



FELLOWSHIP HANDBOOK

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Introduction

In order to become a member of this Fellowship, you must already be a member of God's Church. This is the highest calling that anyone can have and demands a life worthy of that calling. God calls us to holiness and that is what we should be striving towards.

Whilst realising that none of us will be perfect until we go to be with the Lord, being a member of a local fellowship still requires certain standards in the way that we live. All the members of this Fellowship are expected to strive and encourage each other towards Christian maturity. This is not to be taken lightly and we trust that all who desire to be members here, desire primarily, to be more like Jesus.

In becoming a member of this Fellowship you are committing yourself to the rest of the members and they in turn are committing themselves to you. As Christians God never intended us to be isolated, but part of a chosen people, the family of God. We welcome you to this part of that family.

Name Of Fellowship

The name of the Fellowship is to be **KOINONIA Evangelical Church**.

Mission Statement

In being part of the one true Church, our aim is to glorify God by being Christ centred, Bible based, Spirit empowered and mission orientated.

We commit ourselves to worship God, love one another and serve the world through positive Christian witness and practical Christian service.

We desire to follow our Lord's commission to make disciples and to encourage all God's people to grow in Christian maturity.

Statement Of Faith

The following Statement Of Faith has been adopted from the Fellowship Of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC).

- **God**

There is one God, who exists eternally in three distinct but equal persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. God is unchangeable in His holiness, justice, wisdom and love. He is the Almighty Creator, Saviour and Judge who sustains and governs all the things according to His sovereign will for His own glory.

- **The Bible**

God has revealed Himself in the Bible, which consists of the Old and New Testaments alone. Every word was inspired by God through human authors, so that the Bible as originally given is in its entirety the Word of God, without error and fully reliable in fact and doctrine. The Bible alone speaks with final authority and is always sufficient for all matters of belief and practice.

- **The Human Race**

All men and women, being created in the image of God, have inherent and equal dignity and worth. Their greatest purpose is to obey, worship and love God. As a result of the fall of our first parents, every aspect of human nature has been corrupted and all men and women are without spiritual life, guilty sinners and hostile to God. Every person is therefore under just condemnation of God and needs to be born again, forgiven and reconciled to God in order to know and please Him.

- **The Lord Jesus Christ**

The Lord Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin and lived a sinless life in obedience to the Father. He taught with authority and all His words are true. On the cross He died in the place of sinners, bearing God's punishment for their sin, redeeming them by His blood. He rose from the dead and in His resurrection body ascended into heaven where he is exalted as Lord of all. He intercedes for His people

in the presence of the Father.

- **Salvation**
Salvation is entirely a work of God's grace and cannot be earned or deserved. It has been accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ and is offered to all in the Gospel. God in His love forgives sinners whom He calls, granting them repentance and faith. All who believe in Christ are justified by faith alone, adopted into the family of God and receive eternal life.
- **The Holy Spirit**
The Holy Spirit has been sent from heaven to glorify Christ and to apply His work of salvation. He convicts sinners, imparts spiritual life and gives a true understanding of the Scriptures. He indwells all believers, brings assurance of salvation and produces increasing likeness to Christ. He builds up the Church and empowers its members for worship, service and mission.
- **The Church**
The universal Church is the body of which Christ is the head and to which all who are saved belong. It is made visible in local churches, where the congregations of believers are committed to each other for the worship of God, the preaching of the Word, the administering of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, for pastoral care and discipline and for evangelism. The unity of the body is expressed within and between churches by mutual love, care and encouragement. True fellowship between churches exists only where they are faithful to the Gospel.
- **Baptism And The Lord's Supper**
Baptism and the Lord's Supper have been given to the churches by Christ as visible signs of the Gospel. Baptism is a symbol of union with Christ and entry into His Church but does not impart spiritual life. The Lord's Supper is a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice offered once for all and involves no change in the bread and wine. All its blessings are received by faith.
- **The Future**
The Lord Jesus Christ will return in glory. He will raise the dead and judge the world in righteousness. The wicked will be sent to eternal punishment and the righteous will be welcomed into a life of eternal joy and fellowship with God. God will make all things new and will be glorified forever.

Doctrinal Stance

The following details the stance of the Fellowship in regard to certain doctrinal issues. Whilst agreement with this stance is not a requirement for membership it is a requirement for anyone with any leadership or paid role within the Fellowship.

- **Creation and Evolution**
God created the heavens and the earth, including all life, by direct act in six literal days as clearly detailed in the Scriptures (Gen 1:1; John 1:3; Col 1:16-17). Man was created by God directly and in His image; consequently man did not evolve from lower forms of life (Gen 1:26-27).
- **Marriage and Homosexuality**
God created mankind male and female and from the beginning, ordained marriage as a natural relationship of life. It is an agreement between one man and one woman only, in which the parties covenant with each other that they will live together in mutual love and faithfulness. Homosexual relationships are not permitted by God and are contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture (Lev 18:22, Rom 1:24-26, 1 Cor 6:9).

Affiliations

The fellowship, although independent of any denominational allegiance, is to be affiliated to the **Fellowship Of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC)**.

Organisational Structure

The organisational structure of the Fellowship will be made up of Elders, Deacons and church officers.

⇒ **Elders** - The Elders are entrusted with the Spiritual oversight and leadership of the Fellowship and are responsible, under God, for the ministry to the Fellowship. They are to be men worthy of the office who meet the qualifications as laid down in Scripture.

Elders are to be appointed by the Fellowship on the recommendation of the serving Elders. If for any reason there are no serving Elders then it will be the responsibility of the Management Team in consultation with the Charity Trustees to recommend suitable candidates to the Fellowship. To be accepted as an Elder the candidate must obtain two thirds of the votes of those present at the meeting.

There is no specific period of service although they should, if possible, take a Sabbatical every seventh year after which they may or may not be re-appointed.

⇒ **Deacons** - The Deacons are entrusted with the practical welfare of the Fellowship. They are to be men worthy of the office who meet the qualifications laid down in Scripture. There is no set number of deacons but they may be appointed for particular roles as they arise within the requirements of the Fellowship. The roles in question should be identified by the Elders.

Deacons are to be appointed by the Fellowship after nomination from within the Fellowship. Nominations, with the consent of the person involved, must be submitted to the Secretary, in writing, signed by two members, at least two Sundays before a business meeting.

To be accepted as a Deacon the candidate must obtain two thirds of the votes of those present at the meeting.

A Deacon may serve for three years before standing down, he may however be nominated for re-election. After serving two consecutive periods a deacon should have a Sabbatical year free from office unless this is considered detrimental to the running of the Fellowship. After this Sabbatical period he may stand for office again.

⇒ **Church Officers** – The roles of Secretary and Treasurer shall be regarded as Church Officers. The incumbents would normally be expected to serve in the same roles as Trustees in respect of the Fellowship's charitable status.

The Fellowship may appoint full or part-time, paid leaders as appropriate. Paid employment can be terminated by the Fellowship or the individual in accordance with the terms of the individual contract.

All Elders, Deacons, church officers and any paid workers must be members of the Fellowship who have undergone Believers Baptism and they must hold to the Fellowship's doctrinal and ethical basis as detailed in the [Statement of Faith](#) and [Doctrinal Stance](#).

Church Management Meetings

Church management meetings involving the Elders, Deacons and church officers should take place

at least bi-monthly. Other meetings may be called as necessary and other people may be invited to attend as required.

Membership

Membership will be open to all who profess repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and whose lives bear witness of their Christian profession.

To be accepted as members, individuals would normally be expected to have witnessed to their faith through being baptised as believers. However, in exceptional circumstances, where there is clear evidence of Christian conversion and an individual has genuine reasons for not having been through the waters of baptism as a believer, they may be put forward for membership with the express approval of the eldership. In such cases the individuals concerned would be asked to earnestly consider their position in the light of the New Testament teaching on baptism. This policy on membership in no way lessens the commitment of the Fellowship to the Scriptural teaching of believers' baptism.

All those applying for membership will be expected to have read and agreed to the Fellowship's Statement of Faith and rules.

After a request for membership the Fellowship as a whole will be notified. Following this notification there will be a three month period during which the Fellowship will be encouraged to get to know the applicant better. During this time the applicant is to be visited by the elders, or two people nominated by the elders, in order to bring a formal recommendation to the Fellowship at the next business meeting. Applications will only be brought before the membership for voting on if they have the approval of the eldership.

If accepted, new members will be formally welcomed into the Fellowship at the next convenient Sunday service.

Applications for transfer from other Fellowships is to be dealt with in the same way as any other request for membership. However, a reference may be sought from the other Fellowship in these cases.

A Members Roll is to be kept and revised on a regular basis.

Non-Voting Membership Roll

In the event of a member moving away and not transferring membership they will automatically be placed on a non-voting membership roll. Their membership will be maintained but they will no longer be eligible to vote. If they return to regular worship with the Fellowship they will be removed from the non-voting roll.

In the event of a member failing to attend the Fellowship without good reason for a period of 6 months they will be automatically placed on the non-voting roll. The Elders will follow up the matter and recommend any further action.

Church Discipline

All members of the Fellowship are expected to live lives worthy of their high calling. All matters of discipline are to be overseen by the Elders in accordance with Scriptural teaching.

Gifts

God provides His people with the gifts needed to carry out His work. It is the responsibility of all members to use the gifts that they have been given to serve God within the Fellowship.

It is the responsibility of the Elders to recognise and encourage the correct use of gifts within the Fellowship, to ensure that they are used appropriately.

Ordinances

⇒ **Baptism** - The ordinance of Believer's Baptism, by immersion, is open to all those who profess repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and wish to obey His command and follow His example. Believer's Baptism is encouraged through the teaching of the Fellowship and is normally expected of members.

⇒ **The Lords Supper** - The ordinance of the Lord's Supper is open to all those who profess repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and are at peace with their fellow believers. Partaking in the Lord's Supper is encouraged through the teaching of the Fellowship and is normally expected of members.

Business Meetings

The Fellowship shall meet for the transaction of business at least once a quarter. Notice of the meeting is to be given on the two Sundays preceding the date of the meeting.

Special Business meetings may be called at the discretion of the Elders or at the request of three or more church members. Such a request should be in writing to the Secretary and signed by all the requesting church members.

An annual general meeting is to be held during which the accounts, suitably audited in line with current legislation, are to be presented to the Fellowship.

Members over the age of 16 are entitled to vote at meetings, which are to be held in accordance with such rules as ordinarily govern the conduct of public meetings.

In order for business to be conducted a quorum of members must be present. A quorum will consist of 30% of the current membership.

Fellowship Meetings

In addition to normal business meetings, Fellowship meetings may be called at the discretion of the Elders. These meetings may include the wider fellowship of believers rather than just the membership and should be seen as a forum for promoting discussion amongst the Fellowship as a whole.

These meetings will **not** make any decisions in respect of the Fellowship.

Organisations Within The Fellowship

All leaders of organisations are to be members and must be appointed by the Fellowship.

Helpers may be appointed by the organisation's leaders with the approval of the Elders. These helpers need not necessarily be members.

All organisations must be approved by the whole Fellowship and submit to the authority of the leadership. If appropriate they shall submit annual accounts to the treasurer for audit.

Alteration Of Rules

The rules of the Fellowship are to be given to each member and prospective members. They may only be altered at the Annual General meeting or a meeting called specifically for that purpose. In order to change any rules a majority of two thirds of the members present must vote for the change.

Responsibilities Of Members

- ⇒ To meet for worship and fellowship with God's people each Sunday.
- ⇒ To endeavour to be a constant and faithful witness to Jesus Christ.
- ⇒ To share in fellowship, prayer and Bible study with other members of the Fellowship, outside of Sunday services.
- ⇒ To be active in Christian service using whatever gifts God has given.
- ⇒ To contribute financially to the Fellowship in a systematic way.
- ⇒ To uphold the Fellowship and especially the leaders in regular prayer.
- ⇒ To take an active interest in the wider work and witness of the Church in this land and overseas.

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