

# Pound Lane Free Church Church Constitution

This document comprises the Church  
Constitution and Basis of Faith of Pound Lane  
Free Church, 28-30 Pound Lane, ISLEHAM

ADOPTED BY  
PLFC OCT  
1991

LATEST  
VERSION  
21/02/2020



## REVISION HISTORY

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1.0	October 1991
1.1	February 1995
1.2	February 2011
2.0	AGM February 2020

## INTRODUCTION

Pound Lane Free Church is an independent, evangelical church, free from denominational association and control. It is our belief that this is in accord with New Testament teaching. Likewise, after the New Testament pattern, the church is self-governing and self-supporting and depends upon the loyal and practical service and support of its members.

It is our certain belief that the Bible is the complete inspired Word of God. This constitution is never to be seen as opposed to, or above, Scripture, but is rather our prayerfully considered application of the Word of God to the church at Pound Lane.

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## 1

## MEMBERSHIP

1.1 Church membership shall be open to all who profess repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; who assent to the Basis of Faith, and whose lives bear evidence of their Christian profession.

1.2 Any person desiring to become a member of the church shall make application to the minister or other elder. Church members will be notified and given one week to bring to the attention of the eldership any matter that they consider relevant to this application before the elders arrange for preferably two of their number to interview the applicant and report to the first possible church meeting for decision upon admission into membership.

Admission shall be made upon the recommendation of the elders, with the approval of at least 75% of those present at the meeting.

New members will be formally welcomed into the fellowship by the pastor on behalf of the church at the Lord's Table.

1.3 For the purpose of calculating the quorum percentage when calling a Pastor (sect 2.1.2), dismissing an elder (2.2.7), or dismissing a deacon

(3.1.6), only members who are present at the meeting, or have been present at at-least one out of the three most recent regular Church Members' Meetings will be included in the calculation.

- 1.4 Members of the church who move away from the district shall be expected and encouraged to seek fellowship in that locality in a church where the gospel is faithfully preached, and the doctrines of the Christian faith upheld.
- 1.5 Resignations from membership shall be made in writing to the elders. They will report the resignation to the church at the next church meeting.
- 1.6 If it should become necessary for the church to consider the withdrawal of membership through backsliding of a member, or for other reason established by Scripture, the method to be observed is that outlined by our Saviour in Matthew 18:15-20, firstly a pastoral visit to seek the cause of spiritual decline and to urge a return to the Lord Jesus followed by a second visit from two persons appointed by the eldership. If necessary, the matter will then be heard before an ordinary meeting of the church. Dismissal or suspension from membership will be made on the recommendation of the elders and with the approval of the church.

- 1.7 Where a member absences himself/herself from both Sunday services, without sufficient reason, for a consecutive period of six months, this shall be considered sufficient cause to remove that person from membership. The decision to remove a member in such circumstances shall be made on the recommendation of the elders and with the approval of the majority of members present at the church meeting.

## 2 MINISTRY

The ministry will be shared between the pastor and elders. The pastor, upon appointment, assumes the office (including the authority and responsibility) of an elder within the church. Upon termination of his pastorate, he may be invited to continue to serve as an elder within the church.

The eldership shall be responsible for the spiritual oversight of the church, but may call upon such persons as they consider suitable both from within the church, and from outside, to share in the pulpit ministry.

### 2.1 PASTOR

- 2.1.1 The pastor shall hold to and teach the doctrines contained in the Basis of Faith.

- 2.1.2 In the calling of any man (see Basis of Faith point 10) to the full or part time pastoral ministry of the church, the following procedure shall be followed:

The church shall be given opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential pastor.

The church must receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his whole-hearted commitment to the biblical doctrines we seek to uphold, and assents to the church's constitution.

The church must receive from the elders assurance that the name brought before them comes with their unanimous, unreserved recommendation, and with the support of the deacons.

The church must be given adequate time to consider the matter prayerfully before expressing its judgement at a specially convened members meeting, the quorum for which shall be 60% of the active members(see 1.3). The minister shall be elected with the approval of not less than 75% of those present.

- 2.1.3 The pastor's terms and conditions are covered in the latest version of a separate document entitled "Protection of employment of Pastor" as originally approved by the membership of this church on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2010.

## 2.2 ELDERS

2.2.1 The government of the church shall be in the charge of the elders, of whom the pastor shall be one, who shall hold to and maintain the doctrines contained in the Basis of Faith.

2.2.2 Elders other than the pastor shall be appointed from among the admitted male members (see Basis of Faith point 10) of at least one year's standing.

2.2.3 Nominations for the eldership shall be given in writing to the existing eldership by an appointed date, without the approval of the nominated person. If the elders endorse the nomination, they shall approach the nominee, explaining to him the responsibilities of the office.

He will then be given one month to prayerfully consider the matter before reporting his decision to the elders.

The names of those standing will be made known to the church members at least one month before the A.G.M. in order that they can prayerfully consider the matter.

2.2.4 Elders shall be appointed at an A.G.M. by the unanimous recommendation of the existing elders and the approval of 75% of those present at the meeting.

- 2.2.5 Elders shall serve a term of three years, during which time they shall meet together regularly to pray for, and plan, the ongoing work of the Lord in His church at Pound Lane.
- 2.2.6 Should, for any reason, the eldership require strengthening during the year, a special church meeting may be called for appointment of elders.
- 2.2.7 If it should become necessary to remove from office any elder (including the pastor) because of backsliding, or for any other reason established by Scripture, this will be done by the unanimous decision of the remaining elders and/or the decision of a special members' meeting, the quorum for which shall be 60% of the active members (see 1.3). The decision being taken by the agreement of 75% of those present.
- 2.2.8 An elder may at any time deputise for the pastor.

## 2.3 LEADERS AND TEACHERS

- 2.3.1 Each regular leader or teacher in a recognised department of the church shall be appointed by the elders subject to approval of 75% of those attending a church meeting. Only church members shall be eligible for appointment.
- 2.3.2 Before appointment of any leader, teacher, or helper to work with children or young people, the applicant

must be vetted according to the current church procedure as detailed in the church's Child Protection Policy.

## **3 AMINISTRATION**

### **3.1 DEACONS**

Deacons are to be concerned with the practical details of church life, undertaking tasks of administration, maintenance of church property, finance and the practical care of the brethren. They will draw on the membership to assist with such work under their supervision.

3.1.1 Deacons shall be appointed from among the admitted male members (see Basis of Faith point 10) of at least one year's standing.

3.1.2 Nominations for the diaconate shall be given in writing to the elders by an appointed date, without the approval of the nominated person. If the elders endorse the nomination, they shall approach the nominee, explaining to him the responsibilities of the office.

He will then be given one month to prayerfully consider the matter before reporting his decision to the elders.

The names of those standing will be made known to the church members at least one month before the

A.G.M. in order that they can prayerfully consider the matter.

- 3.1.3. Deacons shall be appointed at an A.G.M. by the unanimous recommendation of the elders and the approval of 75% of those present at the meeting.
- 3.1.4 Deacons shall serve for a term of 3 years, during which time they shall meet together regularly with the pastor and elders to pray for and plan the ongoing work of the Lord in His church at Pound Lane.
- 3.1.5 Should, for any reason, the diaconate require strengthening during the year, a special church meeting may be called for the appointment of deacons.
- 3.1.6 If it should become necessary to remove from office any deacon because of backsliding, or for any other reason established by Scripture, this will be done by the unanimous decision of the elders and/or the decision of a special members' meeting, the quorum for which shall be 60% of the active members (see 1.3). The decision being taken by the agreement of 75% of those present.

## 3.2 OFFICERS

- 3.2.1 The secretary and treasurer shall be elected annually at the A.G.M from within the church membership with the approval of 75% of those present.

### 3.3 TRUSTEES

- 3.3.1 Trustees are the legal owners of the land and premises and are listed in the minutes of the Church Meeting at which they were appointed.
- 3.3.2. The number of trustees shall be sufficient to ensure proper legal cover for the trust.
- 3.3.3 Should additional trustees be required, they will be appointed upon approval of the elders, with the support of 75% of those present at the meeting.

## 4 CHURCH MEETINGS

- 4.1 Church meetings shall be held quarterly, or otherwise as required. The A.G.M. for the appointment of elders and deacons, secretary and treasurer, shall be held as close to the start of the new year as possible.
- 4.2 Notice of any church meeting shall be given on the two preceding Sundays prior to the meeting. At the discretion of the elders an emergency meeting may be called and this rule waived.

- 4.3 A financial statement for the previous calendar year (duly audited by auditors appointed at a previous church meeting) shall be presented at the A.G.M.
- 4.4 Reports (including a financial statement for the preceding calendar year) will be provided by each department of the church in writing at least two weeks before the A.G.M. A printed copy of these reports will be given to each member at the A.G.M.
- 4.5. It is the privilege and responsibility of each church member to make every effort to attend all church meetings.
- 4.6 The business transacted at each church meeting shall be considered private and confidential.
- 4.7 Voting is used as a means of determining God's will for the church. Members are to vote accordingly and not simply to express their own personal desires. Election of the pastor, elders and deacons will always be by written vote. The number of votes cast for and against will not be published but only the outcome of the vote.

## **5 WORK OF THE CHURCH**

- 5.1 The local church is the gathering together in one place of a group of believers for worship, fellowship, and service.

- 5.2 Members may at any time present matters for consideration by the elders and deacons. When appropriate, these matters will be brought to a church meeting for open discussion.
- 5.3 Not all the work of the church can be accomplished by the elders and deacons alone. The burden of the work must, as far as possible, be shared equally by all members. The strength and effectiveness of the church is dependent upon the degree of involvement of each member of the fellowship.
- 5.4 In obedience to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), the church has an active involvement in mission worldwide. A copy of the current policy is contained in our 'Missionary Policy Statement'.
- 5.5 The church has a growing children's and young people's ministry. The church takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted to its care. These areas are covered in the church's Child Protection Policy.
- 5.6 The church has adopted, and now follows, a Disability Code of Practice in compliance with the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act.

## 6

## DUTIES OF MEMBERSHIP

6.1 In regard of duty towards one another, each member is to:

Love one another. The love which we have for each other is an outward sign of the love we have for our Lord. 1 John 4:12. It is a command of Christ. John 13:34-35

Have equal concern for each other. 1 Corinthians 12:25

Seek at all times to build each other up in the faith. Romans 14:19

Bear one another's burdens by prayerful and sympathetic interest. Galatians 6:2

Settle according to Scripture any differences that might arise between one and another. Matthew 18:15

Forgive each other and not harbour jealousies, envies, or wrongs. Colossians 3:13

Confess one's faults to each other when appropriate. James 5:16

Refrain from judging one another, knowing that true and final judgement is the prerogative of God.

Romans 14:13, Acts 17:31

Be careful that our freedom in Christ is not the means of hindering a weaker Christian. 1 Corinthians 8:13, 1 Corinthians 6:12

Restore in the spirit of meekness the one who has fallen. Galatians 6:1

Pray earnestly and consistently for one another. 1 Timothy 2:8, Romans 12:12, Colossians 4:2

6.2 In regard of duty towards the church, each member is to:-

Be as regular in attendance at the services of worship, prayer and Bible study as circumstances will allow. Hebrews 10:25. Whenever possible coming as a family.

Be punctual at all times so honouring the Lord and setting a good example to others.

Seek by prayer and consideration of the Scriptures what gift the Lord has given you for exercise in the church for the good and upbuilding of the fellowship. 1 Corinthians 12:7, 1 Corinthians 14:12

Accept the responsibility of being a witness for the Lord wherever you are from day to day. Acts 1:8

Avoid creating a division in the church by criticising others who on secondary matters act or think differently. 1 Corinthians 3:3

As much as possible, open one's home for fellowship and evangelism. 1 Peter 4:9, Hebrews 13:2

## 7 CHURCH DISCIPLINE

- 7.1 Every member is expected to recognise and submit to the spiritual authority and discipline of those over them in the Lord. In the event of a matter arising between members, this should be settled according to the principles of Matthew 18:15. If a person is caught up in any wrong doing, then it will be the task of the spiritually mature to restore such a person as in Galatians 6:1, counting him not as an enemy, but admonishing him as a brother, 2 Thessalonians 3:15. If after due warning and exhortation, no restoration is effected or repentance shown, the person shall be removed from the membership as detailed in 1.6.

## 8 GIVING

- 8.1 Christian giving is an individual matter and should be conducted in a free and joyful manner. 2 Corinthians 9:7.
- 8.2 Giving should be systematic 1 Corinthians 16:2, recognising that the work of the Lord continues

regardless of holidays or financial difficulties that we may meet.

8.3 Giving should be proportionate as the Lord has prospered us. 1 Corinthians 16:2

8.4 Christian giving is a requirement. Malachi 3:8

## 9 DEDICATION

9.1 A service of dedication shall be administered when so requested by a child's parents, this being their opportunity to publicly acknowledge the God given gift of the child. Also, together with the fellowship, to seek the Lord's help in raising the child, but the church will not be asked to make any promises that they feel unable to fulfil regarding the upbringing of the child.

9.2 The church does not recognise infant baptism or christening as having any part in salvation and accordingly will not conduct either service.

## 10 BAPTISM

The Scriptures refer frequently to the place and function of baptism. The Lord clearly commands it in Matthew 28:19, and it is seen practised in the early church Acts 2:41, 8:12, etc. It is clearly linked with repentance and faith. Belief in Christ is essential BEFORE baptism.

- 10.1 The ordinance of Believer's Baptism by immersion shall be administered to those who profess to have repented of their sins and to have put their faith in Christ for salvation.
- 10.2 Those requesting baptism shall be interviewed by the elders both to ensure that the true meaning of baptism is clearly understood and to establish a credible profession of faith.

## **11 THE LORD'S SUPPER**

It is the privilege and responsibility of all believers to meet regularly at the Lord's Table in obedience to His command and after the example of the early church, Matthew 26:20, Acts 2:42, 1 Corinthians 11:23.

- 11.1 The communion of the Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly at least once a month.
- 11.2 All believers who make creditable profession of faith, and who are walking in personal fellowship with the Lord, will be invited to partake of His Table.

## **12 STRUCTURAL ALTERATIONS**

- 12.1 Any alteration to the structure of the church (or other church property) must be jointly approved by a majority decision of a church meeting and the trustees.

## 13 MARRIAGE

Couples comprising one man and one woman (see Basis of Faith point 10), where one or both parties regularly worship at plfc, can apply to the Pastor/elders for marriage at this church. Any marriage will be dependent upon the couple's willingness to participate in a formal course in preparation for marriage, and upon their agreeing to any conditions that the eldership may impose concerning activities/behaviour at the church on the wedding day. The church retains the right to withdraw from conducting the marriage at any time that the eldership so determines.

## 14 GENERAL

13.1 Permission must be obtained from the elders before arranging any fund raising events on behalf of the church, arranging to hold any meetings on the church premises, or arranging to distribute or display any literature on the church premises.

## 15 AMENDMENTS

- 14.1 Any proposed amendment must be submitted in writing to the elders at least one month before the A.G.M.
- 14.2 Amendments to this Constitution can only be made at an A.G.M., with the approval of 75% of those present.

## 16 BASIS OF FAITH

- 1 The full inspiration of the Holy Scriptures as originally given, and of these alone; their authority and sufficiency as not only containing, but being themselves the Word of God, without error, and wholly reliable in both fact and doctrine; their authority and perpetual sufficiency in all matters of faith and practise. 1 Corinthians 2:13, 2 Timothy 3:15-17, 2 Peter 1:20-21
- 2 The unity of the Godhead and the divine co-equality of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; the Sovereignty of God in Creation, Providence and Redemption. 1 John 5:7, John 1:1, John 14:9-11, Genesis 1, Acts 17:24, Ephesians 1:3-5
- 3 The total depravity of human nature in consequence of the fall, and the necessity for regeneration. Romans 3:23, 5:12
- 4 The true and proper Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ; His virgin birth, His real and perfect manhood; the authority of His teaching; and the infallibility of all His utterances; His work of atonement for sinners of mankind by His substitutionary suffering and death; His bodily resurrection and His ascension into Heaven; and His present priestly intercession for His people at the right hand of the Father. John 1:1, Luke

1:34-35, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, Hebrews 1:3, Mark 1:27, Hebrews 4:14-16

5. The justification of the sinner solely by faith, through the atoning merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:8-9, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Hebrews 9:24-28
6. The work of the Holy Spirit as essential for a true spiritual understanding of the Scriptures; for regeneration, conversion and sanctification, and for ministry and worship. Whose presence and witness are the seal of every Child of God. John 16:7-14, Ephesians 1:13-14, 1 Peter 1:2.
7. The ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as being instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, but not in Baptism as conveying regenerating grace, neither the Lord's Supper as being a sacrifice for sin, nor involving any change in the substance of the bread and wine.
8. The personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory. Acts 1:9-11, 1 Thessalonians 4:16
9. The resurrection of the body; the judgement of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, with the blessedness of the child of God and the condemnation of the Christ rejecter being eternal. 1 Corinthians 15:12-53, 2 Corinthians 5:10, Psalm 16:11, Daniel 12:2-3,

Matthew 25:41 &46, John 3:16 &36, John 5:28-29,  
Revelation 20:15

10. The equal value of every human life as having been created in the image of God. That each person is either male or female, and that a person's gender is determined at conception and is inherently the same as their sex which cannot be changed or reassigned. Each person is called to live out their life according to their God-given sex. Genesis 1:27, 2:24-25, 1 Corinthians 11:8-12