

# Constitution and Bylaws

## STRONG TOWER CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

### CONSTITUTION

#### PREAMBLE

WHEREAS, it is the express purpose of God our Heavenly Father to call out of the world a saved people who shall contribute to the Body of Christ, built and established on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the Chief Cornerstone.

WHEREAS, the members of the Body of Christ are enjoined to assemble themselves together for worship, fellowship, counsel, and instruction in the Word of God and the work of the ministry and for the exercise of those spiritual gifts and offices provided for in the New Testament, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED: That we recognize ourselves as a body of Christian believers working together for the common purpose of spreading the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and that under the laws of the State of **TEXAS** we may exercise all the rights and privileges granted to religious bodies.

#### ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this corporation shall be ***STRONG TOWER CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP (S.T.C.F.)*** (Acts 2:17-21).

#### ARTICLE II -PURPOSE

The purpose of this corporation shall be:

- A. To establish and oversee places of worship under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Titus 1:5; Ps. 107:3; Acts 2:42,46,47; Heb. 10:25).
- B. To conduct the work of evangelizing both home and foreign missions in obedience to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:46, 47; John 20:21).
- C. To create departments as may be necessary in order to establish places of worship, to spread the Gospel, (including but not limited to educational, recreational, community, and social services) and to support missionary activity (Acts 6:1-7).
- D. To have the right to own, hold in trust, use, possess, sell, convey, mortgage, lease or dispose of such property, real or chattel, as may be needed for the prosecution of its work.

E. To license ministers of the Gospel and be their covering (1 Thess. 5:12; 2 Thess. 2:15; 3:4; Heb. 13:17).

### **ARTICLE III - ARTICLES OF FAITH (WHAT WE BELIEVE)**

#### **SCRIPTURES:**

We believe that the Old and New Testament were written by men divinely inspired by God, and is infallible and inerrant in the original manuscripts, totally trustworthy and reliable, and is the final authority in all matters of life and faith. The scriptures are the revelation of God and his instructions for holy living. (II Tim. 3:15-17 & II Pet 1:20-21)

#### **GOD:**

We believe that there is only one living and true God, eternal and infinite, existing in three persons; the Father, the son, and the Holy Spirit. He is our Creator who is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent, the Sovereign and Supreme Ruler of the universe. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which equally coexist with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence or being. (I John 5:7)

#### **MAN:**

We believe that man was created in the image of God ( Gen. 1:26-27). Adam willfully sinned in the Garden of Eden and brought the curse of sin, which is death (Rom. 6:23) and alienation from God, upon all mankind. All human beings are born with a sinful nature (Rom. 3:10-12), coming short of God's standard of holiness (Rom. 3:23), and thus guilty of spiritual death (eternal punishment in hell), (Rev. 21:8). Man is depraved and desperately in need of forgiveness and redemption in order to be brought back into fellowship with God.

#### **JESUS CHRIST:**

We believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, the eternal second person in the Trinity, co-equal with the Father (Phil. 2:6), the only begotten Son of the Father who became flesh (John 1:14-His incarnation), conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin birth (Matt. 1:20-23), lived a sinless life (II Cor.5:21), died upon the Cross for the sins of the whole world (John 3:16), offering himself as a perfect substitutable sacrifice for our redemption (I Peter 2:24), on the third day He bodily rose from the grave, ascended into heaven, presently setting at the right hand of the Father making intercessions on our behalf, and one day soon, He will return in all power and glory to judge the world and complete His redemptive mission.

## **HOLY SPIRIT:**

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person in the Trinity and co-equal with the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit's ministry is to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:7-11), He performs the miracle of Salvation (John 3:6-8 & Titus 3:5-6), baptizing us into the body of Christ (I Cor. 12:12-13). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ that comes to indwell the believer giving them eternal life (II Cor. 6:19-20). He empowers us to live the Christian life (II Cor. 5:17), endows us with gifts (I Cor. 12), instructs us and guides us into all truth (John 16:13), he teaches us the deeper things of God (John 14:26) and makes intercessions for us (Rom. 8:26-27). He sanctifies us (Rom. 15:16), seals us (Eph. 4:30), and is always exalting Christ and not himself. The Holy Spirit is our Comforter, Guide, and Director energizing us to be able to live a holy life, and empowering us to be witnesses to a lost and dying world (Acts 1:8).

## **SATAN:**

We believe that Satan was a created angel, who was called Lucifer. He was created perfect in all of his way, beautiful in every aspect and full of wisdom until pride rose up in his heart (Ezek. 28:13-17), and decided to try to dethrone God (Isa. 14:12-16). He was cast out of heaven to the earth along with 1/3 of the angels that had fallen with him (Rev. 12:3-4 & 9). Satan's goal is to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10) and keep the world in darkness and away from the truth. He is the arch enemy of God, and Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (I John 3:8) and set the captives free from his lies and destruction. Satan is NOT omnipresent and NOT all powerful but controls a massive army of fallen angels (demons) called principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, and spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph. 6:12). He cannot do a thing that God does not allow him to do (Job 1:7-12). We as God's children are to put on the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:11) in order to live victorious over the world, the flesh, and the devil (I John 4:4). Jesus defeated Satan at the Cross and his ultimate end will be in the lake of fire.

## **SALVATION:**

We believe that there can be salvation in none other than Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12 & John 14:6). We believe that we are saved by grace alone (Eph. 2:8-9), through faith alone, in Christ Jesus alone, trusting in the shed blood of Jesus on the Cross (Eph. 1:7) to remove our sin, and trusting in His resurrection, to give us eternal life (Rom. 5:9-10). Salvation is totally provided as an act of grace (Rom. 11:6) and not by man's works (Titus 3:5). It is provided through Jesus Christ death, burial, and resurrection (I Cor. 15:1-4). Man cannot add to what Christ has done for them, they can only receive His free gift of eternal life (John 1:12) by faith and trusting totally in Jesus Christ to save them. Even though man is a free will agent and has the choice of accepting or rejecting God's free offer of salvation, if a man chooses to not receive Christ then he is condemned already because he was born in sin (John 3:16-18) and the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). There is no salvation apart from repentance (turning from your sin), and a personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord (giving Him control of your life). Salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification and glorification.

## **CHURCH:**

We believe that a New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous body of baptized believers that has covenanted together in likeness of faith, and in the fellowship of the gospel, to become obedient in fulfilling the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37-40), and the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20). We acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the head (Col. 1:18), and we as members are the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23). We believe that we are to operate in love and unity under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and that the gifts, talents, and abilities that God gives to individual members will determine the uniqueness and character of His church. Our ultimate goal and purpose is to be used of God to bring glory and honor to His name, to see the Saints grow to maturity, and see souls won into His Kingdom.

## **ORDINANCES:**

We believe that Lord instructs us as a church to observe two ordinances, "Water Baptism" and observing of the "Lord's Supper." We believe that these are not sacraments for there is no saving power in them, but they were to be observed in openly declaring our faith.

We believe that Christian Baptism is through immersion in water as set forth by Jesus example in the scriptures (Matt. 3:13-17]. After one has been saved, trusting in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, they are instructed to follow the Lord in baptism in obedience to the great commission (Matt. 28:19-20). Baptism gives us the privilege to openly testify of the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord and thus identifying publicly with Him as our Redeemer. Baptism is a physical picture of what Jesus did for us spiritually (Rom. 6:3-8).

We believe that the Lord's supper is an ordinance to be observed in commemorating Jesus' death on the Cross for the sins of men. The bread represents Jesus' body that was voluntarily given and broken for us (I Cor.11:24), and the cup represented the blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins (Matt.26:28). As often as we partake of the Lord's Supper we are to do it in remembrance of His death and in anticipation of His soon return (I Cor. 11:26). We believe in open communion, which means that you do not have to be a member of Strong Tower Christian Fellowship to partake, but you must be a Baptized Born Again Believer in right standing with the Lord. This observance is always to be preceded by a solemn self-examination, making sure that our hearts and motives are right (I Cor. 11:27-32).

## **HELL & HEAVEN:**

We believe that hell and heaven are literal places described in scripture.

Hell is a place of torment (Luke 16:23) where people who never trust in Jesus as their Lord and Savior will go and spend eternity. When they refuse to receive God's only remedy for sin, which is Jesus shed blood on the Cross, then because of their rebellion and sin they are cast from God's presents into eternal damnation (Rev. 20:10-15 & Rev. 21:7-8).

Heaven is where the Father lives (Matt. 5:16 & 48), and a place that God has prepared for those that love Him (I Pet. 1:3-5). Those that have trusted in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior will spend eternity in heaven with our God. Heaven will be glorious and beyond anything that we can imagine (I Cor. 2:9). Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us in the Father's house and will soon return and take the redeemed back with Him (John 14:1-3). When a person dies, we believe that their spirit and soul leaves their body and goes to be with the Lord (II Cor. 5:8) until the resurrection day, in which we will be given an incorruptible and glorified body that will rise and unite with our soul and spirit (I Cor. 15:49-54) and to ever be with the Lord.

### **FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:**

We believe that at the time of salvation the Holy Spirit baptizes us into the body of Christ (I Cor. 12:12-13). The Holy Spirit comes into the believer to indwell and tabernacle within us forever (I Cor. 6:19-20, Rom. 8:9-11, John 14:16-17, Heb. 13:5). We enter into the family of God through spiritual birth and regeneration (John 3:3-8, Titus 3:5); becoming new creatures in Christ (II Cor. 5:17); born of his Spirit. We are baptized into Christ and into all that He is and has accomplished (Rom. 6:3-11, Gal. 3:27).

We become his purchased possessions and become heirs and joint heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:16-17). The Spirit of God comes to live and dwell in our spirit giving us eternal life (Rom. 8:9, John 1:12, 1 John 5:11-13).

At Jesus Ascension, he instructed the Disciples to go to Jerusalem and wait there (John 16:7) until they received the Holy Ghost, as John proclaimed (Acts 1:4-5) and it was in that upper room, during Pentecost, that the church was birthed (the promise was fulfilled) and the believers received the Holy Ghost with power (Matt. 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:33, Acts 1:5).

We believe that at salvation there is an initial filling and many continual fillings (Acts 2:4, Acts 4:8, Acts 4:32, Acts 9:17, Acts 13:9, Eph. 3:19). The Lord commands that we be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18), and to be filled you must deny yourself (Luke 9:23), and surrender the controls of your life over to Him. All Christians should continuously live a life of self-denial and be yielded to our Lord. After Salvation, too often many drift away from the lordship of Christ, and God has to bring us to a place of brokenness before we will yield the controls back over to the Lord. When the Holy Spirit fills us, it is only then that we can sense the power to live the Christian life, because it is He that must live the life through us.

### **SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER**

We believe that Salvation is all an act of God and not of man. The only way that a man can be saved is by the intervention of God. The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin (John 16:8), sends a messenger with the Word of God to us (Rom. 10:14-17), opens our eyes to the truth, draws us to Jesus (John 6:44), chooses us and gives us an invitation to respond to his call (John 15:16), gives us the faith to trust in Him (Gal.2:20), and all we have to do is respond to His invitation (Rom. 10:13). Salvation is an act of Grace (Rom. 11:6) and is a free gift (Rom. 6:23, Eph. 2:8-9). We did not do anything to get it, and we cannot do anything to keep it (Gal. 3:1-3). When Jesus

comes to live inside of us, He changes us from the inside out, making us a new creation, and we will never be the same (II Cor. 5:17). As Christians, he deals with us differently from the world. He loves us, guides us, directs us, and chastens us (Heb. 12:6-8]. If one has ever trusted in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and has become a Christian, then it is impossible to undo what Christ has done (Heb. 6:4-6). If you could lose your salvation, then you would be saying that the blood of Jesus Christ was not sufficient to keep you redeemed. We do not have to hang on to God for salvation, for He is the one that keeps us safe in His Grace (John 17:12).

### **RAPTURE:**

We believe that just before the great tribulation begins as recorded in Daniel and Revelation, that the Lord! Jesus will come for His Bride (the Church). Even though the Scriptures do not mention the word "**RAPTURE**" which means to "snatched out" or taken out," the scriptures clearly describe the event in I Thess. 4:16-18 and I Cor. 15:50-52. There will be a bodily resurrection of all Saints, those that had previously passed on before us and those still alive when Jesus comes will be **raptured** out to meet the Lord in the air.

### **MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST:**

We believe that-after the seven year tribulation, and the battle of Armageddon is fought, that the Lord Jesus will come to earth, cast Satan in the bottomless pit for a thousand year (Rev. 20:1-3), set upon the throne of David in Jerusalem, and reign in righteousness as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords for the thousand year period (Rev. 20:4-6), He will loose Satan for a season to deceive the nations (Rev. 20:7-8) that would choose to follow him, and then cast Satan and his fallen angels in to the lake of fire (Rev. 21:10).

### **THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT:**

We believe that after the thousand years, and Satan has been cast into the Lake of Fire, that all those through the ages that have refused to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, will be brought before the Great White Throne of Judgment and the wicked will give an account of their lives. Those names who do not appear in the Book of Life will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:11-15).

### **THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH:**

We believe that the Lord will make all things new (Rev. 21:1) and the redeemed of the Lord will live throughout eternity, rejoicing because of His Amazing Grace.

## **ARTICLE IV - ORDINANCES**

### A. WATER BAPTISM

The ordinance of water baptism (Matt. 28:19) shall be administered by all established places of worship to all those who have repented of their sins and who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of their souls (Ro. 6:3-5; Col.2:12).

### B. THE LORD'S SUPPER

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly by all established places of worship, as enjoined in the Scriptures (Luke 22:19,20; I Cor. 11:23-26).

## **ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP**

### A. MEMBERSHIP PROCESS

A person is eligible for membership in this church who gives evidence of his/her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who voluntarily subscribes to the **Articles of Faith** and who reads and agrees to be governed by the **constitution and bylaws** of this church as herein set forth.

*STRONG TOWER CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP* is a fellowship of believers participating in the labors of the Holy Spirit in this community. An individual seeking to become a member of this church must submit in writing, using a form prescribed by this church, that they wish to become a member. The form must meet the following guidelines:

1. The name of the applicant must be listed. If a married couple is applying for membership both names must be listed and both applicants must sign.
2. There must be a statement indicating that the member will abide by the Holy Scriptures and submit to the constitution and bylaws of the church.

*STRONG TOWER FELLOWSHIP* subscribes to a nonvoting membership. In any growing congregation, there will be people at all stages of spiritual growth and maturity. For that reason, it is not proper to submit the affairs of the church to a democratic vote as the same is not God's way, for the purpose of the church is not to do the will of the majority, but the will of God.

Any disputes that arise over the interpretation of these bylaws shall be deferred to the highest authority of this church. In this case it would be the pastor, with the advice of the board of directors. In Watson v. Jones, the court ruled that

*"Whenever the questions of discipline, or of faith, of ecclesiastical rule, custom, or law have been decided by the highest church judicatory to which the matter has been carried, the legal tribunals must accept such decisions as final, and as binding on them..."*

Additionally, it was ruled by the Supreme Court in Tones v. Wolf, 443 U.S. 595 (1979) that to suspend or exclude from the Lord's Supper those found delinquent, are matters concerning membership and are solely under the control of the church, and that a member may have membership revoked if the pastor and/or church board of directors deem it necessary so long as the church follows its own rules in doing so. This right and power cannot go under review by the IRS or courts.

## B. THE STANDARDS OF MEMBERSHIP

The standard of membership of this church shall be:

1. Evidence of a genuine experience of regeneration (new birth)(John 1:12-14; John 3:3-8; I Peter 1:23-25)
2. Evidence of a consistent Christian life (Romans 6:4; 8:1-4; 13:13-14; Ephesians 4:1-2, 15, 17-32; 5:1, 2, 15; I John 1:6, 7)
3. Baptism in water by immersion (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 10:47-48; Romans 6:3-12; Colossians 2:11-12)
4. Full subscription to the **Articles of Faith** as set forth in the bylaws adopted by the church.
5. Willingness to contribute regularly to the support of the church according to his or her ability through tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:10; Matthew 23:23; Hebrews 7:4-5)
6. Support of the church with regular attendance at services (Hebrews 10:25).

## C. RECEPTION OF MEMBERS

Persons desiring to become members in fellowship with the church shall make the fact known to the senior pastor by a signed application approved by the board of directors. The application must be submitted to the church secretary.

Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as his/her personal Savior and giving evidence of having been born again and evidence of water baptism, by making a written request to the senior pastor and board of directors and upon their recommendation, may acquire membership in this church in the following manner:

1. The senior pastor shall present the names of those who apply for membership to the board of directors who shall act upon said recommendation. All persons who shall meet the membership requirements and have been passed on favorably shall be received into the church publicly at any of the regular services and their names inscribed on the roster.

## D. PROHIBITED CONDUCT OF MEMBERS

Any member or those who are in covenant fellowship with the church, found guilty of any of the following offenses shall be subject to removal from the church membership:

1. In any way sowing discord among the brethren, including but not limited to rumor mongering, tale bearing and bearing false witnesses (Proverbs 6:16-19, 1 Corinthians 1: 10, 12:25, Galatians 5:20-21, Ephesians 4:2-3).
2. Propagating of doctrines and practices contrary to the Statements of A.O.F. which causes discord, dissention and division in the church (Romans 1:21-32; Galatians 1:8-9; Titus 3:9-11; 2 Thessalonians 3:6].
3. Living any kind of sexually immoral lifestyle (Romans 1:21-32, 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, 9-13, Galatians 5:16-21, Ephesians 5:1-12, 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7).
4. Persisting in believing or propagating some pernicious, false, contrary doctrine (Romans 16:17-18, 1 Timothy 4:1, II Timothy 4:3-4, Titus 3:10-11, II Peter 2:1-3).
5. Involvement in any form of occult practices (Deuteronomy 18:9-14, Acts 19:18-19, Galatians 5:20, Revelation 21:8).
6. Being involved with the sinful worldly habits that will bring reproach to the church, such as abusing: alcoholic beverages and tobacco (Proverbs 23:29-32, 1 Corinthians 6:19); non-prescription narcotics and illegal drugs or substances including marijuana (Romans 6:12-16, Galatians 5: 1); participating in oath bound secret societies (Hosea 10:4, Matthew 5:34-37); reading of literature, listening to or viewing video of theatrical productions that promote attitudes, values or conduct contrary to God's Word (Luke 11:34-36, 1 Thessalonians 4:7).
7. Publicly wearing apparel which is indecent or sensual (I Timothy 2:9-10, 4:11-12).
8. Repeated offenses of civil laws that are not consistent with the Word of God (Ecclesiastes 8:2-4, Romans 13:1-7, 1 Peter 2:13-17).

## E. DISCIPLINE

This church is committed to Biblical discipline in order to prepare a spotless bride for the Lord Jesus Christ's return, to maintain holiness as a way of life, to restore the sinning person to a right relationship with the Lord, and to expose sin so that it will not become a polluting influence in the rest of the church (Ephesians 5:11, 1 Peter 1:15-16, 1 Corinthians 5:6-7, Joshua 7:1-26).

Divisive persons shall be confronted according to the pattern outlined in Titus 3:9-11. At least two elders, or those whom they designate, shall meet with the divisive person and warn him/her to repent. If the person does not repent, at least two elders, or those whom they designate, shall meet with him/her again and warn him/her a second time. If the person still refuses to repent of

his/her sin of divisiveness, the presbytery at either a regular or special meeting may excommunicate him/her from the church in accordance with the Word of God [Romans 16:17-19).

If a believer observes a sin in another believer's life, he/she is to confront the person according to the pattern outlined in Matthew 18:15-17, by first going to him/her in private. If the sinning person does not listen and repent, the believer is to take one or two other believers and confront him/her again. If he/she stays unrepentant, he/she shall be brought before the presbytery. The presbytery shall do everything necessary to restore the sinning brother/sister. If everything has been done Biblically to restore the sinning brother/sister and the person refuses to repent, then the presbytery shall excommunicate him/her from the church at a regular or special meeting.

All believers are encouraged to consult with one of the elders when confronting another believer about sin in his/her life (Matthew 18:15-17). In both the above cases, the elder shall determine the appropriate time between steps and everyone involved shall, to the best of their ability, carry out this discipline in the spirit of love, humility, and meekness putting the interests of others ahead of their own (Galatians 6:1-2).

In the event of a serious difference arising between members of the assembly, if the parties involved cannot effect reconciliation, they shall have the right to appeal to the presbytery. The presbytery will consider no charges of misconduct unless they are made in writing. When formal charges have been laid against a member, and the senior pastor decides that disciplinary action must be taken, the member so charged shall be advised in writing and a date shall be set for a hearing before the presbytery in the presence of the one laying the charge, at which time the evidence shall be considered and a verdict shall be determined by secret ballot. If guilt is established and contrition, sorrow and repentance are not evident on the part of the offender, suspension of membership shall be considered as disciplinary action. However, unless his/her attendance at church would be cause for scandal, he/she should be permitted to attend church services in the hope that he/she would be reconciled to the Lord. Every effort shall be made to restore such a one to membership upon evidence of repentance (Matthew 18:15-17, 35).

## F. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

The senior pastor and board of directors shall be authorized to revise the membership roll of the corporation, and the senior pastor and presbytery shall be authorized to revise the membership roll of the church at least once a year, and to remove from the list of active members those in fellowship under the following categories:

1. Issuance of Letter of Transfer.
2. Voluntary withdrawal from membership.
3. Deceased during the year.
4. Propagation of doctrines and practices contrary to the Tenets of Faith, which cause discord, dissension and division in the church (Romans 16:17,18; Galatians 1:8,9; Titus 3:9-11; II Thessalonians 3:6).

5. Those who are living in sin and whose lives are inconsistent with Biblical standards of holiness (I Corinthians 5:11; Galatians 5:19-21; Hebrews 12:14).
6. It is understood that the purpose of terminating the membership of those who are in violation is to discipline them and to win them back, not to condemn them and forget them (I Corinthians 5:1-2; II Corinthians 2:6-11).
7. The board of directors reserves the right to remove, without warning, any member which is deemed to be harming the flock or to be in purpose and willful contention with the church.

Any person who may have been terminated as a church member shall be notified of this action in writing by the church secretary and shall have the right to appeal to the presbytery for reconsideration of said action.

The presbytery may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon request of the excluded person, and upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation. This should be done in the Spirit of forgiveness and love(II Corinthians 2:68).

#### G. DUTY OF CHURCH MEMBERS IN FELLOWSHIP

1. To contribute financially for the support of the church and its ministries in tithes and offerings in accordance with the Scriptures as God may prosper them, for the support of its various missionary work, both at home and foreign.
2. By a godly and Christian life each member shall cooperate with the church, its senior pastor, board of directors, local and advisory presbytery and deacons in their various efforts to attain to Scriptural church life.
3. Members should regularly attend church services, and special meetings as called by the senior pastor.
4. The duties of the members to themselves are: the acquisition of Scriptural knowledge, constant progress in spirituality, and consistency of external conduct.
5. Each member must consent to be in subjection to church discipline and order as directed in a Scriptural manner by the senior pastor and presbytery. It is the duty of the members to honor and esteem their senior pastor; to pray for him fervently and daily; to attend constantly upon his ministrations; to manifest a tender regard for his reputation, and to follow his vision. He shall publicly be referred to as "pastor."
6. It is the duty of each member to cultivate and cherish brotherly love for all people, especially members of the Body of Christ.
7. It shall be understood that matters discussed among the membership shall remain confidential within the membership.

8. Membership in *S.T.C.F.* shall terminate by voluntary transfer of membership or membership to another church. It shall also terminate by excommunication of an unruly member, according to Matthew 18:15-17.

#### H. LIMITATION OF CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the *S.T.C.F.* is limited. Voting in the corporation is limited to those individuals permitted to vote by the constitution and bylaws of the church. The general qualifications for corporate membership are a firm and consistent adherence to the Statement of Fundamental Truths of *S.T.C.F.*

In addition, the specific qualifications for corporate membership shall consist of the present and evident ability to meet the current needs of the church as perceived by the board of directors and the senior pastor.

### **ARTICLE VI - ADVISORY COUNCIL**

There shall be an advisory council made up of no less than three [3] persons and no more than 5. The council shall be made up of individuals nominated by the senior pastor/president of the corporation and confirmed by a simple majority of the board of directors. (II Timothy 3:16,17; Acts 15).

#### A. PURPOSE

The purpose of the advisory council is to:

1. Provide a spiritual covering by prayerfully giving necessary aid, comfort, instruction, guidance, protection and correction as well as counsel, wisdom and fellowship to the senior pastor/president (*II Timothy 3:16,17; Acts 15*).
2. Make themselves available to listen to complaints/accusations against the senior pastor/president of the corporation brought to them unanimously by the official board of directors excluding the senior pastor/president and to make a determination.
3. The board of directors may call the advisory council into session for the following reasons/accusations against the senior pastor/president:

- Adultery
  - Embezzlement
  - Compulsive lying
  - Sexual impurity
  - Not acting in the best interest of the church
4. The senior pastor/president may be dismissed by the advisory council for the following reasons.
- Adultery
  - Embezzlement
  - Compulsive lying
  - Sexual impurity
  - Not acting in the best interest of the church.
5. The council will determine if the senior pastor/president is guilty or innocent and whether to dismiss him/her from office. The advisory council is the only entity that has the authority to dismiss the senior pastor/president from his/her position if, after being called into session in accordance with the provisions of the article and after considering all accusations against him/her; they determine that it is the best course of action for him/her and the church. The decision of the advisory council is final.
6. In the event of death or resignation of the senior pastor/president the board of directors may exercise article IV A-3 of the bylaws or call the advisory council into session to serve in an apostolic function to seek the face of God and install a new senior pastor/president.

## B. STRUCTURE

1. The secretary of the corporation shall be present at all officially called meetings of the advisory council and shall record the proceedings. The secretary shall also create minutes of the meeting and present them to the advisory council within one week (seven days) after the meeting has come to a close.
2. Any member of the advisory council may be replaced or removed at any time deemed necessary by request of the senior pastor/president and confirmation of the board of directors of the corporation, provided that it not be after the advisory council has been called to officially meet in accordance with section 3 of this article.
3. The advisory council shall be chaired by the representative nominated by the

president and confirmed by the board of directors.

4. Future vacancies shall be nominated by the president and confirmed by the board of directors with the counsel of the remaining members of the advisory council of this corporation.

5. The representatives of the advisory council shall be made up of current or former senior pastors or other people in ministry who have or have had at least five (5) years experience and have displayed an uncompromising commitment to the Word of God.

6. A record of the current and past members of the advisory council shall be kept in a log under the custody of the official board of directors. The log shall clearly list the name of the current chairman.

7. Any successor, senior pastor/president to the founding or current senior pastor/president, shall keep the advisory council that was in existence the time he/she became senior pastor/president. He/she may, after a six month period, make nominations for replacements. He/she must follow the procedure set forth in section 2 of this article.

#### C. QUORUM

One hundred percent (100%) of the advisory council must be present to constitute a quorum. The council may only meet if it has been called to do so unanimously by the official board excluding the senior pastor/president.

#### D. DETERMINATIONS

Any action taken by the advisory council is valid by a two-thirds majority.

#### E. POWER

The advisory council shall have no innate power or authority as a legal organizational entity, except that which is invested in them by these bylaws. Their decisions, when called together in accordance with section 1 of this article, shall be final.

### **ARTICLE VII - FINANCE**

The corporation shall be financed by the freewill offerings of the members and friends of the corporation, by the established places of worship, by all other subordinate groups affiliated with *S.T.C.F.* and by fundraisers that are approved by the senior pastor/president and official board (1 Chronicles 29:6-9; 2 Chronicles. 24:10; 31:10).

### **ARTICLE VIM - GOVERNMENT**

A. OFFICERS OF THE BOARD

1. There shall be a senior pastor/president.
2. There may be an executive pastor/executive vice-president
3. There shall be a secretary.
4. There shall be a treasurer.
5. Other officers shall be added as needed.

B. OFFICIAL BOARD

The official board shall consist of the individuals, the majority of which shall serve without remuneration and not be related by blood or marriage. The senior pastor/president shall be chairman of the board and chief executive of the corporation. This paragraph cannot be amended, changed or altered, as it would be a violation of the Holy Scriptures.

C. COMMITTEES

There shall (as the occasion may demand) be operational committees appointed by the senior pastor/president to serve under the supervision of the board of directors in the capacity of expediting the work of the ministry.

D. PASTORS

In any established place of worship the senior pastor/president will appoint a pastor to govern the affairs of said place of worship. The appointed pastor will give account to the senior pastor/president of the corporation concerning every aspect of the established place of worship.

**ARTICLE IX - MEETINGS**

A. CHURCH MEETINGS

In any established place of worship, the appointed pastor will be responsible for regular church services.

B. CORPORATION MEETINGS

The corporation year shall coincide with the calendar year beginning on January 1, and running through December 31.

The senior pastor/president will call the official board meeting to discuss the direction of the corporation. The senior pastor/president shall set dates and times for board meetings. A minimum of two-thirds of the officers including the senior pastor/president shall be present for an official board meeting to exist. The board may have invited guests present at any meeting so long as the senior pastor/president has approved it.

The secretary shall keep an account of the minutes that were discussed at any board

meeting. He/she then has to submit them at the next board meeting for discussion by the official board and approval by the senior pastor/president. Upon approval by the majority of the board of directors including the senior pastor/president, the minutes shall be adopted, and all policy and procedure in them will continue to be enforced.

## **ARTICLE X - QUORUM**

Two-thirds (2/3) of the board members (including the senior pastor/president) at an official board meeting constitutes a quorum. The pastor is the only one who can call an official board meeting by notifying the board members verbally or in writing with 24 hours notice. An emergency meeting can be call anytime.

## **ARTICLE XI - MEMBERSHIP REVIEW OF CHURCH RECORDS**

### **A. REQUESTS MADE BY MEMBERS**

To ensure the trust of the membership and to also ensure that a public interest is being served, all church records, financial information and all kinds of financial transactions must always be available for membership inspection and review. Any questions by any members shall be addressed to the treasurer either in writing or by scheduled appointment.

### **B. REQUIRED PROVISIONS OF THE REQUEST**

The request must state the name of the member, the reason for the request and that the information shall in no way be made public or shared with any other member in a way that will jeopardize the church.

### **C. REQUIRED FEE**

If requested by a member of this church, a photo copy of any financial transaction in question shall be given. The member shall pay a reasonable fee of \$0.50 per copy (per sheet of paper).

### **D. CONFIDENTIALITY**

In order to keep the records of the church confidential, records shall not be released to any outside agency, person or entity unless due process has been served and a certified subpoena has been personally delivered. This includes the IRS, except under the provisions of section 7611

which shall be limited only to information deemed to be relevant to the inquiry being made. At all times the IRS will be expected to comply with all of the provisions of section 7611.

#### E. DENYING A REQUEST

The board of directors reserves the right to deny such a request for any of the following reasons:

1. The request is considered by the board of directors and deemed to be frivolous.
2. The member making the request has a history of being divisive.
3. The member does not adequately provide the required information on the request as stated in paragraph 1 of this article.
4. The person making a request is a non-member or a person whose membership was terminated.

### **ARTICLE XII - DEFINITIONS**

Presbytery: The presbytery is the board of directors.

Officers: The officers of the church are also the appointed board of directors.

### **ARTICLE XIII - AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to this constitution may be made by a 75 percent vote of the official board, including the senior pastor's/president's approval.

## **BYLAWS**

### **Of**

## **STRONG TOWER CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP**

### **ARTICLE I - ORDER**

For the purpose of conducting business, the senior pastor/president shall, in an orderly manner, preside over all of the affairs of the corporation.

### **ARTICLE II - FINANCES**

#### **A. BUDGET**

The funds for the maintenance of the corporation shall be Provided for by the freewill offerings of friends of the corporation, established places of worship, by all other subordinate groups affiliated with *S.T.C.F.* and by approved. fund-raisers. All offerings are subject to approval by the board of directors as provided in the Holy Scriptures. If approved, an offering shall be passed on to the treasurer for deposit in the corporation's treasury.

#### **B. AUDIT**

An internal audit shall be completed by the treasurer and/or other board appointed person. This audit of all financial records shall be made after the close of the calendar year, prior to the end of February.

#### **C. WITHDRAWALS**

The treasurer, senior pastor and /or designated board member shall make all withdrawals from the regular corporation treasury.

#### **D. SALARIES**

The senior pastor/president shall be given a regular and reasonable salary as determined by agreement of the official board. His/her salary shall be reviewed each year during the last meeting of the calendar year.

The salaries of all other officers and employees shall be determined by the official board of directors and the senior pastor/president.

### **ARTICLE III - PROPERTY RIGHTS**

All property, real or chattel, shall be taken, held, sold, transferred or conveyed in the corporation's name.

No real or chattel property of the corporation shall be sold, leased, mortgaged, or otherwise alienated without authorization of the senior pastor/president.

The senior pastor/president of the corporation shall certify in such conveyances, leases, or mortgages.

In the event that the corporation ceases to exist, all assets of *S.T.C.F.* shall, at the discretion of the board of directors, be given to organizations that are exempt as described in section 501(c)(3) and/or 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. The organization must be of similar purpose and also apply ARTICLE III, PARAGRAPHS 1, 2 and 4 of the constitution as essential tenets of the Christian faith.

#### **ARTICLE IV - GOVERNMENT AND OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS**

##### **A. SENIOR PASTOR/PRESIDENT**

1. **Qualifications:** The senior pastor/president shall have been saved at least five years and shall have wisdom in handling the corporation's affairs. He/she shall be of sound doctrine and good judgment. He/she must also cooperate with and listen to the sound advice given by the officers.
2. **Duties:** The senior pastor/president shall be the head of the entire corporation as provided by the Holy Scriptures. The senior pastor/president shall be chairman of the official board and preside over all corporation meetings.
3. **Manner of Appointment:** In the event that the corporation needs a new senior pastor/president due to sudden death or resignation, the executive-vice president shall automatically replace him/her.
4. **Term of Office:** The term of the senior pastor/president's office shall be for an indefinite period of time as provided by the Holy Scriptures.

##### **B. EXECUTIVE PASTOR/EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT**

1. **Qualifications:** The executive pastor/executive vice-president shall have been saved at least five years and shall have wisdom in handling the corporation's affairs if the senior pastor/president is out carrying on the work of the ministry. He/she shall be of sound doctrine and good judgment. He/she will serve as chief advisor to the senior pastor/president.
2. **Duties:** He/she will serve as the executive pastor of the corporation.
  - i. He/she shall serve on the board.
  - ii. He/she shall carry out the responsibilities that the senior pastor/president delegates to him/her.

3. Manner of Appointment: The senior pastor/president shall nominate and the board of directors shall confirm the executive pastor/executive vice-president to office.

4. Term of Office: The office of the executive pastor/executive vice-president shall be for an indefinite period of time; he/she (executive vice-president/executive pastor) is subject to dismissal if he/she violates the constitution and bylaws of *S.T.C.F.*

#### C. SECRETARY

1. Qualifications: The secretary shall be a spiritually minded person and of sound judgment.

i. He/she must be capable of recording the minutes of meetings, and of doing all the correspondence necessary in the conducting of official corporation business.

2. Duties: By virtue of his/her office, the secretary shall keep a true and accurate record of all meetings, including business meetings of the corporation. He/she shall perform clerical duties, and shall be the custodian of all legal documents.

3. Manner of Appointment: The senior pastor/president shall nominate and the board of directors shall confirm the secretary to office.

4. Term of Office: The term of office shall be for an indefinite period of time; he/she (secretary) is subject to dismissal if he/she violates the constitution and bylaws of *S.T.C.F.*

#### D. TREASURER

1. Qualifications: The treasurer shall be a spiritually minded person, and of sound business judgment. He/she shall be capable of doing the accounting required to maintain the corporation books.

2. Duties: By virtue of his/her office, the treasurer shall keep, in a business-like manner, an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements of monies committed to his/her trust, and shall make reports to be presented during the official board meetings. He/she shall deposit and make withdrawals in a manner prescribed in Article II of the bylaws.

3. Manner of Appointment: The senior pastor/president shall nominate and the board of directors shall confirm the treasurer to office.

4. Term of Office: The term of office shall be for an indefinite period of time; he/she (treasurer) is subject to dismissal if he/she violates the constitution and bylaws of *S.T.C.F.*

## E. OTHER EMPLOYEES

Employees may be hired from time to time in order to carry out the work of the ministry. The senior pastor/president must approve an employee. An employee is hired for an indefinite period of time and may be dismissed at any time by the senior pastor/president. All employees must abide by the church constitution and bylaws.

## **ARTICLE V - OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

Anything that has not been discussed in this constitution and bylaws shall be discussed and decided upon at an official board meeting.

## **ARTICLE VI - MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL**

### A. CLASSES OF MINISTERS

This church shall have four classes of ministers. Each class of minister will have distinct rights and privileges; they are listed below:

1. Commissioned Minister: This recognition is automatically given to all believers and members of this church. They are not authorized to perform any sacerdotal services, but primarily assist others in the Body of Christ. Individuals in this category may include, but are not limited to: teachers, worship leaders, instructors, hospital and jail visitation, ministerial assistance, and lay persons.
2. Chaplain: This recognition is for ministers of the gospel that are called by God and recognized by the senior pastor to minister primarily in prisons, hospitals and government agencies.
3. Licensed Minister: This recognition is given by the senior pastor of this church. This recognition is for those who are somewhat seasoned in the ministry, but need further experience. Many of these are individuals that have been working in their chosen vocation, but for some reason or another have never entered full-time ministry, or have only been in full-time ministry for less than three [3] years. Such persons are authorized to perform all sacerdotal services. However, this person is not in charge of a congregation. Limited authority is granted to run the affairs of the church.
4. Ordained Minister: This recognition is given by the senior pastor to those persons who have an "established" or "proven" ministry. Ordained ministers are authorized to perform all functions of the Christian ministry and sacerdotal services, and must be capable of doing so. He or she must be capable, as determined by the senior pastor, to take charge of a congregation.

## B. SENIOR PASTOR'S AUTHORITY

The senior pastor of this church shall have the authority to decide who, how or if a person will be licensed by this church to hold any of the four classes mentioned above (Matthew 16:13-19).

The senior pastor of this church shall by virtue of his/her office automatically be recognized as an ordained minister.

## **ARTICLE VII - LOANS**

The church shall have the authority to enter into transactions with banks, lenders and other providers of financial services to further its exempt purposes.

### LOANS AND MORTGAGES

The church must follow the guidelines set forth below in order to enter into such transactions.

1. In addition to a board approved resolution, the transaction must be approved by the pastor.
2. The church board of directors and pastor must perform their own inquiry to ensure that the loan they seek is the best one available to the church and that after meeting at arm's length, they have determined that the church can afford such transaction, including all monthly payments and any additional expenses which may be incurred.
3. The closing documents must be signed by the Senior Pastor/President and the Secretary of the Board of Directors.

## **ARTICLE VIII- PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES CLAUSE**

This church is prohibited from engaging in activities that violate our written doctrines. This church is also prohibited from promoting, condoning or permitting activities to take place in our facilities that violate our written doctrines. This church is vehemently opposed to a homosexual lifestyle as being an alternative lifestyle. Additionally, this church holds that a homosexual lifestyle is contrary to God's will and purpose for humanity. The Bible instructs that it is a sin that leads to death. Moreover, this church is instructed to love those living such lifestyles, while abhorring their sin. 1 Cor. 6:9 says the following: " Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders deceived: Neither." Lev. 20:13 says, "The penalty for homosexual acts is death to both parties. They have committed a detestable act and are guilty of a capital offense."

### A. HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGE

This church will not perform any homosexual marriages. It will not condone or recognize such marriages, even if the state passes laws that provide for recognition of such unions.

## B. MEMBERS AND HOMOSEXUALITY

Members of the church are forbidden to practice such sin. Any member found to be in such sin shall be treated according to article V, section 6 of the constitution.

### **ARTICLE IX - PRIVACY**

This church shall diligently watch to keep private all records concerning polity, doctrine, counseling and information on membership. This church must not disclose any records that may compromise information about a member's attendance, membership status, giving and counseling records. Additionally, no request shall ever be released to any government authority without due process and a valid subpoena delivered by the proper government agency.

Any church owned computer that has internet access must install and maintain filtering software to reduce the potential of harmful content being accessed.

### **ARTICLE X - CLERGY PENITENT PRIVILEGE**

All ministers who are recognized by this church according to article VI of the bylaws must follow the rules set forth below:

When a member asks to meet with a minister, the minister must ask the following questions before proceeding:

- Are you seeking to communicate with me in my capacity as a minister, in confidence, while acting in my spiritual capacity as a spiritual adviser?
- Do you intend the communication to be confidential?
- Are you seeking to confess any sins according to the discipline of this church?

Additionally, the minister must make the member aware that in order for clergy-penitent privilege to apply, all other parties must leave the room before the session may begin.

However, to prevent reproach on ministers or the church no session with the opposite sex will take place without someone else in view of session.

### **ARTICLE XI - AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to the bylaws may be made by a 75 percent vote of the official board, including the senior pastor's/president's approval.

These bylaws adopted on this day make null and void all prior addendums and these bylaws supersede and replace all previous bylaws voted on prior to this day.

Signed and certified this \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ mm 20 \_\_\_\_, to be effective immediately.

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Charlie Talamantez  
Senior Pastor/President  
*STRONG TOWER CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP*

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Eddie Dominguez  
Co-Vice President of Board of Directors  
*STRONG TOWER CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP*

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Barbara Pittman  
Secretary, Board of Directors  
*STRONG TOWER CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP*

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Fred Jurek  
Co-Vice President of Board of Directors  
*STRONG TOWER CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP*

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Bill Day  
Treasurer, Board of Directors  
*STRONG TOWER CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP*