

## **How to Conduct a Church Business Meeting**

Church chair duties include but are not limited to biblical duties, administrative duties, financial duties and coordinative duties. A church chair is an elected or appointed person holding the position of presidency on a church committee or board. The chosen church chair is expected to carry on all of these duties diligently and without any prejudice.

### **Biblical Duties**

According to church doctrines, church chair duties should witness the faith of the church and biblical teachings. Biblical church chair duties include practicing the church principles, being a faithful spouse, being a good parent, offering counseling to needy church members and practicing transparency as a leader. After being elected by the church members or appointed by the clergy, the church chair is assigned all of these duties. If the chosen church chair goes against the set duties, then that is grounds for discharge. Church chair duties therefore entail a good reputation both in the church and the community.

### **Administrative Duties**

Administrative duties should be focused on signing documents, planning, scheduling and chairing meetings. It is the church chair who decides on the venue, date and time of meetings. During meetings, the chair ensures that the allotted time is kept and can extend the time with due cause. The chair sees that members address one other with due respect and can appoint anyone to speak in an unbiased manner. It is wise for the chair not to force personal views onto others. Keeping a track of how the members attend meetings is expected of the church chair.

### **Financial Duties**

The church chair's financial duties are very important. The chair should clarify any financial requirements needed for projects such as building, purchasing assets and charity work. This creates transparency among the chair, church members and donors. The church chair backs up signing of financial documents by the treasurer. The chair ensures that all financial documents are well-prepared and updated by the treasurer. Fiduciary duties apply in law, both incorporated and non-incorporated bodies. Courts now hold church boards, whether incorporated or not, to the same standards as business for profit.

### **MEETINGS**

With the honor of chairing a church's committee comes the responsibility to conduct fruitful, effective meetings. The tone, atmosphere and results of the meeting are dependent on leadership skills of the Chair. Church committee members who experience unity and consensus at a meeting become motivated lay leaders. With proper preparation, a prayerful countenance and goal-directed strategies in place, anyone can be equipped to effectively chair a church meeting.

### **Begin Well**

Open the meeting in prayer, focusing on thankfulness for the opportunity to serve. Ask God for wisdom, discernment and unity. Solicit God's blessing on the meeting and for His will to be revealed in the discussions and decisions. Prayer focuses the committee on God's agenda.

*Example: LSB Page 307 Almighty God and Lord, as You have called us to labour in Your vineyard, so grant us now Your Presence. Enlighten and guide us by Your Word that in all matters of deliberation we may always consider the best interests of Your Church and this congregation. Let Your Holy Spirit rule and direct our hearts that, in the spirit of Christian love, we may present and discuss matters and be kindly disposed toward one another, to the end that all we say and do may please You; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.*

Offer a mini-devotional of few minutes. Select a scripture that is pertinent to the meeting's goals or issues. Reflect on the passage in a way that directs the spiritual atmosphere in a productive manner. This should be handled by the congregations Pastor, Deacon or an Elder.

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Establish the meeting agenda. Hand out sheets and/or put the agenda on a whiteboard so that everyone has an understanding of the flow of the work that must be accomplished. Clearly state the goals for the meeting.

### **Running the Meeting**

Manage discussions and debates with keeping an eye on the clock. Allow a limited number of pros and cons of an issue to be offered and then call a consensus decision. Summarize the issues and ask for only new input if people seem to be repeating each other. Unity and consensus come from listening to all sides.

Chairs are responsible for managing the time.

Reinforce the meeting's goals if discussions seem to be getting sidetracked. Encourage the group to stick to printed agenda as a demonstration of good stewardship of everyone's time.

Table a decision if it appears that consensus is unobtainable. Committees function better when everyone feels that they have been heard and can agree on a consensus decision. Allow for time away from an issue that can't be resolved on the first round.

End the meeting as it began, with prayer. Attend to any feelings of hurt, frustration or anger that may have been experienced in the meeting. Leaders set the tone; pointing toward reconciliation and healing is the job of the Chair. Productive meetings result in committee members who are motivated to grow the church's ministries.

Have the recording secretary send out full minutes within a week, with the next meeting time clearly noted.

Discuss old business first. The old business consist of items that were discussed in the previous meeting that require an update or vote. As part of the old business, you can also read the minutes from the previous meeting. The minutes is a simple summary of items discussed at the previous meeting, along with other information, such as the date, who conducted the meeting and the time the meeting adjourned.

Introduce new business. The new business will consist of new ideas and new topics that have not been previously discussed. During the new business segment it is important to get feedback and comments from other church members or board members.

Vote on items that need action. In order to vote, a church member will have to make a motion to vote. A second church member will have to second the motion to show their agreement to vote on the item or to get the matter on the table for discussion. After taking a vote, the majority rules. The church members making the motions should be a member of the church board. However, if you do not have a church board, any church member may perform the motions and seconds.

Stick to the topics that are on the agenda. If items come up for discussion that are not listed on the agenda, document it in the church minutes so that it can be placed on the agenda for the next meeting. By sticking to the agenda, you can ensure that all items are discussed.