

# **BROMLEY BAPTIST CHURCH**

## **CHURCH RULES**

Approved by the Church Meeting in March 2007

## **Membership**

1.1 Members of the Church are those who have given satisfactory evidence of conversion and are actively following the Lord Jesus Christ. New members are proposed by the Leadership (as defined in Rule 12) and reports, from appointed visitors, are received and accepted at a Church Meeting. Full membership of the Church requires believer's baptism, by immersion, except where, through disability, such a step is not possible or desirable.

1.2. A category entitled 'Commissioned Missionary Members' enables those who are working long-term elsewhere to become full members of another church while retaining their membership of this Church.

2. Associate membership fulfilling the same conditions is available to those who have not been baptised by immersion. An associate member is welcome to attend and vote at all Church Meetings, but may not be a Deacon, Elder or Pastor of the Church.

3. Where members of other churches apply for membership, or associate membership, letters of transfer or commendation will be sought. Letters of transfer or commendation will be sent for members and associate members leaving the Church family to attend other fellowships.

4. Care will be taken of all members and associate members, and a list will be kept by the Membership Secretary and reviewed, regularly, by the Pastoral Care Team and the Leadership.

5. Church discipline will be exercised by the Leadership and Church Meeting according to scriptural principles.

## **Baptism**

6. Believer's Baptism shall be celebrated whenever this is requested and the Leadership is in agreement.

## **Communion**

7. All followers of Jesus Christ will be welcome to share the bread and wine at Communion services. These will be held regularly.

## **Church Meetings**

8. A Church Meeting will normally be held once every two months and at such other times as the Church members may direct, or the Leadership considers desirable. Notification of any form of such Meeting will be made on the previous Sunday.

9. The quorum at a Church Meeting will be 10% of the membership, being the figure returned to the London Baptist Association and Baptist Union at the end of the previous calendar year.

10. Matters of importance to be considered at any Church Meeting need to be communicated to the Church Secretary, in writing, at least ten days beforehand.

11. All decisions in Church Meetings, apart from the election of a Pastor or an Elder, will be by a majority of the members present. At any meeting a request from five members present will determine that a vote will take place by secret ballot.

### **The Leadership of the Church**

12. The Leadership of the Church consists of Elders and Deacons, appointed or elected by the Church in accordance with the procedures laid down in Rules 2, 13-17, 18 and 21. The Elders of the Church shall include:

The Church Pastors appointed by the Church in accordance with Rule 21

The Elders elected by the Church in accordance with Rules 13-17

The Elders elected by the Church on a personal basis in accordance with Rule 18.

The Church may appoint in accordance with the procedure in Rule 21, a person qualified to provide pastoral leadership for the young people and children. Such a person would be designated "The Youth Pastor", would be a member of the Leadership Team of the Church, and would attend Elders' meetings by invitation. The election of this person as an Elder of the Church is possible under the normal procedures.

### **The Election of Leaders**

13. An election of Leaders (to include both Deacons and Elders) will take place every two years, to appoint leaders to keep the leadership numbers not less than ten and not more than sixteen Leaders, who will be full members of the Church, over the age of eighteen years and will have been in membership for at least six months on the closing date of nomination. Leaders will be elected for four years and should normally serve for no more than two complete terms of four years. This should be followed by a minimum two years' sabbatical period after which the leader may seek re-election. Half the leadership will normally be eligible for re-election every two years – except those who have served two full terms.

14. At a Church Meeting before the election, the Church will agree the maximum number of vacancies on the leadership. Nominations will open a month before the ballot is held. For a nomination form to be valid it will need to be signed by six members and by the nominee. Completed forms should be returned to the church office by the closing date for nominations. All those nominated will go forward for election.

15. Ballot papers containing the names of all those nominated shall be posted to church members. Completed papers may be returned by hand, post, fax, email or by other electronic means which can be received at the church building. Only ballot papers received by the closing date will be accepted. To be elected a Leader, a nominee must receive the votes of at least 50% of valid ballot papers returned.

16. In the event of a vacancy occurring between elections, the Leadership may recommend to the Church a full member to fill such vacancy.

17. As part of the ballot process, members will be able to indicate if the nominated candidate is considered suitable for Eldership. Candidates so nominated receiving 66% of the ballot papers of those voting will be eligible for the Eldership. At the first meeting of the newly elected Leadership a list drawn from all those who achieved the required percentage, and who are willing to serve as Elders, will be compiled. These names will be put to the next Church Meeting for ratification.

### **The Election of Additional Elders**

18. The Leadership may at any time make nominations to the Church for additional Elders from among the full members of the Church. A majority of at least two thirds shall be required of the members voting for the nominees to be elected. There will not normally be more than two such additional Elders in the Leadership at any one time. These Elders will serve until the Leaders' election due after a period of between two and four years' service and will then be eligible for re-election either by this same procedure or by the procedure in Rule 17.

### **Church Secretary and Treasurer**

19. The Church Secretary and Church Treasurer or by whatever title they will be known will be nominated by the Leadership from among their number and the appointments confirmed by the Church.

### **Pastor**

20. A Church Pastor or a Youth Pastor will be elected by the Church at a Special Church Meeting convened for that purpose by notice in the Church during public worship on the two Sundays immediately preceding such a Special Church meeting. Such election shall require the votes of two thirds of the members present at such meeting. In the event, for any reason, of either the Pastor or the Church desiring to terminate the appointment at any time, at least three months previous notice shall be given by the Pastor and at least nine months previous notice by the Church.

### **Accounts**

21. The Church Treasurer or whatever title is to be used and the Treasurers of all organisations of the Church shall keep a record of all money received and paid on account of the General and all other funds in accordance with the Charity Commissioners' regulations. The Treasurers of all Church organisations shall present an annual statement, their records, and supporting vouchers to the Church Treasurer in a manner to comply with the Charity Commissioners' regulations, as all

such finance is deemed to be under the oversight of the Church. The Church Treasurer shall present to the Church the annual accounts independently examined or audited as required by the Charity Commissioners' regulations, and other financial statements at such times as the Church may determine. The Independent Examiners or Auditors as required by the Charity Commissioners' regulations shall be appointed by the Church and shall be qualified in accordance with the Charity Commissioners' regulations.

### **Amendment of Rules**

22. These rules can only be amended at a Special Church Meeting convened for that purpose on previous notice being given in the manner specified in the first sentence of Rule 20 above.