

Membership

The membership of the Cedar Crest Bible Fellowship Church is composed of people, who through faith in Christ, have been regenerated and have given testimony of the assurance of the forgiveness of sin, have been baptized by immersion, and have committed themselves to the discipline and fellowship of the Church as set forth in the FAITH AND ORDER of the Bible Fellowship Church and the by-laws of Cedar Crest BFC.

A. ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

1. Persons requesting membership in this church shall attend an established course of instruction approved by the Board of Elders for prospective members. They shall, during the course of instruction, acknowledge confession of faith in Christ and acceptance of the FAITH AND ORDER of the Bible Fellowship Church by personal testimony and by signing the application for membership provided by the Church. The Board may waive attendance at the established course of instruction based on special instruction for persons whose circumstances prevent them from attending the regular membership course, or who have attended the instruction sessions within the previous two years. Those under the age of 16 may be received as full, active members because membership in the Kingdom of God is not determined by age. They will, however, not be allowed to vote or hold an elected Church office until they reach the age of 16
2. Applicants may also be received as members by transfer from another Bible Fellowship Church.
3. An "Active Member" is defined as a person who regularly attends the physical weekly gathering for corporate worship, serves within the church, pursues community (e.g., Life Group), ~~(if able)~~, engages with the local church body, and supports the church through faithful giving (per availability and capability; extenuating circumstances such as multiple residences, homebound, employment obligations, family obligations, etc. all considered and understood).

B. MEMBERS IN VOCATIONAL CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

We gladly recognize that God will call members of our congregation into full time Christian service which will necessitate their moving out of our local area. Because they are a part of our Church family and will remain in a special relationship with us as their home church (exercising care for them and authority over them), it is good to retain a formal relationship while yet recognizing their change in status and responsibilities. Upon the call of an individual or family of active members to full time service, they shall be classified as Members in Vocational Christian Ministry. They shall only have voting privileges during times of recognized home ministry, or if their ministry allows them to live locally and regularly attend the stated services of the Cedar Crest Bible Fellowship Church

C. ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

Any friends who worship with this church regularly, are members of another church, and because of distance are not able to participate in the life of their home church, but wish to retain membership in their home church; or members of our own church who find it necessary to be away for a prolonged period of time, may become Associate Members, and enjoy all the privileges of membership, except that they will not be able to vote or hold an elected church office. Qualifications for Associate Membership will be the same as for regular membership. Such members shall render to the church as many of the duties of the active member as they are able to perform.

D. INACTIVE

Members who absent themselves for ~~6 months~~ 3 months without legitimate excuses and without showing any interest by communicating with the church shall be placed on an Inactive Membership roll. The Elders shall define the term "legitimate excuse" in every case. Inactive members are not eligible to ~~speak or vote~~ in "members only" meetings or hold an elected church office. Any member against whom such action is taken, shall be informed of that action, and may be reinstated as an active member upon their faithful attendance to the stated services for 3 consecutive months, their written request to the Membership and Baptism Committee, and an interview by the Membership Committee.

E. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership in this church may terminate in any of the following ways:

1. By death.
2. By transfer to another Bible Fellowship Church. At his request, the Board may remove a member's name from this church roll and may forward a letter of transfer to a designated Bible Fellowship Church with which he is uniting. A letter of transfer will not be issued to an unspecified church.
- ~~3. By transfer to another evangelical church. At his request, the Board may remove a member's name from this church roll and may forward a letter of transfer to a designated evangelical church with which he is uniting. A letter of transfer will not be issued to an unspecified church.~~
4. By withdrawal. At their request, a member may have their name removed from Cedar Crest Bible Fellowship Church's roll. If he desires, a letter of withdrawal may be sent to a non-Bible Fellowship Church with which he is uniting. **Members may not withdraw their membership while in the disciplinary process.**
5. By exclusion. Should a member become an offense to the church and its good name, the church may terminate his membership, but only after faithful efforts have been made to bring such member to repentance and correction as indicated under "Discipline."
- ~~6. By absenting themselves from attendance at Cedar Crest Bible Fellowship Church for one year and a By failure to respond to Elder contact for the six months~~ **By failure to respond to the church 3 months after becoming "Inactive."**

F. DISCIPLINE

~~The Scripture warns that false teachers and other disruptive persons will enter the Church and admonishes the Church to exercise discipline over those who threaten the peace and purity of the fellowship.~~ Scripture is clear that each church will endure false teaching, divisions, quarreling, and the habitual sin of unrepentant members. Jesus Christ, the head of His Church, has promised to exercise His discipline on those who would possess His name yet live contrary to it. He has entrusted His church and empowered them through His Spirit to be intentional, careful, and diligent in exercising discipline with those who would threaten the purity and unity of His Church. Therefore, Cedar Crest BFC has sought to lay out a biblical and intentional process for church discipline.

*All principles, processes, and applications are derived from Matt. 16:15-20; 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 11:28-32; 2 Cor. 2:5-11; 1 Tim. 5:19-21; Rev. 2:20-23; 3:19-20

1. The definition of discipline

- a. There are two types of discipline, proactive and reactive. Proactive discipline is the practice of the means of grace amongst the local church to build everyone up in love towards maturity, holiness, and habitual repentance from sin to preserve the faith of all (Heb. 10:19-25). Reactive discipline is the response of the local church to a member who is living in unconfessed and unrepentant habitual sin.

2. The basis for discipline

- a. The authority of Jesus Christ
 - i. Jesus owns the church (Matt. 16:18, Eph. 1:22)
 - ii. Jesus entrusted his authority to the church (Matt. 16:19; 18:18, Eph. 4:11-14)
 - iii. Jesus exercises his judgment through the church (Matt. 18:20; 1 Cor. 5:4, Ps 15:1-2)
- b. The purposes of Jesus Christ
 - i. The holiness of His church (2 Cor. 7:1; Heb. 12:4)
 - ii. The repentance of His church (1 Pet. 1:14-16)
 - iii. The presentation of His church as pure (Eph. 5:26-27)

3. The purposes of discipline are:

- a. To uphold the glory of God and the name of Christ in the world
- b. To restore the offending member to fellowship with the Lord and His people.
- c. To preserve the peace and purity of the Church.
- d. To protect younger or weaker members of the Church from spiritual harm.
- e. To maintain the testimony of the Church.

4. The causes of discipline: *Any habitual sin that is not confessed, repented of, and forsaken. This is not to say that we do not expect believers to struggle against sin and sometimes fail. The issue is not that we discipline an unsuccessful struggle against a recognized sin, but that we give serious concern to a rationalization of behavior which excuses the practice of sin. Categories of note are:*

- a. The denial of any foundational doctrine of the Christian Faith (e.g., the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, Justification by faith alone in Christ alone, the resurrection of Christ, the virgin birth, etc.)
 - b. The ~~introduction~~ **propagation** of heretical or doctrinally divisive issues which threaten the unity of the fellowship. (Gal. 1:8-9; Tit. 1:1:9-14; Rev. 2:14-16)
 - c. The causing of **relational** ~~earnal~~ divisions within the Body which threaten the unity of the fellowship. (e.g., gossip, slander, lying, malice, envy, bitterness, unforgiveness, etc.) (Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 1:10-13, Jude 18-19, Romans 2:6-8)
 - d. **Public and private sinful practices and/or** disorderly conduct which threatens to damage other members of the Church or to bring scandal upon the name of Christ and His Church. (e.g., lust, sexual immorality, pornography use, behaving in a way contrary to God's created order and purpose [e.g., homosexual behavior and gender dishonesty], drunkenness, illegal drug use, outbursts of anger, violence, abuse, insubordination to authority, idleness, dishonest practices, crudeness, etc.)
 - e. ~~Sinful practices which will not be acknowledged, confessed, repented of and forsaken as sin. This is not saying that we do not expect believers to struggle against sin and sometimes fail. The issue is not that we discipline an unsuccessful struggle against a recognized sin, but that we give serious concern to a rationalization of behavior which excuses the practice of sin.~~
5. **The procedure in discipline:**

Where there appears to be cause for disciplinary action against a member of the Church, **the Board of Elders shall oversee the process, following** Biblical principles as outlined in Scripture (e.g., Matthew 5:23,24, 18:15-20; Galatians 6:1-5) **primarily, as well as the Board of Elders approved "Disciplinary Process."** ~~shall be followed.~~

6. **Restoration to fellowship:**

In most cases, the Church shall reinstate a previously disciplined member upon his request and expression of repentance and satisfactory evidence that he has made the necessary correction. **There may be situations where the Board of Elders may determine that it is unwise to welcome an offender back as a member. The Board of Elders will guide this process in accordance with the current "Disciplinary Process."**