

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

Every church needs a means by which it conducts its business and relates to its membership and the community at large. The constitution and bylaws are the means, which declare the cooperatively held truths and the rules for dealing with the issues that face the church.

The **constitution** may include, but is not limited to, the following items:

1. A preamble, which declares the purposes of the constitution.
2. The official name of the church which may be used for business and legal purposes.
3. A statement of the purposes and objectives of the church.
4. A declaration of the basic doctrinal beliefs of the church.
5. The church covenant.
6. A statement of polity and relationships.

The **bylaws** are the practical guidelines which a church uses to deal with internal matters and its dealings with others. Bylaws focus on procedures that may change more often than the constitution. The bylaws give direction to the following items:

1. Conducting the business of the church.
2. The manner of receiving and disciplining members.
3. Terminating employees.
4. Committees and their responsibilities.
5. Church officers, their election and terms of service.
6. The organizational description of the church, its leadership and relationships.
7. Calling the pastor and staff

NOTE: Churches should check any sample document with an attorney in their respective state.