

Governing Principles

THE EFFORTS OF FOUR DIFFERENT FELLOWSHIP REPRESENTATIVES IDENTIFIED THE LEAST COMMON TOPICS AND WORDS, WRITING A DOCUMENT THAT OUGHT TO BE AGREEABLE TO THE LEAST AMONG US. THIS WOULD RESPECT THE LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEAST, SOWING THE SEED OF UNITY, TO ASSIST IN THE PROCESS OF ZION. THOSE THAT ARE GREATEST OUGHT TO FIND SATISFACTION IN THE SIMPLICITY OF THE DOCUMENT. WHILE THOSE WHO ARE BEGINNING CAN FIND CLARITY AS THEY BEGIN THEIR JOURNEY.

Governing Principles are prepared for the benefit of new fellowships, to maintain an eye single to the glory of God, as they navigate in a new environment of self-governance.

Salvation is individual, requiring a personal relationship with Christ. The doctrine of Christ makes this possible through faith in Christ, repentance, and baptism. The Holy Spirit is the mind and will of God. Christ and God the Father share the same mind and will. Thus, receiving the Holy Ghost provides individuals with the ability to access the mind and will of God.

Fellowships exist to assist the individual on their path to becoming one with Christ. They are to govern themselves freely as the spirit dictates to them, choosing to gather when, where, and with whom they please. Meeting in fellowships provides the opportunity to teach, serve, and learn from both the Spirit, and one another's experiences. Equality requires that no one is above another and that all individuals have value. Regional and general conferences ought to adhere to the same principles and guidelines as fellowships, and can be called and organized by anyone at any time.

Tithing is to relieve the poor among you. It can be collected and distributed as a group, a fellowship, or as individuals. If done as a group or fellowship, tithes accumulated in a common fund must be distributed by the common consent of the group or fellowship. Separate fellowships can assist one another on a case by case basis, maintaining independence and autonomy. Tithes are not to be accumulated for wealth. If there are no poor among you, excess tithes can be contributed to the needs of a temple.

Performing ordinances, such as baptism and sacrament, requires priesthood. Priesthood is confined to men because of the fall. In order to exercise priesthood in fellowships, three key elements are required of priesthood bearers: ordination, sustaining, and confirmation.

Ordination: A man with the priesthood lays hands on another man's head, calls him by name, and confers upon him the priesthood in the name of Jesus Christ.

Sustaining: A vote of seven women is required to sustain a man to the priesthood. If the man is married, his wife must be one of the seven women, or he is unauthorized to exercise priesthood among fellowships.

Confirmation: Ultimately, the man must obtain confirmation of his priesthood from heaven.

If there is not a man authorized to confer priesthood, a man may perform the ordinances of baptism and sacrament within his family, with the confirmation of heaven alone. Record of priesthood ordination, sustaining, and confirmation should be kept in the personal journals of the man given priesthood and the women who sustained him. A certificate, signed by the seven sustaining women, should accompany the man should he perform ordinances outside of his family. The man is responsible to record and know his priesthood lineage.

In the event that priesthood is abused, exercising priesthood in fellowships can be revoked by a fair trial where a unanimous vote of at least twelve women vote to end his authority among fellowships.

The ordinance of baptism is a sign to heaven of an individual's choice to receive the gospel of Christ. It does not offer membership into a fellowship or church. A man who has priesthood may baptize all those who desire as follows:

- *Both go down and stand in the water.*
- *The man with priesthood will call the person being baptized by name, saying: "Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen."*
- *And then immerse them in the water, and come again out of the water*

As circumstances allow, the ordinance of baptism should be performed in living waters. A record of the baptism ought to be kept in a personal journal and also submitted to a central recorder so that the names of those baptized will be preserved within the temple of God.

The ordinance of sacrament should be performed as prescribed in the scriptures. It instructs that all kneel. The emblems of bread and wine are to be used as symbols of the flesh and the atoning blood of Christ. If any are opposed to alcohol, or have a medical condition preventing the use of wine, red grape juice may be used as an alternative. Bitter wine, in remembrance of Christ's blood, is symbolic and appropriate. A man with the priesthood will pray to the Father in the name of Christ saying:

O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it; that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him, and keep his commandments which he hath given them, that they may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen.

O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee, in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this wine to the souls of all those who drink of it, that they may do it in remembrance of the blood of thy Son, which was shed for them; that they may witness

unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they do always remember him, that they may have his Spirit to be with them. Amen.

The oneness of fellowships is a testimony to the world that Christ is the redeemer of all. Agency must be respected and preserved, allowing new fellowships the freedom to learn correct principles and govern themselves. Keep your eye single to the glory of God. Seek to receive God's mind and will. Bear one another's burdens that they may be light. Associate with one another as equals. God will gather his choice fruit.