung International Fellowship** as a ministry of Taichung Baptist Church for the worship of God and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and He has sustained and prospered this work to the present day; and Whereas we, the members of Taichung International Fellowship, having searched the Scriptures under the guidance of His Spirit, have recognized the need to reconstitute ourselves to more closely conform to His will for the Church in this age and prepare ourselves for greater efforts in His name; now therefore we, the members of Taichung International Fellowship, do hereby organize ourselves in accord with the laws and statues of the Republic of Taiwan and adopt this Constitution as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of and bring glory to Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Bible and articulated in the standards set forth in the Statement of Faith and Covenant of this church.

Guiding Principles

1. The Bible is our authority. The Bible is the authority for determining our purpose and structure. Psalms 1:2; 119:11, 72, 105, 130, 140; Proverbs 29:18; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21
 2. Jesus Christ is the head of the church, actively involved in the day-to-day operation and decisions of the church. Ephesians 1:22; 4:12; 5:23; 1 Corinthians 11:3 Colossians 1:18; 2:10
 3. Methods should not be confused with purpose. We recognize that our God-given purpose will never change. It is our understanding that methods must change as the needs of people change. Matthew 9:20-28, 25:34-40; Luke 19:10; John 6:38
 4. The church's priority to equip believers for ministry is accomplished through the preaching and teaching of the Bible. The Bible will be the standard for our approach to win the lost and disciple the saved. We place our emphasis on Scripture being the tool God uses to develop our faith and equip us for ministry. Romans 10:17; 1 Corinthians 1:21; 1 Timothy 1:3-8; 1 Timothy 4:9-13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Colossians 2:8
 5. Our desire as a church is unity, not unanimity (all submitted to Christ's headship over the body) and health (all actively growing in obedience to God's Word and his Spirit). 1 Peter 3:8; Philippians 2:2; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Colossian 3:14; Acts 4:32
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I. Name and Location

- 1.1. The name of this organization shall be known as ‘Taichung International Fellowship’, hereinafter referred to as TIF. The organization is located in Taichung, Taiwan.

2. Purpose & Mission

- 2.1. TIF exists by the grace of God, for the glory of God. This church glorifies God by loving Him and obeying His commands through:
 - Worshipping Him;
 - Equipping the saints through Bible instruction and study;
 - Proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching and personal evangelism, and any other means consistent with the teachings of Holy Scripture;
 - Encouraging, supporting, and participating in missions work, local, domestic, and international;
 - Administering the ordinances of baptism and communion;
Encouraging Biblical fellowship among believers;
 - Serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, in the name of Jesus Christ;
 - Calling fellow churches to biblical faithfulness and purity through instruction and encouragement about the nature of the local church.
- 2.2. Our mission is to bring the peace, power, presence and promise of Christ to the people of Taichung and beyond.

3. Membership

- 3.1. Membership - All Members shall give evidence of saving faith in Christ. They shall subscribe to the Church's Statement of Faith, they shall give evidence of having been baptized, and lacking such evidence, they shall be baptized prior to being received into membership.
- 3.2. Membership will be granted to anyone who offers a biblical testimony of salvation and agrees to accept the responsibilities of membership, including baptism if they have not been baptized. Once accepted, the name of the new member shall be added to the TIF membership and publicized to the membership of TIF. (John 3:16; Acts 2: 37-41, Romans 1:16- 17; 10:9-10; Ephesians 2:8-9; James 2:14-26)
- 3.3. Admission of Members - To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be recommended by the elders for admission and accepted by affirmation of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members.
- 3.4. Duties and Privileges of Membership - Each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received.
 - 3.4.1. Office Holding - Every member is eligible for consideration as a candidate for offices in TIF, subject to scriptural qualifications. (Acts 6:1-7; Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Timothy 3:1-13)
 - 3.4.2. Voting - After being admitted to membership and attending the membership class, all members shall be allowed to vote at members meetings.
 - 3.4.3. Members are expected to live as Christians and participate in the life of the church, including worship, study, service, and stewardship.
- 3.5. Church Discipline
 - 3.5.1. Jesus grants the local church the authority to discipline their own in Matthew 16:16-19 and 18:15-20 and Paul describes the processes of church discipline in a number of places, including 1 Corinthians 5, 2 Corinthians 2:6, Galatians 6:1, Ephesians 5:11, 1 Thessalonians 5:14, 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15, 1 Timothy 5:19-20, 2 Timothy 3:5, and Titus 3:9-11.

3.5.2. We largely expect that the majority of church discipline will take place informally, as Christians speak the truth in love to one another and point each other to the grace of the gospel. However, in this fallen world, there will be times when informal discipline will not be enough; there will be times when those who belong to the church refuse to repent and continue down the path of sin. It is for these situations that Jesus provides instructions for church discipline. TIF is committed to following the Biblical commands and principles to guide us as we lovingly practice Church discipline, which follows, should ordinarily be contemplated only after individual private admonition has failed.

3.5.3. Formal church discipline is required in cases of outward, serious, and unrepentant sin.

3.5.3.1. Outward - A sin must have an outward manifestation. It must be something that can be seen with the eyes or heard with the ears. It's not that sins of the heart are not serious. It's that the Lord knows we cannot see one another's hearts, and that real heart problems will eventually rise to the surface anyway (1 Sam. 16:7; Matt. 7:17f; Mark 7:21).

3.5.3.2. Serious - A sin must be serious. Not every sin must be addressed publicly. Only those which cast shame on Christ or his body or place a brother/sister or others in spiritual danger. There clearly needs to be a place for love to "cover a multitude of sins" in our congregation's life (1 Peter 4:8). Not every sin should be pursued to the utmost. Thankfully, God has not done so with us.

3.5.3.3. Unrepentant - Formal church discipline is the appropriate course of action when sin is unrepentant. The person involved in serious sin has been privately confronted with God's commands in Scripture, but he or she refuses to let go of the sin. From all appearances, the person prizes the sin more than Jesus.

3.6. Termination of Membership

- 3.6.1. The church shall recognize the termination of a person's membership following his or her death, and may do so after he or she has voluntarily resigned or joined with another church.
- 3.6.2. Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline (ordinarily, but not necessarily, at the recommendation of the elders) upon the vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members. The church shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline, or for any other biblical reason.

4. Church Leadership

- 4.1. Summary - The Biblical offices in the church are elders and deacons. In addition, our church recognizes the administrative positions of clerk and treasurer. All officers must be members of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.
- 4.2. Elders - TIF is a New Testament church committed to the teachings of the Bible. No other authority or tradition is to guide the means, faith, or structure of this Church. The administrative and pastoral structure for a New Testament church is to utilize a plurality of leadership. TIF will follow this scriptural example. To achieve this New Testament model, TIF requires qualified men to serve as an Elder Council. These men should meet specific moral and spiritual qualifications before they serve (1 Timothy 3:1-7). They must be publicly installed into office (Acts 14:23). They should be motivated and empowered by the Holy Spirit to do their work (Acts 20:28). After review, examination and appointment, men affirmed by TIF to serve as elders shall constitute the “Elder Council.” To effectively perform their duties, the Elder Council needs the prayers, support (1 Timothy 5:17-18) and assent of members of TIF (Hebrews 13:17). TIF members are biblically bound to honor their Elder Council and to protect them against false accusations (1 Timothy 5:19). Finally, if an elder falls into sin, and continues in sin, he must be publicly rebuked (1 Timothy 5:20).
 - 4.2.1. Elder Responsibilities
 - 4.2.1.1. Feed (1 Timothy 3:2; 5:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; Titus 1:9),
 - 4.2.1.2. Provide leadership (Acts 20:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; Hebrews 13:17), in practical matters (Acts 6:1-6; 11:29-30), in matters of doctrine (Acts 15; 16:4-5; Titus 1:9), and in matters of discipline and character (Hebrews 13:17)
 - 4.2.1.3. Lovingly care (James 5:14-15; Hebrews 13:17)
 - 4.2.1.4. Protect (1 Peter 5:2-3; Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17).
 - 4.2.2. Elder Qualifications
 - 4.2.2.1. Each elder should have a “calling” from God to this office. The qualifications of an elder are described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.
 - 4.2.3. Selection of Elders

- 4.2.3.1. The Elder Council shall seek the Lord's leadership regarding the number of additional elders needed to minister at TIF. While the Bible does not give instruction as to the number of elders a church should have, it is recognized that there must be a plurality. A determination of the need for additional elders should be based upon the work of God in the TIF family and the availability of those with a God-given desire to serve as an elder.
- 4.2.3.2. Men who aspire to be elders, due to the calling of God, should express that desire to a currently serving elder of TIF. (1 Timothy 3:1)
- 4.2.3.3. A potential elder will be examined by the Elder Council in order to discover his calling and qualifications. If the Elder Council and the man, in search of God's will for his life in this matter, are of like mind as to his calling, the Elder Council shall recommend him to the TIF body to be affirmed as an elder. During this process, if members have a concern about the character of a potential elder, they should follow the pattern in Matthew 18 and approach the candidate directly. This should be done with great love and humility. If this meeting does not clear up the concern, members should then approach the elder council. The appointment of a man to serve as an elder is a solemn and serious matter (1 Timothy 5:21-22). Therefore, the Elder Council shall earnestly, without any haste, bias or partiality, seek God's will with regard to the potential elder's appointment to the Elder Council.
- 4.2.3.4. Should the need for additional elders arise, there will be an active search initiated by the elders for men who meet the biblical qualifications. The elders will examine each candidate to determine if they meet the biblical qualifications. The number of candidates presented to the membership for affirmation will depend upon the needs of the church. There is neither a preset number of elders, nor a preset term of service.
- 4.3. The Senior Pastor - The senior pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of

preaching and teaching. He shall preach on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the constitution. In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor the elders shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated to biblically qualified personnel.

- 4.3.1. In addition to his shepherding role, as an elder, the Pastor-Teacher's primary responsibility is the ministry of the Word and prayer, in order to provide strategic leadership and vision to the body.
- 4.3.2. He is called to help believers to mature in their faith, giving insightful and accurate presentation of biblical truths, equipping them to be the true "ministers" of the body. Because of these primary roles, the ministry of the Word and his leadership, the Pastor-Teacher will need to prioritize his time, focusing upon these duties first (Ephesians 4:11-12).
- 4.3.3. As shepherds of the flock, the elders are responsible to appoint other leaders, with complimentary spiritual gifts, to undertake areas and aspects of the ministry that cannot be filled by the Pastor-Teacher.
- 4.4. Associate Pastors - The church may call additional pastors whose relationship to the senior pastor is that of associate. An associate pastor shall be an elder or shall become a candidate to become an elder. He shall have the character and perform the duties of an elder described in Section 4.2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. He shall assist the senior pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor, or as set forth in the constitution, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the congregation. In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor for defined periods of time (such as sabbatical or illness), the associate pastor(s) shall assume the responsibility for his duties under the oversight of the elders.
- 4.5. Deacons & Deaconesses - The office of deacon is described in I Timothy 3: 8-13 and Acts 6: 1-7. The church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on election of men and women who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service. These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church

and set apart as deacons and deaconesses. They shall be elected to one term lasting for a maximum of three years and may only be elected to another term after one year. Deacons and deaconesses shall care for the temporal needs of members, attend to the accommodations for public worship, and encourage and support those able to help others and those with gifts of administration. The deacons and deaconesses, with the agreement of the elders, may establish unpaid administrative positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church.

- 4.5.1. Deacons & Deaconesses are the servant-ministers of the church. Their purpose is to relieve the elders of the multitude of practical duties of caring for the flock. Deacons are to give their primary attention toward caring for the congregation's physical welfare. Deacons have the honor of modeling, for the local church and the lost world, God's compassion, kindness, mercy, and love. As the church compassionately cares for people's needs, the world sees a visible display of Christ's love, which will draw some people to the Savior. Deacons are to be an example of commitment, unity and harmony in their service.
- 4.5.2. Responsibilities of Deacons & Deaconesses - The deacons are to effectively and carefully administer the church's charitable activities. They are the collectors of funds, the distributors of relief and agents of mercy. They help the poor, the jobless, the sick, the widowed, the elderly, the homeless, the shut-in, and the disabled. They comfort, protect and encourage people and help to meet their needs. Although they do in many ways meet spiritual needs of those whom they serve, their primary service is related to physical needs. Specific duties include, but are not limited to:
 - 4.5.2.1. Service to the physical needs of the membership exhibiting the love and compassion of Christ. Specific attention is to be given to widows and widowers, the needy and the aged. Collection and administration of the benevolent fund is included.
 - 4.5.2.2. Assisting the Elder Council in the preparation and serving of the Lord's Supper to the membership.
 - 4.5.2.3. Other such duties and responsibilities as determined by the Elder Council.

- 4.5.3. Qualifications of Deacons & Deaconesses - must be members in good standing of TIF and should possess the qualifications stated in I Timothy 3:8-10, 12-13.
- 4.5.4. Selection - The elders will select and appoint deacons as needed based upon spiritual qualifications found in scripture to fill the needs of the body.
- 4.5.5. Training & Education - No special education or training is required to serve as a deacon. The deacon must have a heart to serve others and be committed to work together with the other deacons in fulfilling the deacon ministry.
- 4.5.6. Discipline & Removal - Any deacon may be removed from office if he becomes incapacitated, spiritually unqualified or his inability to serve is established in the minds of a majority of the Elder Council. TIF has the Biblical responsibility to rebuke a deacon due to a continuing sin in his life, based upon the procedure established in 1 Timothy 5:19-20.
- 4.6. Clerk - It shall be the duty of the clerk to record the minutes of all regular and special members' meetings of the church, to preserve an accurate roll of the membership, and to render reports as requested by the pastor, the elders, the deacons, or the church. The clerk shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation to serve a term of one year. In the absence or incapacity of the clerk the elders shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the church clerk. The church clerk shall ensure that dated copies of the most recent revision of this constitution shall be available for all church members.
- 4.7. Treasurer - The treasurer, who shall not be an active elder, deacon, or paid church staff member, or a spouse of the aforementioned shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The treasurer shall also be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues and expenses of the church at each members' meeting. The responsibility may be delegated with the approval of the elders. The treasurer shall also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the

church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church. The treasurer shall render to the elders annually, or whenever they may require it, an account of all transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church. The treasurer shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation to serve a term of one year.

5. Elections

- 5.1. The purpose of church elections is to allow the congregation to know and participate in several key functions of the church. The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the following principles: Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the election process. Nominations should proceed with the support of the elders. All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members; the election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 5.2. Offices for election - At TIF, the congregation shall vote for the offices of clerk and treasurer.
- 5.3. Selection of Officers - The election of officers shall be held at a members' meeting of the church. Names of nominees to serve as clerk or treasurer shall be presented by the elders at the previous members' meeting (providing that previous meeting occurred at least eight weeks prior), and the election shall proceed as directed by the moderator. The elders should seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the nomination process. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant church members' meeting. For all offices, the moderator shall declare elected all persons receiving a simple majority of all votes cast; abstentions will not be considered as votes cast. The persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless another date has been specifically designated.

- 5.4. Calling of the Senior Pastor - In the calling of any man to this position, the same basic process of calling an elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential senior pastor and, before being asked to express its affirmation, must receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith. Notice of the nomination of a man to be elected to membership and called as senior pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.
- 5.5. Calling of Associate Pastor - In the calling of any man to the position of associate pastor, the same basic process of calling an elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential associate pastor and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith. Notice of the nomination of a man to be called as associate pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of him and his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

6. Meetings

- 6.1. Worship Services - Worship services shall be held each Lord's Day, and may be held throughout the week as the church determines.
- 6.2. Members' Meetings - In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. Members' meeting shall be called at least four times per year by the elders, at some time apart from a public worship service. The Elders shall provide the moderation of all such meetings. The elders shall see that the stated meetings of the church are regularly held and that required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members. Provided all constitutional provisions for notification have been met, a quorum shall be understood to be met by

those members present. All votes shall be tallied based on the number of votes cast by members present. A budget shall be approved by the membership at a members' meeting not more than three months after the start of the fiscal year. Prior to this approval and subject to the elders' discretion, expenditures may continue at the prior year's level. At any regular or special members' meeting, officers may be elected and positions filled as needed, so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met. Special members' meetings may be called as required by the elders, or at the written request, submitted to the elders, or twenty percent of the voting membership. The date, time, and purpose of any special meeting shall be announced at all public services of the church within two weeks preceding the meeting. In the event of a written request from the members, the elders shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the request.

- 6.2.1. Regular members meetings must have a quorum of 51% of the members in order to vote on any measures or positions.
- 6.2.2. Any meeting which contains a vote to change the Constitution or Statement of Faith must have at least 75% of the members present to constitute a quorum.
- 6.3. Every year, the elders will call for the members input at an annual specially called congregational meeting. This meeting will be to both celebrate all that God has done in the life of the church over the past year as well as look forward to the coming year. In addition, members may bring forward any agenda item for consideration at this meeting without discussion which the elders will then take into consideration at their next elders meeting.
- 6.4. Matters for Members Consideration - The Elders will secure the affirmation of the TIF body regarding:
 - 6.4.1. Selection, rebuke or dismissal of the Pastor-Teacher;
 - 6.4.2. Building and facilities--major decisions relating to TIF properties;
 - 6.4.3. Financial budgets of TIF;
 - 6.4.4. Amending the Bylaws; and,
 - 6.4.5. Other matters in which the Elder Council feel led to seek the members' advice and counsel.

7. Initial Constitution Of Elders Or Reconstitution Of Elder Council

- 7.1. The Senior Pastor & Associate Pastor will initiate an elder candidate process which will include prayerful consideration of potential elder candidates, interviews with both the candidates and their wives and/or families, a training process and a final interview to ascertain if the person is a qualified elder candidate.
- 7.2. The Initial Elders Council will be recommended to the church by the Senior Pastor in conjunction with the Associate Pastor.
- 7.3. Upon the completion of this process, and the affirmation of TIF in a Special Meeting, these men shall form the Elder Council and shall begin serving the church as elders.

8. Amendments Provision

- 8.1. The Statement of Faith and Church Constitution and By-Laws may only be amended by a ninety percent affirmative vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting. For constitutional changes, at least seventy five percent of voting members must attend. The amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such meeting. The revised version of this constitution shall be made available to all church members by the church clerk.