

Provisions Commonly Found in Church Bylaws

- 1) Qualifications, selection, and discipline of members
- 2) Time and place of regular business meetings
- 3) Calling of special business meetings
- 4) Notice for annual and special meetings
- 5) Quorum
- 6) Voting rights
- 7) Selection, tenure, and removal of officers and directors
- 8) Filling of vacancies
- 9) Responsibilities of directors and officers
- 10) Method of amending bylaws
- 11) Purchase and conveyance of property
- 12) Operations and dissolution clause
- 13) Adoption of a specific body of parliamentary procedure
- 14) A clause requiring disputes between church members, or between a member and the church itself, to be resolved through mediation or arbitration
- 15) A clause specifying how contracts and other legal documents are to be approved and signed
- 16) Signature authority on checks
- 17) “Bonding” of officers and employees who handle church funds
- 18) An annual audit by independent certified public accountants
- 19) An indemnification clause
- 20) Specification of the church’s fiscal year
- 21) “Staggered voting” of directors (a portion of the board is elected each year – to ensure year-to-year continuity of leadership)

Note: Items 1) through 12) are essentially mandatory in a good set of church bylaws. Items 13) through 21) are not mandatory but recommended. This is not an exhaustive list, but does provide a framework for churches to evaluate their existing bylaws or begin to formulate a new set of bylaws. Also, the terminology used here is generic in nature, which means that titles of leaders, the form of governance for decision-making, etc. would need to be conditioned to the actual circumstance of each church.