

Sample Constitution

Use the following sample and flesh it out to fit your ministry context.

I. NAME

The name of this organization, a nonprofit Corporation, shall be the _____, an Evangelical Free Church.

II. STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Statement of faith of this church shall be the same as that of The Evangelical Free church of America and its Allegheny District. ***Note: to be accepted as an Evangelical Free Church, a church must incorporate the Evangelical Free Church Statement of Faith.***

III. STANDING

This church shall maintain membership with The Evangelical Free Church of America and its branches and with the Allegheny District of the Evangelical Free Church.

IV. PURPOSE

The purpose of this church shall be to bring pleasure to God by making more and better disciples who celebrate our Lord Jesus Christ in corporate worship, are committed to obedience to Jesus Christ, loving one another, and penetrating our spheres of influence with the dynamic gospel of Jesus Christ.

V. MEMBERSHIP

The church shall receive as members those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior being born again, and manifesting the fruits of the Spirit in their lives, and are in agreement with the doctrine and polity of this church. (Sometimes a statement is put in here about membership process and discipline process. Sometimes these statements are put in the by-laws.)

VI. PROPERTY RIGHTS

If the church membership votes to dissolve and cease to function as a church of like faith and practice, or if the membership should dissolve through some disaster, the property rights shall be assigned to the Allegheny District of The Evangelical Free Church of America to enable said district to renew the work or use the values thereof for further Gospel enterprises.

VII. GOVERNMENT

Ultimate authority lies in Christ as the head of the church and in the Scripture as the basis for all faith and practice. This church shall remain free and self-governing. The government is vested in its membership and administered by its officers. In function, final authority shall reside in the membership. They shall approve and/or affirm Biblically qualified leadership, to carry out Christ's purposes.

VIII. OFFICERS The officers of this church shall be the Pastor(s), Elders, and/or Deacons, and other officers as deemed necessary by the local church.

IX. PROVISION FOR BY-LAWS AND POLICY MANUAL

A supplement to this constitution known as the BY-LAWS shall embody the stated qualifications for church leaders and officers. The BY-LAWS shall also include officers' duties, provisions for appointment of additional leaders and teachers, conditions for membership, method by which members are received, along with other rules and regulations for church activities as needed. A Policy Manual shall cover such items as operational, job descriptions for all positions in the church, etc.

- The by-laws are in a separate document from the constitution. It is usually longer, more detailed, and easier to change. With growing church plants, this should be a dynamic document.
- The by-laws provide a vehicle to implement and carry out the principles outlined by the Constitution. They explain how the organization functions in terms of boards, committees, officers, membership admission, frequency of meetings and quorums. A description of boards and committees, including their duties and terms of service, should also be included. An organizational chart is helpful.

X. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this constitution may be made at any business meeting when said proposed Amendments have been presented to the membership in writing and posted for at least one month prior to the business meeting. A two-thirds majority is required for passage.¹

¹Church Planter's Toolkit, Robert Logan, chapter 6 has some helpful worksheets. The toolkit is available through the district office.