

Bethesda Baptist Church and Schools
Brownsburg, Indiana

Governance Policy

Five Key Principles for Effective Church Governance

Guiding Principles for Pastors and Deacons

For **Bethesda Baptist Church** to move forward in the will of God, the relationship and expectations of the pastors, the Board of Deacons and the membership at large, must be open and clearly outlined.

Clarity of roles and responsibilities, communication and processes is an imperative for uniting the Church in pursuit of its vision and objectives.

February 2005

PRINCIPLE 1 – The Function of the Senior Pastor

- 1.0 The Senior Pastor is the only employee of Bethesda Baptist Church (“the Church”) having direct accountability to the Board of Deacons (“the Board”).
- 3.0 The calling of the Senior Pastor is recommended by the Pastoral Search Committee, approved by the Board, and ratified by resolution of the membership in accordance with the Church Constitution.
- 5.0 **Rationale:**
 - (a) The Senior Pastor is the under shepherd of the Church
 - (b) The Senior Pastor is the operational leader of the church.
 - (c) The Senior Pastor, in concert with the Board, sets the criteria for operational standards and policies.
 - (d) The Senior Pastor attends all Board meetings and may bring an issue to the Board, including issues that require or would benefit from the Board’s input and discussion.
 - (e) The Board provides counsel and perspective, and is a sounding-board to the Senior Pastor on strategy, direction, and policy.
 - (f) The Senior Pastor is evaluated on 1) his ability to fulfill his principle duties, as outlined in his Position Description and in the Church Constitution, and 2) on his performance in providing input to, and in carrying out the strategic plan of the church.

PRINCIPLE 2 – The Role of the Board of Deacons

- 1.0 Deacons are nominated on the basis of their wisdom and spiritual maturity. Their passion to support the church’s mission, vision, and values, and their willingness and availability to serve also influence their nomination.
- 3.0 The Board is elected as outlined in the Church’s governing bylaws. While these bylaws impose a number of requirements, the Scriptures define the primary qualifications for those who would serve as deacons.
- 5.0 **Rationale:**
 - (a) Through the consensus of its members, the Board provides input into strategies for executing the objectives of the church.
 - (b) Issues are addressed through interaction with standing committees, ad hoc committees and task forces, whose composition may include representation from the Board, individuals drawn from the general membership and through consultation with the Pastoral Staff.
 - (c) The Board takes into consideration opportunities and challenges of both the local church and the global mission field.

- (d) The Board addresses individual member issues where appropriate, and responds scripturally in light of overall church vision and objectives, and in compliance with the church constitution.
- (e) The Board operates in a manner that fosters the individual member's sense of connection with the Body.

PRINCIPLE 3 – The Function of the Board of Deacons

1.0 Deacons are servant leaders who assist the Senior Pastor in the general oversight of the Church (Acts 6:2-3), and in carrying out the vision of the Church. Concurrent with these responsibilities, Deacons are encouraged to develop avenues through which they can fulfill their personal ministries within the congregation (e.g. Sunday School teacher). Each Deacon will also have a ministry assignment from the Senior Pastor.

1.1 Except for extenuating circumstances, or by request of the Senior Pastor, the Board shall not be involved in the day-to-day operations of the church

5.0 **Rationale:**

- (a) The Board has the primary responsibility to comprehensively ensure that the present and future needs and requirements of the membership are met.
- (b) The Board has a responsibility of trust to oversee, monitor, and ensure fiscal effectiveness and legal compliance of the church, in all of its practices.
- (c) The Board has the responsibility to oversee the maintenance and enhancement of the physical assets of the church and to see that adequate insurance coverage is in place.
- (d) The Board has the responsibility to ensure continuance of the quality and appropriateness of the vision, operational leadership, strategic guidance and orthodoxy of the Senior Pastor.
- (e) The Board, in concert with the Senior Pastor, is responsible to identify concerns, which may or may not put the church at risk, and seek out recommendations to manage these effectively.
- (f) The Board, in concert with the Senior Pastor, designates and develops alliances and partnerships that will further the overall ministry objectives of the church.
- (g) The Board and its individual members are champions and advocates for the mission, vision, and values of the church.

PRINCIPLE 4 – The Accountability of the Board of Deacons

1.0 The Board is self-managing and accountable in its administrative ministry to the church and to themselves. It shall function in such a way that the values and core commitments of the Church, and their responsibilities to God are fully respected.

5.0 Rationale:

- (a) The Board leads and manages their own activities based on their role and responsibilities to the Church.
- (b) The Board structures and organizes efficiently and effectively, in order to fulfill their functional requirements.
- (c) The Board sets goals for themselves that are designed to forward the mission, vision, values, and overall ministry of the church.
- (d) The Board is responsible to evaluate their own performance as a whole and that of the individual members, using appropriate criteria, including its previously set goals as a benchmark.
- (e) The Board is responsible to develop and improve their knowledge and skills, and each member is responsible to deepen his personal walk with God, in order that the needs of the church may be better served.
- (f) The Board exists to support and serve the church and support the Senior Pastor. The Board must build communication and accountability into each major decision and action taken.
- (g) The Board shall function in such a way that the values and core commitments of the church are fully respected.

PRINCIPLE 5 – Strategic Leadership

1.0 By earnestly seeking God’s will, strategy and future directions for the ministry and vision of the church are initial drafted and put forward by the Senior Pastor and his ministry teams. The Senior Pastor works with the Board of Deacons to enhance, bless, and prepare any needed recommendations for approval by the membership.

5.0 Rationale:

- (a) The Board recognizes that the Senior Pastor and his Ministry Team have been called to the pastoral ministry. Therefore having spiritual gifts, formal training, and experience in their various specialty sectors, their expertise will be used to provide valuable input and depth to the strategic planning process.
- (b) The Board’s spiritual gifts, expertise, and experience, are applied to the strategies and future directions for the ministry, offered by the Senior Pastor, for the purpose of evaluating and enhancing their potential for effectiveness.
- (c) In evaluating the proposals offered by the Senior Pastor, the Board is responsible to evaluate and address risk management issues inherent in the implementation of those proposals.
- (d) The Senior Pastor has a responsibility to the Board to provide avenues for achieving a deeper comprehension of issues, whether potentially positive or negative in their impact upon the church.
- (e) In fulfillment of its trust responsibilities, the Board is the approving authority for future directions and strategies, and for recommending these to the membership for their approval, when required.

MINISTRY POSITIONS ELECTED BY THE CONGREGATION

DEACONS – SIX OR MORE MEN

Action:

Date:

Approved by the Deacon Board

24 February 2005

Approved by Congregational Vote

13 April 2005

Deric Bartlett

4/13/05

Jack Halsey

4/13/05

Senior Pastor

Date

Church Moderator

Date