

How to Run a Church Members' Meeting

Discussion

How many of you have been part of Members' Meetings?

What were they for?

What happened in them?

What were they like?

What would you change?

Why have Church Members' Meetings

We might be required to by the regulations of our Constitution. So, for example, here is the CHBC constitution

1 Section 2 – Members' Meetings

2 In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust,
3 openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord
4 Jesus Christ.

5 There shall be a regular members' meeting at least every other month, at some
6 time apart from a public worship service agreed upon by the membership.

7 An elder designated by the elders shall preside as moderator at all members'
8 meetings of the church. The elders shall see that the stated meetings of the church are
9 regularly held and that required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible
10 members.

11 Provided all constitutional provisions for notification have been met, a quorum
12 shall be understood to be met by those members present. All votes shall be tallied based
13 on the number of votes cast by members present.

14 A budget shall be approved by the membership at a members' meeting not more
15 than three months after the start of the fiscal year. Congregational approval shall
16 proceed, without amendment, as a single vote on the budget in its entirety. Prior to this
17 approval and subject to the elders' discretion, expenditures may continue at the prior
18 year's level.

19 At any regular or special members' meeting, officers may be elected and positions
20 filled as needed, so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met.

21 Special members' meetings may be called as required by the elders, or at the
22 written request, submitted to the elders, of five percent of the voting membership. The
23 date, time, and purpose of any special meeting shall be announced at all public services
24 of the church within two weeks preceding the meeting and posted at all entrances to the
25 church during that time period. In the event of a written request from the members, the
26 elders shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the
27 request.

I want to step back from that and think about what we're hoping to accomplish in a meeting.

What is this meeting for?

Reason for Meeting	Description	Key Things to Think About
Dissemination	It's a meeting to communicate information	What do you want to communicate? Why do you want to communicate it? Who is the best person to do that? How do you want to communicate it? What do you want people to do in response? How can people ask questions? What will you do if discussion ensues?
Discussion		
Delegation		
Decision		
Discipline		

Discussion

What are the reasons that we don't have Church Meetings?

Here are some suggestions to think through.

1. Call this meeting something that's consistent with the doctrine of the church and that communicates what they are.
2. Decide who's invited and who's allowed to contribute.
3. Welcome the newcomers and don't shy away from mentioning the departures.
4. Remind them of the House Rules.

Capitol Hill Baptist Church Covenant

Having, as we trust, been brought by divine grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give up ourselves to him, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith, in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, we do now, relying on His gracious aid, solemnly and joyfully renew our covenant with each other.

We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

We will walk together in brotherly love, as becomes the members of a Christian Church, exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully admonish and entreat one another as occasion may require.

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for ourselves and others.

We will endeavor to bring up such as may at any time be under our care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example to seek the salvation of our family and friends.

We will rejoice at each others' happiness and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows.

We will seek, by Divine aid, to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and remembering that, as we have been voluntarily buried by baptism and raised again from the symbolic grave, so there is on us a special obligation now to lead a new and holy life.

We will work together for the continuance of a faithful evangelical ministry in this church, as we sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines. We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

5. Pray together.
6. Bring the big issues up front.
7. Remind people what congregationalism is and what it isn't.
8. Beware of the meeting after the meeting particularly when discussions are being had or decisions are being made.
9. Know you're going to get things wrong.

<https://archive.thomrainer.com/2016/02/seven-reasons-why-monthly-church-business-meetings-are-dying/>

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/erik-raymond/how-membership-meetings-can-help-your-preaching/>

<https://churchanswers.com/blog/death-by-church-meetings-five-considerations/>

I confess.

I used to hate meetings.

In fact I was very vocal about meetings being a waste of time. In most meetings I attended, I daydreamed about a dozen other ways I could be spending my time more productively.

Over time I would discover the problem was not the meeting per se, but the way the meeting was managed. Today I am a shouting proponent of meetings, at least the productive ones. And I have found that church staff persons, whether full-time, part-time, or volunteer, are among the most notorious for having bad staff meetings.

Over the past decade I have been on a quest to find highly effective church staff meetings. I have been fortunate to observe several, and I emulate them in my own staff meetings. Though all of the good meetings have several diverse characteristics,

I Found Seven Characteristics Consistent in The Highly Effective Meetings:

1. The Meetings Begin With Prayer For The Church And Her Members
Effective staff meetings have core to their purpose the need to pray for the church. These prayers are not quick and perfunctory, but sincere and well thought. The staff comes prepared to pray for members' physical, spiritual, and family needs. They pray for their members to be a witness in their homes, communities, and workplaces. They pray for unity in the church.

2. The Meetings Take Place Routinely
Effective meetings can make a huge difference in the leadership and life of the church. They are regularly scheduled, weekly if possible.
3. The Meetings Have A Fixed And Predetermined Length
Don't intrude upon the staff's busy schedule by having a meeting go longer than planned. Efficient staff will already have plans after the meeting. Don't impose upon that time. People tend to become restless if they don't know when a meeting will end.
4. The Meetings Have An Agenda Prepared Ahead Of Time
Each staff member submits his or her agenda items ahead of the meeting. Those items largely determine the content and the length of the meeting. It should be a rare and exceptional occurrence when someone brings up non-agenda items. And generic agenda items should not be allowed (for example, "update on student ministry"). If no one has real agenda items, the meeting probably is not necessary. Don't meet for the sake of meeting.
5. The Meetings Focus A Great Deal Of Time On Alignment
Are all of the areas of the church in alignment together? Do they fulfil or complement the vision of the church? It would be better to have no staff members than having two staff members whose work and ministry go in opposing directions.
6. The Meetings Start On Time And Finish On Time
They begin on time and they end on time or earlier. I begin meetings on time even if others are late. I actually began one meeting when no one showed up on time but me. I made a lot decisions without opposition. The staff will learn if the leader is serious about the meeting by the prompt beginnings of the meeting, and by the leader's own punctuality.
7. The Meetings Conclude With Action Items
As a meeting ends, the leader, presumably the pastor, notes what is to be done after the meeting, who is to do it, and what the timetable for completion is. The pastor makes certain that everyone is in agreement with the action items.

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