

Cameron Baptist Church

Lawton, Oklahoma

Constitution and Bylaws

Last Updated: August 24, 2015

Constitution

“But the path of the righteous is as the dawning light, that shineth more and more until that perfect day.” Proverbs 4:18

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to other churches and our community.

This body shall be known as Cameron Baptist Church, located at 2621 SW C Avenue, Lawton, Oklahoma, 73505. The Head and Leader of this body of believers, Cameron Baptist Church, is Christ Jesus.

“And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy.” Colossians 1:18

The objectives of Cameron Baptist Church are built upon three pillars: Evangelism, Discipleship, and Missions. These pillars shall be the basis of everything we do, in order to accomplish the tasks set before us by our Holy God. We shall be a dynamic spiritual organism empowered by the Holy Spirit to share Christ with as many people as possible in our church, community, and throughout the world. We shall be a worshiping fellowship, experiencing an awareness of God, recognizing His person, and responding in obedience to His leadership. We shall strive to experience an increasingly meaningful fellowship with God and fellow believers. We shall help people experience a growing knowledge of God and man, while sustaining a church that ministers unselfishly to people in the community and the world in Jesus’ name. Our desire is to be a church with the purpose of being Christ-like in our daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality, and possessions to the lordship of Christ.

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired word of God and the basis for our beliefs. Cameron Baptist Church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of “The Baptist Faith and Message”, as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention. We voluntarily come together as a body of baptized believers, in Jesus Christ, personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to a lost world. The ordinances of the church are believer’s baptism and the Lord’s Supper (See Policy – Church Ordinances).

Covenant of Membership

Membership in Cameron Baptist Church inherently acknowledges the following, as will be published and publicly available in this Constitution:

Having been led by the Spirit of God to receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ. We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge,

holiness, and comfort of others; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, doctrines, and discipline; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations. We also engage to maintain family devotions; to train up our children in Christ; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale of and abuse of intoxicants; to use our influence to combat the spread of all human deviancy; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior. We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay. We moreover engage that when we move from Cameron Baptist Church, we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

Organization and Control

The governance of Cameron Baptist Church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. Persons duly received by the members shall constitute the membership (See Policy – Church Membership). All internal groups created and empowered by the church shall report to and be accountable only to the church, through the leadership of Jesus Christ, unless otherwise specified by church action. Cameron Baptist Church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation common among Southern Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical, this church will cooperate with and support the association, the state convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

The bylaws of this document shall be presented in terms of Organizational Church Policies, heretofore known as "Policies", and prescribed by policy number, with no particular order of precedence set. These bylaws are the critical issues required to govern Cameron Baptist Church, and are empowered by this Constitution. Within each policy shall be a "Purpose", summarily describing the intent of the policy, and "Governing Principles", detailing the policy to be enforced through its administration. These policies shall be able to be amended, updated, added to, or deleted, as needed to maintain an accurate presentation of Cameron Baptist Church. Changes to these Constitution and Bylaws shall be developed by an appropriate team, consisting of members from the Church Body (See Policy - Teams), documented in consistent format, presented to the body of the church for approval, and published in a manner conducive to ready access by members of Cameron Baptist Church.

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law? Jesus replied: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Matthew 22:36-40

Marriage

Purpose

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” Genesis 2:24

The purpose of the Cameron Baptist Church policy on marriage is to affect an understandable, non-discriminating, Biblically-based process, by which couples may come together and become man and wife, as prescribed in God’s Word.

Governing Principles

We believe that “marriage” has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God joining one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as dictated in Scripture. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography, any attempt to change one’s sex, or disagreement with one’s biological sex is sinful and offensive to God.

“Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable.” Leviticus 18:22

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Cameron Baptist Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a Biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with scripture nor the doctrines of the church. **(Matthew 22:36-40)**

Cameron Baptist Church, including its pastoral, ministering, and supportive staff members, shall not sanction, participate in, or administrate any event that violates these principles. All marriage ceremonies sanctioned by Cameron Baptist Church, its staff, or through the use of its facilities shall be God-purposed, and shall not violate the principles stated within this policy.

Church Ordinances

Purpose

“We were buried therefore with him through baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.” Romans 6:4

The purpose of the Cameron Baptist Church policy on official Ordinances is to ensure that we have the clarity and direction to obey His desire for remembrances, always striving to be Christ-like. We believe that God’s direction for the Church body is to apply the very selective statutes, regarding appropriate ordinances, and limit them to just those appointed specifically by Jesus Christ, through His Word.

Governing Principles

There shall be only two (2) official ordinances recognized and exercised within Cameron Baptist Church:

1. Baptism:

- a. This church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord.
- b. Baptism shall be by submersion in water.
- c. The Pastor, or whomever the Church shall authorize to do so, shall administer baptism.
- d. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship, during any worship service of the Church.

2. The Lord’s Supper:

- a. The Church shall observe the Lord’s Supper in accordance with a pre-established and published schedule. The pastor and deacons are responsible for the administration of the Lord’s Supper, with the deacons being responsible for the physical preparations.
- b. The schedule shall be coordinated and discussed in the normal conduct of Deacons’ Meetings.

“And He received a cup, and when He had given thanks, He said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves; for I say unto you, I shall not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And He took bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave to them, saying, this is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. And the cup in like manner after supper, saying, this cup is the new covenant in My blood, even that which is poured out for you.” Luke 22:17-20

Church Membership

Purpose

“And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence.” Colossians 1:18

The purpose of the Cameron Baptist Church policy on Church Membership is to ensure that there is an equitable, understandable, and Biblically-based process, through which people can join and participate, through collective agreement, this local representation of the Body of Christ.

Governing Principles

Overview

Church membership is more about giving than getting. This is contrary to most of the world’s beliefs on “belonging” to an organization. Many people join organizations, in order to gain access, money, friends, status, and many other things associated with personal gratification. The gifts of God are great and immeasurable, but these gifts are not a reward for Church membership. Becoming a member of the family of God, and joining Cameron Baptist Church, is a member’s indication that they are ready and willing to join in the Body of Christ, and are prepared to serve in whatever capacity that God calls them. If you are prepared to serve as a member of Cameron Baptist Church, then this policy is for you.

“For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.” Romans 4:4-6

General

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist Church, under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership and the associated criteria are expressed in this policy.

All candidates for membership shall be graciously received by Cameron Baptist Church, and will not be excluded based upon race, age, gender, or national origin. We are to always be known as an inclusive Church, as prescribed by God.

“But the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me; that through me the message might be fully proclaimed, and that all the Gentiles might hear”. 2 Timothy 4:17

Candidacy

The primary entry criterion, for a candidate for membership to be considered, is that the candidate be Saved, in accordance with Biblical principles and the teaching of Christ. That criterion is most simply expressed in the “ABC” acronym:

Admit – that you are a sinner. ***“All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23***

When we admit that we are sinners, saved only by the grace of God, it is important that we repent and turn away from sin. Admission is not simply a “check box”, it is an active part of salvation, requiring repentance. ***“I tell you, nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” Luke 13:3***

Believe - that Jesus Christ is the true virgin-born Son of God, and only through Him can we be saved. ***“Jesus answered, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through Me.” John 14:6***

Confess – with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord. ***“If you declare with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” Romans 10:9***

Any person may offer themselves as a candidate for membership in Cameron Baptist Church. All candidates shall be presented to the church at a regular church service for membership, in any of the following ways:

- (1) By profession of faith and following in baptism (see Policy 2.0 – Church Ordinances).
- (2) By promise of a letter of recommendation from another church of like faith and order.
- (3) By personal statement of prior conversion experience and baptism in a church of like faith and order, when no letter is obtainable.

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate from any Church member, such dissent shall be discreetly referred to the Senior Pastor for investigation and follow-up. The Senior Pastor may, at his discretion, gain assistance from the Ministering Staff and/or Deacons of Cameron Baptist Church, in order to discern an appropriate disposition of this investigation. Once a conclusion is reached, the Pastor or an appointed Staff member or Deacon will address with the candidate. If the investigation finds no basis for denying membership, the candidate will be re-submitted for membership to the Church, with the voiced approval of the Pastor, Staff, and Deacons.

New Member Orientation

New members of this Church are expected to participate in the Church’s new member orientation. Historically, this orientation has taken different formats; usually changing as culture, environment, and technology has changed. However, the content is not so dynamic, as this orientation centers on providing the new member the tools and information that they need, in order to gain a greater understanding of Jesus Christ our Lord, and so they can best identify their place in the Body. Christians find that through study, prayer, and intercession

that God leads them through all of the challenges associated with the Christian faith. Of course, the primary documented foundation for our faith lies in the Bible, and understanding God's Word for our life. Cameron Baptist Church uses other literature, such as the "Baptist Faith and Message", in order to assist new members' understanding of what we, as Christians and Baptists believe.

"Jesus answered and said unto them, you do err, not knowing the scriptures, or the power of God." Matthew 22:29

Rights of Members

One of the fallacies of Church membership, across most congregations, is that this membership provides special access to facilities, supplies, activities, and persons. Cameron Baptist Church is not exclusive with its assets, and we must manage these in a responsible manner, providing the best support for our Church and community as possible. God requires us to be good stewards of our resources, and this Church will always put His needs and desires first. We have given special provision to the Ministering and Supportive Staff of Cameron Baptist Church to administrate these resources competently, legally, ethically, and in support of what is best for the Church. There are some rights afforded to Cameron Baptist Church members, which are exclusive:

- (1) Every member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in conference, provided the member is present or provision has been made for absentee balloting.
- (2) Every member of the church is eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for elective offices in the church.
- (3) Every member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church, as administered by the church.
- (4) Every member of the church is eligible to serve in all capacities of leadership, teaching, discipleship, and Teams (see Policy 4.0 – Teams).

Termination of Membership

Membership in Cameron Baptist Church shall be terminated in the following ways:

- (1) Death of the member.
- (2) Transfer to another Baptist church.
- (3) Erasure upon request
- (4) Membership in a church of another denomination (no dual memberships allowed).

Records

Records of membership shall be developed and maintained by the Church, in a manner conducive to administration, while adhering to the fundamental precepts of privacy. The Cameron Baptist Church Membership Roll shall never be sold nor afforded to any individual or organization, for purposes not benefitting the administration of the Church.

Teams

Purpose

“Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to the will of God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves examples to the flock.”

1 Peter 5:2-3

The purpose of the Cameron Baptist Church policy on Teams is to ensure that God’s desires for counsel, in the governance of His Church, is expressed through the appropriate selection and direction of members to provide service through cooperative agreement.

Governing Principles

Teams shall be established within Cameron Baptist Church, when there needs to be a structured approach to solving a challenge, requiring the dynamic resources available through members with varied backgrounds and experiences. The following guidelines for the formation and conduct of Teams shall be followed:

1. Team Members shall be voted on by the Church Membership (see Policy 3.0 – Church Membership), during the conduct of a normal service or called business meeting. This service or business meeting must be advertised at least one week in advance of the presentation and vote, providing adequate notice of the presentation and vote to the Membership.
 - There may be occasions, in special circumstances, when the Senior Pastor could recommend specific Church Members to be on a Team. This occasion can occur when specific talents are needed to address challenges, such as electrical expertise, finance, or legal, and timing is critical. The procedures below will continue to be followed, even in on these occasions.
2. Candidates for Team Members shall be any current Church Member.
3. Prior to the vote for Team Members, the purpose of the team shall be clearly presented to the Church.
4. Procedures for voting shall also be clearly presented to the Church, prior to the vote, and will follow an orderly and transparent process.
 - a. In some cases, a voice or show-of-hands vote can be sufficient. This normally would follow a nomination process from the Deacons, Staff, or other Church Team.

- b. In some cases, a written ballot vote can be used. This normally would occur when a deliberate nomination process had not been used to identify potential candidates.
 - c. Church Members and Staff may also recommend other voting procedures, based upon the nature of the Team being established. These could include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Drawing names from a listing of appropriate Church Members (e.g., the listing of all women in the Church to attend a Women's Conference)
 - ii. Selecting from volunteers at the associated service or business meeting (e.g., someone to attend the State Convention)
 - iii. Other appropriate methods, as accepted by the Church Membership present at the associated service or business meeting
5. Once selected, teams will establish a hierarchy of leadership, to at least include a Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary/Scribe.
 6. Teams will periodically report status to the Senior Pastor and to the Church.
 7. Once the associated task is completed, the results will be presented to the Church.