



GraceLife
BIBLE CHURCH

TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP, CONFIDENTIALITY, AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Members may be removed from membership at their own request by informing the Elders of their intention to withdraw and the reasons thereof. If a member requests to withdraw because of specific problems or disappointments with the church, the Elders shall attempt to resolve those matters so that the member may remain in the church and enjoy greater fruitfulness and personal spiritual growth. If the Elders are unable to resolve those matters, it shall offer to assist the member in locating a church of like faith and practice that can respond more effectively to his gifts and needs. If it appears to the Elders that a member has requested removal merely to avoid church discipline, that request shall not be given effect until the disciplinary process has been properly concluded.

CONFIDENTIALITY

1. The Bible teaches that Christians should carefully guard any personal and private information that others reveal to them. Protecting confidences is a sign of Christian love and respect (Matt 7:12). It also discourages harmful gossip (Prov 16:28; 26:20), invites confession (Prov 28:13; Jam 5:16), and encourages people to seek needed counseling (Rom 15:14). Since these goals are essential to the ministry of the gospel and the work of this church, all members are expected to refrain from gossip and to respect the confidences of others. In particular, our pastor and elders shall carefully protect all information that they receive through pastoral counseling, subject to the following guidelines.
2. Although confidentiality is to be respected as much as possible, there are times when it is appropriate to reveal certain information to others. In particular, when the pastors and elders of this church believe it is biblically necessary, they may disclose confidential information to appropriate people in the following circumstances:
 - a. When a pastor or elder is uncertain of how to counsel a person about a particular problem and needs to seek advice from other pastors or elders in this church or, if the person attends another church, from the pastors or elders of that church (Prov 11:14; 13:10; 15:22; 19:20; 20:18; Matt 18:15–17);

- b. When the person who disclosed the information or any other person is in imminent danger of serious harm unless others intervene (Prov 24:11–12);
 - c. When a person refuses to repent of sin and it becomes necessary to institute disciplinary proceedings (Matt 18:15–20) or seek the assistance of individuals or agencies outside this church (Rom 13:1–5); or
 - d. When required by law to report suspected abuse.
3. Scripture commands that confidential information is to be shared with others only when a problem cannot be resolved through the efforts of a small group of people within the church (Matt 18:15–17). Therefore, except as provided in 2.a-d. above, a pastor or elder may not disclose confidential information to anyone outside this church without the approval of the Elders or the consent of the person who originally disclosed the information. The Elders may approve such disclosure only when it finds that all internal efforts to resolve a problem have been exhausted (1 Cor 6:1–8) and the problem cannot be satisfactorily resolved without the assistance of individuals or agencies outside this church (Rom 13:1–5). This limitation shall apply to but is not limited to the giving of testimony in a court of law and the reporting of abuse.
 4. The pastors and elders may, but need not, provide counselees with written notice of these confidentiality provisions, but these provisions shall be in effect regardless of whether such notice is given.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

If a dispute arises within the church or between a member and the church and cannot be resolved through the internal procedures described above, it shall be resolved as follows:

- a. The dispute shall be submitted to mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Institute for Christian Conciliation, and judgment upon an arbitration award may be entered in any court otherwise having jurisdiction.
- b. All mediators and arbitrators shall be in agreement with the *Affirmations of Faith* document of GraceLife Bible Church and our basic form of government, unless this requirement is modified or waived by all parties to the dispute. If a dispute involves an attempted revision of the *Affirmations of Faith* document or our form of government, the mediators and arbitrators shall be in agreement with those documents as they existed prior to the attempted revision.