



## **PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES DOCUMENT**

This document contains the organizational and operating guidelines for Hill Country Bible Church Georgetown. It is intended to be a dynamic document and will likely be revised as the church grows and takes on a greater scope of ministry. Revisions will be made according to section VI. below.

### **I. GOVERNMENT**

Scripture provides general principles, which serve as guidelines for church leadership. These scriptural guidelines form the basis of Hill Country Bible Church Georgetown's philosophy of government as follows: (Acts 6:3, 14:23, Col. 1:18, I Tim. 3:1-7, 5:17, Titus 1:5-9, Heb. 13:7, 17).

#### **A. Christ (Col. 1:18)**

Christ is the source of all the Church is and does. Christ is the leader of the Church. His glory is to be the objective of every act, function, and motive of the Body, both individually and corporately. (I Cor. 10:31)

Christ has provided His direction, commands, counsel, and purpose in the Bible. (II Tim. 3:16, 17)

The Body is to conform to His Word, carrying out His will to His glory. That is the Church's reason for being. (Col. 3:15-17)

#### **B. Elders**

Hill Country Bible Church Georgetown is an elder-led church. As overseers, the elders are responsible for the spiritual health of the church. They are to glorify Christ by serving according to the biblical principles. The elders establish the strategic vision, guidelines, and policies for the church and work with the Senior Pastor and church staff and volunteers to implement. The elders then review and give feedback to the Senior Pastor as it pertains to the fulfillment of our vision, purpose, and mission. The elders have final responsibility for the conduct of all church business. The elders are to lead by example and are accountable to Christ for their efforts. (Heb. 13:17, Acts 20:24,28)

##### **1. Qualifications**

The qualifications for an elder are set forth in the scriptural passages I Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:1-9, and I Peter 5:1-4. An elder is to be self-controlled, hospitable, able to teach, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money, not a recent convert. He must have a good reputation with outsiders, not be overbearing or quick-tempered, loves what is good, be upright, holy, disciplined, above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, respectable, not given to drunkenness, manages his own family well, sees that his children obey him, does not pursue dishonest gain, and keeps hold of deep truths. An elder demonstrates through leadership a

commitment to the purposes, vision and the core values of the church. Elders must be members of Hill Country Bible Church Georgetown.

2. **Selection**

In order for a man to serve as an elder, he must first be approved by a vote of the elders, followed by a vote of the membership assembled at a duly called congregational meeting to confirm. Except for the Senior Pastor, current staff members and their immediate family will not be eligible for elder nomination.

3. **Number and Term**

There will be a maximum of seven elders at any time. Each man will serve for a four-year term. The collective body of elders makes up the Elder Board. With the agreement of said elder, the Elder Board may extend an elder's term one year by majority vote, not to exceed five consecutive years. Upon conclusion of his term, he must function in a non-elder role for at least one year before becoming eligible for eldership again. A man filling an unexpired term of two years or less may be eligible to waive this one year at the end of his term and serve an additional term subject to the above prescribed selection process. The Senior Pastor serves as a perpetual elder and is one of the seven. The elders shall annually select a chairman to direct elder and congregational meetings. In the absence of the chairman, the elders will select an interim chairman.

4. **Replacement**

A vacancy created by a departing elder may be filled in accordance with B.2 above. The new elder will complete the departing elder's term.

5. **Dismissal**

An elder may be dismissed for not fulfilling the responsibilities and/or qualifications of the role. Dismissal is the responsibility of the elders and is accomplished by an Elder Board vote. See III A. However, this dismissal rule does not apply to the Senior Pastor. Dismissal of the Senior Pastor is defined in III B.

C. **Senior Pastor**

1. **Selection**

The Senior Pastor will be recruited by the Elder Board or their delegates and hired by the Elder Board with the approval of the voting membership (see III B).

2. **Role**

The Senior Pastor is the spiritual leader of the church who preaches, trains, encourages the church, and does the work of an evangelist. His responsibility is to mature the church through insightful and accurate

presentation and proclamation of God's Word, stressing both the understanding and application of divine truths and principles. He is to provide visionary leadership to advance the mission, vision, values, and statement of beliefs of Hill Country Bible Church Georgetown. He serves as the permanent member of the Elder Board while leading and collaborating with the Executive and Teaching teams. He will lead to see life change and growing impact in the city and beyond. He is accountable to the elders for the discharge of his ministry. He must be a member of Hill Country Bible Church Georgetown. (I Tim. 4:11-13, 15, 16; Eph. 4:11, 12; II Tim. 3:16, 17, 4:2-4; Matt. 5:13)

3. **Performance and Compensation**

The Elder Board reviews the Senior Pastor's performance and establishes his salary and benefits annually.

4. **Dismissal**

A Senior Pastor may be dismissed upon a majority vote of the Elder Board and confirmed by the congregation (See III B) for not fulfilling his role, duties, erring from Hill Country Bible Church's statement of beliefs, or for moral turpitude.

D. **Pastors or Directors**

1. **Role**

Pastors or Directors are hired to oversee a particular area of ministry (children, youth, worship, small groups, etc) based on their unique skill set, passion, and expertise. The title Pastor is conveyed upon those who have been officially ordained, whereas the title Director are those who have not been ordained. Pastors and Directors are responsible for carrying out the overarching vision of the church within their realm of ministry. They oversee volunteers and, in some cases, other church employees. They are authorized to make practical decisions regarding the implementation of the vision, purpose, and mission within their realm of ministry. They are responsible for their ministry budget.

2. **Performance and Financial Review**

The performance of Pastors and Directors will be reviewed on at least an annual basis by the Senior Pastor, Executive Pastor, or his delegates.

3. **Compensation**

Salary and benefit plan modifications are established by the Elder Board. The Elder Board will be in unanimous agreement on all offers of employment or termination for Pastors and Directors other than the Senior Pastor which is covered under III B

E. **Deacons**

At the discretion of the elders, deacons may be appointed to assist the elders in the discharge of the church ministry. Deacons are delegated the authority for the execution of ministry. Each deacon is appointed annually by the elders for a specific area of service. Deacons must be members of Hill Country Bible Church Georgetown and exhibit qualifications found in I Tim. 3:8-13.

F. **Staff**

1. **Definition**

Staff members are defined as paid employees of the church, whether full or part time.

2. **Senior Pastor**

The Senior Pastor will be recruited and hired by the elders with the approval of the voting membership. His salary and benefits will be established by the elders and reviewed annually.

3. **Church Staff (other than Senior Pastor)**

Church staff may be recruited by the Senior Pastor or the elder board. Their salaries and benefits are established by the elders.

4. **Performance Review**

The performance of staff members will be reviewed on at least an annual basis. The Senior Pastor or Executive Pastor is responsible for church staff reviews. The elders review the Senior Pastor.

II. **Membership**

A. **Qualifications**

Membership in Hill Country Bible Church Georgetown is open to all who testify to at least two elders or one elder and one deacon, pastor, or former elder of their salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, agree with both the Purpose and Doctrinal Statements of the church, and sign the Membership Covenant.

B. **Expectations**

Members of Hill Country Bible Church Georgetown are expected to support their church by participation in worship, a small group, and giving of their time, talents, and treasures to the accomplishment of the purposes of the church. The signing of the Membership Covenant indicates this support. Members should take seriously the Great Commission and the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19-20; II Cor. 9:7, Heb. 10:25, John 13:35)

C. **Term**

Membership is permanent unless one of the following occurs:

1. The member asks to be dropped from the membership roll.
2. The member is not in attendance at the church worship services for a period of six months or more.
3. At the discretion of the Elder Board, a member may be dismissed due to action, behavior, or speech in opposition to the expectations as outlined in II B, Purpose or Doctrinal Statements of Hill Country Bible Church Georgetown.

D. **Dismissal**

The dismissal process for any member of Hill Country Bible Church Georgetown must follow the pattern established by the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 18:15-17. If the member refuses to repent and seek restoration of fellowship, as determined by the elders, that person's membership is terminated.

E. **Reinstatement**

A former member in good standing can be reinstated to membership following an interview with at least two elders and a one-month period of regular attendance.

A dismissed member will be reinstated by repenting and seeking restored fellowship with the Elder Board and then, if deemed appropriate by the elders, with the church assembled.

III. **Voting**

A. **Elder Board**

Voting shall be by simple majority of the entire board, yet a unanimous vote is preferred. Exceptions are: voting on major indebtedness, the purchase or long-term leases of real or other property, and the selection or dismissal of elders and amendments to this document, amendments to the doctrinal statement, and calling an emergency congregational meeting. These exceptions shall be approved with no more than one dissenting elder vote.

B. **Members**

Voting by the membership is required for the following: hiring or terminating a Senior Pastor, the purchase of real property, lease agreements of over 60 months, and the appointment of elders. In these cases, approval of 2/3 of the votes cast is required.

#### **IV. Congregational Meetings**

##### **A. Annual Meeting**

In order to effectively communicate major issues and decisions, an annual congregational meeting will be scheduled in January.

##### **B. Agenda**

An Agenda will be prepared and distributed to the congregation the Sunday prior to that meeting date. Agenda items submitted by a voting member(s) will be placed on the agenda at the discretion of the elders. Agendas for meetings called by the voting members will be part of the petition calling the meeting. In case of emergencies, the requirement for distribution of agendas may be waived.

##### **C. Special Meetings**

A congregational meeting may be called by petition of 10% of the voting membership of the Church. Special meetings may be called by the elders as required.

##### **D. Announcement**

Except in extreme emergencies, congregational meetings will be announced in the church bulletin two Sundays in advance of the meeting date.

##### **E. Quorum**

The voting members present at a duly called congregational meeting will constitute a quorum.

##### **F. Attendance**

Congregational meetings are generally open to regular attenders and members alike; however, voting is limited to members 18 years of age or older.

#### **V. Church Plant Relationships**

Churches planted by Hill Country Bible Church Georgetown will operate under the authority of the Hill Country Bible Church Georgetown Elder Board until such time as they are deemed to be viable to operate on their own authority. Such viability will be determined at the discretion of the Elder Board.

#### **VI. Amendments and Revisions to these Practices**

Amendments and revisions to these Practices must be presented to the congregation at least one week prior to a congregational meeting and approved in accordance to paragraph III B.

## Revision Tracking

<b>Date</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Person</b>
21-Oct-2024	Updated draft from original – elder board approved	Bobby Cox, David Shiramizu, David Uechi, Don Wallace, Eric DeJong
17-Nov-2024	Congregational approval	Approved