

Church Meetings That Work

An outline developed while reading Church Meetings That Work by Gaylord Noyce

The Basics

- ◆ Getting Things Done
- ◆ Teaching & Learning
- ◆ Social Events
- ◆ About Meeting God

The Basics

Meetings are for *getting things done*.

A meeting without any business or purpose is a waste of time. Participants will get involved more and stay involved longer if they can see meaningful progress toward the goal. Decide what needs to be done and get started.

Meetings are for *teaching and learning*.

If teaching and/or learning is the purpose for the meeting tell folks ahead of time so they come receptively.

The Basics

Meetings are *social events* too.

A wise Chair will give space for fellowship and community building as well as for decision making. Trust is a byproduct of feeling connected to others. Invest in trust building and the pay off will come.

Meetings are *about meeting God*.

1. We do not do our work alone! We believe that God is at work in our meetings guiding our work and words.
2. The doctrine of Total Depravity says (in part) that, "Apart from God we do nothing that is good."
3. Praying to start and close your meeting may remind the group of God's presence. You can help by being intentional in modeling a discerning way for everyone.
4. Church meetings are not merely about cleverly managing the church to achievable ends. We do not need God for that. Rather, our goal is to discern the will of God and act accordingly.

Role of Chair / Moderator

- ◆ Articulate the Vision
- ◆ Attend to External Relations
- ◆ Foster Communication & Deliberation
- ◆ Provide Guidance
- ◆ Monitor Follow-Through
- ◆ Take Responsibility to Call a Meeting

Role of moderator/chair

Articulate the Vision

1. The chair is responsible to keep the committee focussed so that the main thing remains the *main thing*. Having a concise statement of purpose will help. "We're meeting today to choose a date for the next cleanup day and to delegate responsibility for the various aspects of that event." A committee cannot long remain effective without a sense of purpose.

Tend to External Relations

1. As a member of Session you'll be asked to do do all your committee as a "stockholder." That means helping the committee see it's work within and as a part of the larger work of the whole congregation. Practically this might mean being sure to clear dates for building use, coordinating shared events with other groups in the church, keeping a line of communication with the staff of the church.

Role of moderator/chair

Foster Communication and Deliberation

1. As chair you are responsible for allowing and encouraging the input of all members. You'll need to lovingly hush the extroverts and give special attention to those who wait to be asked before they speak. In particular, the chair acts to protect the voice of the minority -- allowing it to shape and inform the final decision of the majority.

Provide Guidance for Decision Making

1. You are responsible to keep the group "in order," with regard to its decision making. You will want to clearly name the decision(s) made when agreement has been reached. "OK, we've agreed that Mike will call the telephone company and have a new line installed."

If there are portions of the Book of Order which are relevant to your committee's work you will be responsible for seeing that the committee meets those obligations. For example, as chair of Worship you would know that the request of the youth group to re-baptize the youth in Fred's swimming pool during their social event next month is out of order.

Role of moderator/chair

Monitor Follow-Through Between Meetings

1. This is last but far from least. In fact it is essential! We all live lives with good intentions. Your job, in part, will be to hold others lovingly accountable to do what they said they'd do for their own benefit and for the benefit of the larger work.

Meet! Please Meet!

1. There are really *no committees* at First who do not need regular attention and maintenance. The committees which are not functioning well . . . to a committee . . . will be those who do not establish a *regular meeting schedule* and fill that schedule with meaningful steps toward defined goals. The Moderator needs to lead in this.