Explanation of Proposed Chatham Bible Church Constitutional Revisions
Proposed May, 2011

Introduction

A revision of the constitution at this time was made necessary by the addition of the Deacon of Men's Ministries. As we contemplated this change, the elders discerned that the time had come to make these other revisions as well. Below is a summary explanation of the more significant changes. Other minor changes have been incorporated and are easy to follow as the proposed revised constitution is read.

Rewording:

Some of the revisions are just rewording to better reflect the nature and practice of the body at Chatham. Examples are the deletion of the word "board" and replacing with "council" when referring to the elders as a group. This is because the elders do not function as a corporate board of directors but as a council of men charged with leading God's people according to His will.

Removals & Deletions:

The paragraph titled "Prayer at Meetings" has been removed. We believe that prayer is an essential priority in everything we do as individuals, and in the life of the body. However, we also want to be careful not to view prayer in a legalistic way. The insistence that every meeting be opened and closed in prayer could be viewed as such, so the elders believe that it is best to remove this sentence as "law," while at the same time encouraging the body to "pray without ceasing" (I Thess. 5:17).

Regarding the annual business meeting, the statement, "…a review and acceptance of the minutes of the previous annual meeting," has been removed. This was done to reflect our current process of publishing the minutes immediately following the annual business meeting and allowing for comments from those attending the meeting to provide any corrections to the minutes.

The requirement that <u>all</u> elder decisions be made by majority vote was removed and replaced with a description of how the elders, being of the same mind, make decisions by coming together in agreement. Some decisions do require the elders to vote and those cases are noted. Also eliminated is the requirement to delay for six months the voting capacity of an associate pastor who has been approved to serve as an elder. The subjective causes of dismissing the Pastor on the grounds of improper conduct (now replaced with unrepentant sin) and the evidence that the Lord is no longer blessing his ministry have also been eliminated.

Reorganization:

The section on church government was unnecessarily complex and this section has been reorganized. Redundancy needed to be removed and procedures needed to be clarified and restated in a more logical way. This section, as you will see, is much simpler and easy to follow without the loss of any essential information. The Deacon of Discipleship position is removed, as several other ministries are already tasked with discipleship.

We believe these changes will improve our constitution and make it to be guide to Chatham Bible Church for prospective members.

Respectfully Proposed,
The Chatham Bible Church Elders
May 8, 2011