



PASTOR BOARD ORIENTATION

Wyoming Ministry Network
of the Assemblies of God

Introduction

If something is healthy, it will naturally grow. For a church to be healthy, the relationships in the church need to be healthy, especially between the pastor and the board. Teamwork between the pastor and board are crucial if the church is going to fulfill the purpose Jesus lived and died for. The principles in this manual are designed to help pastors and boards develop a strong, healthy relationship that will propel the church forward so they can impact their community with the eternal hope of the gospel. If being a God-honoring team that passionately pursues the mission of Jesus is your priority, then together you can lead your church into doing things that are exceedingly abundantly above all that you ask or imagine for the glory of God! Enjoy taking the journey together!

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Wyoming Assemblies of God Pastor-Board Orientation

The Mission of the Church: Why Do We Exist?

What did Jesus say?

"for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

-Luke 19:10

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you..."

-Matthew 28:19-20

The only reason the church is still on the planet is to win the lost and make disciples:

- We can worship Jesus better in heaven seeing Him face to face.
- We can learn about Jesus better sitting at His feet receiving personal teaching.
- We can fellowship with each other better in heaven with our sin natures eradicated.
- The only thing we can't do better in heaven is win lost souls to Jesus.
- Lost souls are the sole reason for your church's existence.

So What Happens?

When a church first starts out, they need people to survive. So they reach people. That is their mission, their focus. But the danger is that once a church gets established, the people tend to shift their focus to maintaining the organization and not fulfilling the mission. What does this look like? Here are some real life examples:

- The Sunday School class which now runs 10 and has been meeting for 25 years in the same room that seats 30, will not change rooms with a new Sunday School class that has grown to 25 and meets in a room that seats 15 people.
- Church members ask a new comer to leave or give them the cold shoulder because of the way the unchurched person looks, smells, or dresses.
- A first time guest is asked to move from a regular attender's spot where they have sat for as long as anyone can remember.

In each of these situations, the underlying sentiment is about us, not others. It is about what we prefer over Christ's mission of reaching the lost and discipling people. As leadership in the church, our job is to make sure that we the body are fulfilling the Head's desire, not our own. We must look out for the best interests of the people while passionately pursuing the mission of Jesus which is to seek and save the lost and to develop them into full-fledged Christ followers.

Unity in the Body

The Bible stresses the importance of unity:

- **With it, much can be accomplished. Without it, it is disastrous:**

"And the LORD said, 'Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.'" -Genesis 11:6

"And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand." -Mark 3:25

- **Pentecost and sequential outpourings of the Holy Spirit are linked to unity:**

"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place... 'And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." -Acts 2:1, 4

"And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness. Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul..." -Acts 4:31-32a

"And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch." -Acts 5:12

- **Unity is likened to the anointing of the Holy Spirit:**

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments." -Psalm 133:1-2

So if a church is filled with division, strife, control groups, power brokers, gossip, backbiting, etc., then the work of the Spirit is stymied. Unity is key if we are going to bring the light of Jesus to our communities. And **TRUE UNITY** does not result unless the body of Christ is aligned with the Head and His wishes—the mission of the church.

Unfortunately, a "spirit of man-control" breaks unity in the body. Man-control takes place when people have their own agendas that they push over the mission of the church. Division occurs because of "division", a dual vision of what man wants and Christ wants. Man-control can be exhibited by the pastor, board members, or anyone in the congregation. A spirit of control must be broken before the Holy Spirit will move in a powerful way in a church. Great unity results in a great anointing.

The Role of the Board Member

What board members are not:

- 1) Not elected representatives of the people. Board members are not a legislative body who represent a constituency and vote the will of the people.

What board members are:

- 1) Servant leaders with pure motives who assist the pastors so they can fulfill the will of God which is the mission of the church (Mark 9:35; Acts 6:2-4; Matthew 28:19).

Mark 9:35—"*...If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.*"

Acts 6:2-4—"*Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."*

Matthew 28:19—"*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...*"

What board members are not:

- 2) Not watchdogs of the pastor. You don't have to protect the flock from the shepherd (pastor). A church should hire a pastor they trust and then let him lead the church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If trust issues between a board member and a pastor cannot be resolved, then one of you needs to resign for the good of the church. *(Some people have had negative experiences with a pastor that have resulted in a distrust of all ministers. That is a toxic attitude that sets a church up for failure. If you find yourself in that category, you should deal with your trust issues before serving in leadership.)*

What board members are:

- 2) On the same team as the pastor. Our common enemy is the devil. We work as a team that is accountable to and supports each other to build Christ's kingdom. As an undershepherd of Christ, the pastor does not abuse the trust given to him by the board and congregation.

The Role of the Pastor

What pastors are not:

- 1) Not hired errand boys of the board or congregation. The board does not boss the pastor around and tell him what to do. Nor are pastors dictators who run roughshod over others and ramrod their own agenda.

What pastors are:

- 1) God's appointed leaders of the church (Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1 Peter 5:1-3). Pastors are shepherds under God who oversee and lead the body. They give direction to the church with pure motives and for godly purposes. They are servant leaders in the same spirit of Christ who laid His life down.

Hebrews 13:7, 17—"Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct...Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you."

1 Peter 5:1-3—"The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;."

What pastors are not:

- 2) Not the only ones who do ministry. A common misconception is that pastors should do all of the ministry. Believers are priests and have been given spiritual gifts which are to be used in ministry to the body (Romans 12:4-6; 1 Peter 2:5 & 4:10; Revelation 1:6).

What pastors are:

- 2) Equippers of the saints – Ephesians 4:11-12 teaches that pastors are to equip the body to minister to each other, not be a one-man show. And each part of the body has a special function that provides care for each other (1 Corinthians 12:14-27).

Romans 12:4-6a—"For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them:"

1 Peter 2:5—"you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

1 Peter 4:10—"As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

Revelation 1:6—"and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father."

Ephesians 4:11-12—"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,"

1 Corinthians 12:14, 18, 25-26—"For in fact the body is not one member but many... But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased... that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it."

Implications of the Roles

- Board members are servant leaders serving without personal agenda, personal gain, desire for recognition, or to be in control.
- Pastors are servant leaders serving to fulfill Christ's purposes, not their own.
- Our purpose is to pursue the Great Commission and build the church. That is what Jesus died for. That is why we the church are still on the planet. So everything we do should be evaluated in light of that:
 - ⇒ How do the unchurched feel when attending our worship services? Do they feel welcomed, but not made a spectacle of and embarrassed? Do they feel our children's ministries are a safe place to leave their kids at?
 - ⇒ Are we doing ministry with anointing and excellence? [The world tends to do things with the quality of Walt Disney while the church tends to settle for doing things "Mickey Mouse"]. How is our greeter team, music, sound, video, announcements, nursery, kid's ministry, preaching, etc.? Are there any weak links that seem hokey and would turn people off?
 - ⇒ Are we doing some programs/ministries that have lost their effectiveness? Can they be changed to increase effectiveness or should we scrap them for others that better help us fulfill our purpose? Are we ministering out of tradition or out of purpose?
- Some churches have not been "mission-based". Instead, their culture has been based on personal preferences, traditions, or programs. Leaders must be careful to not implement too much change too quickly. At the same time, we cannot be so cautious that we are like the marksman who zeros in on the target with "Ready-Set-Aim-Aim-Aim" and never pulls the trigger. Therefore, we must ask:
 - ⇒ How much change can our body handle at one time?

- ⇒ Are we taking people through process so they understand the “why” behind the change?
- ⇒ What is best for our body now—to roll out the change in phases or all at once?
- ⇒ Are we removing barriers that would turn away or scare off the unchurched?
- ⇒ Are we moving forward in becoming mission-based or are we stuck?
- ⇒ Are we letting someone or a group of “someones” hold the church hostage?
- Realize that as leaders, we all need to embrace a culture of change so that we are best aligning with our mission. And we talk about the importance of this with those in our body. We point out how the changes we have made have been beneficial in accomplishing mission.
- We make decisions based upon our mission, not by holding our fingers to the air to see what the people want. Sometimes what the body wants is not what the body needs. The body is not the head of the church; Christ is. The church is a theocracy, not a democracy.
- If there is a spirit of man-control, it needs to be confronted and broken so that genuine unity can come to our church.
- Every believer takes an active role in the ministry of the church. Your pastor can’t do it alone, nor should he.
- The Pastor leads the church. The Board gives advice to the pastor and assists with the administration of the business and work of the church. It is important that the pastor does not just implement ideas without consulting the input of the board. Many times ideas can be enhanced by a collective effort as opposed to only one individual’s paradigm. That does not mean every little detail has to be run by the board. This applies to major decisions with finances, vision, direction, policy, and structural changes. As a team, our desire is to seek to avoid the mistakes to which a single leader might be more vulnerable. Just as Christ developed a team to fulfill the Great Commission, we desire to do the same. The church exists to help all people find and follow Jesus.

Two Buckets

Caught in the Middle

Many times, people will bring a matter to a board member instead of the pastor. It can be about anything: a change that has been made, a concern or question, or perceived ill-treatment the person has received from the pastor or someone else in the church. How a board member reacts to the situation can determine whether the situation turns out positively or negatively.

Gas or Water?

Think of yourself as carrying two buckets. One is filled with gasoline. The other is filled with water. It takes discernment to know which bucket to use in each situation. Over reacting to a negative comment may start a wildfire that causes much damage. If people bring concerns or issues to board members, they are not to make judgments on them or take sides prematurely which can jeopardize unity.

- **Proverbs 18:13, 17**—*"He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him... The first one to plead his cause seems right, until his neighbor comes and examines him."*

It is amazing how when you hear both sides of the story you can gain a more proper perspective. So it is important not to jump to conclusions.

Avoid Being a Dump Ground

If the garbage truck pulled up to your property and dumped its contents all over your front yard, what would you do? You would probably be on the phone to the city really quickly. The point is, you wouldn't just let it sit there and cause a stink. Sometimes when people come to you, they don't want to resolve the issue; they just want to unload it without resolving it. They may even tell you to not say anything to the pastor or the person they have a problem with. But if it is left alone, it will begin to stink. Worse yet, it will create undercurrents of discord which undermines unity in the body. Board members should bring people's issues and concerns to the pastor so (s)he can be informed and decide how to proceed on the matter. To not do anything with someone's grievance now makes you part of the problem instead of part of the solution.

Jesus clearly taught that believers should resolve conflict with each other on a personal basis—

- **Matthew 18:15-16**—*"Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY WORD MAY BE ESTABLISHED.'"*

So if people make a complaint to you about the pastor, you can offer them two options—"You go alone OR we'll go together":

- 1) Encourage them to go to the pastor and share the issue with him/her. Give them a deadline to do this (two weeks is sufficient). Let them know you will give the pastor a heads up notice that they will be seeking him out, and you will check in with them at the appointed deadline to see if

they have done so. If not, then you and the pastor will come to them.

- 2) Offer to go with them to the pastor and have them share the issue. Some people are reluctant to confront but will gather the courage to do so if someone goes with them. You be that person.

As people confront the pastor with perceived wrongdoing, be sure to keep in mind Paul's advice—

- **1 Timothy 5:19**—*"Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses."*

Utilizing this Scripture and the principles of Matthew 18, your board team should carefully and prayerfully sift through the comments and be sure to gather all vantage points as you seek to resolve the conflict.

It Goes Both Ways

Board members should not only communicate to the pastor for the people. They should also communicate to the people for the pastor. You should be your pastor's biggest fan! Be an advocate for your church and pastor when you are out with people. Throw gasoline on the positive to generate excitement and momentum in the church. Here are some practical tips:

- Connect the dots for people between the good things that are happening as a result of your pastor's ministry or the changes that have been made. As people get saved, the church grows, new ministries start that attract new people, finances increase, missions giving goes up—help people realize that what you are doing as a church is working. Our carnal nature tends to focus on the negative so that we don't see the positive.
- Share with someone a nugget you got from pastor's sermon and how it can help you.
- Share praise reports of how people were touched through the church's ministry – "Hey, did you hear that three kids were baptized in the Spirit in Kid's Church last week!"

We are the Winning Team!

As the local church, we know that we are on the winning team! Revelation tells us that. But many times we do not act like it. The devil wants nothing more than for the glorious, victorious bride of Christ to live in a spirit of defeat and despair, confusion and chaos, bickering and fighting.

As church leadership, believe that Christ has given you authority to trample over all the power of the enemy (Luke 10:19). Pursue the mission of the church for the sake of your community. Earnestly walk in unity and let nothing come between you as a team. Pray much, much, much! Do purpose-filled ministry with excellence and passion. Throw water on the fires that would try to destroy the work of God. And look out for how the Spirit of God is moving and throw some gasoline on it! Because the Lord always leads His church in triumph!

"Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ!"

~ 2 Corinthians 2:14 ~

Robert's Rules of Order for Board Meetings

Many church by-laws call for the use of Robert's Rules of Order for church meetings. Robert's in board meetings is more relaxed than it is for annual and special business meetings. *Richard Hammer, attorney for the Assemblies of God and author of *Church Law & Tax*, notes these differences below. Our comments for clarification are bracketed and underlined.

"The latest edition contains a revision of the content of modified parliamentary rules in small boards and in committees, together with recognition that a small assembly may wish to employ these less formal procedures.

The previous edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* contained a few important changes in the conduct of "small boards" which it defined as those "where there are not more than about a dozen members present." Since most church boards have fewer than "about a dozen" members, these relaxed rules apply. In practice, few persons who preside over church board meetings have any idea that relaxed rules apply, much less what these rules are.

The previous (10th) edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* contained the following relaxed rules for small meetings (additional changes made for these in the 11th edition are noted in parenthesis):

- Motions to close or limit debate are not allowed.
- Members can engage in "informal discussion" of a matter while no motion is pending. This contravenes the basic parliamentary principle that the only way to bring business before a deliberative body is through motions.
- On routine and unimportant matters for which there is no apparent opposition, the chair can take action by "unanimous consent" by stating, "If there is no objection" the matter is decided upon. Unanimous consent is not limited, however, to small boards. It is often used in larger deliberative bodies. So, it is unclear why this is listed as one of the different rules that applies to small boards. [It should be noted that if the board is making major decisions, a motion is in order over unanimous consent.]
- The chair need not rise when putting questions to a vote.
- Members are not required to obtain recognition from the chair before making motions or speaking. (In the 11th edition, *Robert's Rules* adds that members can obtain the floor by raising a hand).
- Members can make motions and speak while seated.
- Motions need not be seconded. [Though this can still be done.]
- There is no limit on the number of times a member can speak on a question, or the length of each speech. This is an exception to the standard parliamentary rule that members are limited to two speeches of ten minutes each on the same question in the same day. (In the 11th edition, it clarifies that members can only speak on debatable questions).
- Informal discussion of a subject is permitted while no motion is pending.

- Matters can be handled by common consent (without a motion) if there is no anticipated objection.
- Votes on motions can be taken initially by a show of hands.
- The chair can speak in discussion without rising or leaving the chair, and subject to rule or custom, may make motions and vote on all questions. (In the 11th edition, the chair may initiate informal discussion, which allows him or her to submit proposals without formally making a motion (although motions are always acceptable))."

This relaxed use of Robert's can help facilitate an orderly, but informal atmosphere in board meetings.

Recording Minutes

Minutes of each board meeting should always be recorded. Due to legal concerns, it is recommended that individuals are not named as to who made the motion and the second. Simply state the motion and the result. For example, *"A motion was made to accept John Doe's bid to resurface the parking lot for \$12,000, seconded and carried."*

In recording minutes, details of discussion need not be noted. Only record "action" that the board took. Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- **Motions made and if they carried or failed.**
- **Decisions made that were not official motions, but still things to be acted upon.**
- **Assignments given to board members** – i.e.—*Jim Smith will organize the church work day.*
- **Concise statements showing what we did or discussed**
 - ⇒ *"A time of worship was held and prayer followed."*
 - ⇒ *"We reviewed the itinerary for the Smith's candidating time on April 26-May 2."*
 - ⇒ *"Bids from the three contractors were discussed."*
- **Include enough information to help clarify the mindset of what was being decided -**
 - ⇒ *"Motion to give \$1000.00 of our mission's surplus to the UW Chi Alpha ministry for their matching gift fundraiser to pay off the home mortgage, seconded and carried." (This is important to note so we know that it was not just for general use. It helps us remember that we participated in the fundraiser and the money is coming out of missions.)*
 - ⇒ *"Motion to have ABC Builders to begin construction of the nursery remodel project to be taken from the general fund, seconded and carried. Later on we will put an insert with furniture needs that people can contribute to."*

The secretary should send the minutes to the pastor within 24 hours of the meeting so that he can review them for accuracy and clarity. When the pastor approves of them or makes necessary revisions, then the minutes can be sent out to the board.

*The complete article by Richard Hammer is found on the web at:

<http://www.churchlawandtax.com/blog/2012/september/3-key-changes-for-churches-in-latest-emroberts-rules-em.html>, accessed January 22, 2015.

Principles of Operation for Board Meetings

- **Mutual Respect:** In our board meetings, we will follow (loosely) Roberts Rules of Order. Still, our greater priority is to move by consensus. When we face a big decision, and one or more members have some hesitation, we will seek to take time to pray and wait as we are able. We value unity very highly, and we want to move as a unified body whenever possible.

Each person's opinion is to be respected in our discussions. Our opinions may vary, but we must demonstrate respect for the feelings, background, and perspectives of our brothers. We strive to practice the principle, "Seek first to understand, and then to be understood." We realize that each of us has a right to be heard, **BUT NOT THE RIGHT TO BE AGREED WITH.** Just because others may disagree with you does not mean they did not listen.

Part of respect also means that board members never meet separately on their own without the pastor. In many cases this is unconstitutional, and biblically it borders on rebellion to God and His ordained spiritual authority. If a board member has an issue with the pastor, (s)he should follow Matthew 18:15 and approach the pastor one on one. These issues should not be delayed until the annual performance review, but be brought to the pastor's attention in a timely manner. Waiting weeks or months can cause a breach in your relationship with your pastor. *(There are a few exceptions when the board meets apart from the pastor and that is when they are determining things such as salary raises, Christmas bonuses, pastor appreciation, or special birthday or anniversary celebrations for the pastor. But meeting together separately to discuss complaints against the pastor or other church business are grounds for dismissal from the board.)*

- **Spirit of Unity & Cooperation:** When the result of a vote is not unanimous, we are all to be unified around the decision made. When we walk out of the meeting, we have one voice saying this was the direction that we as a board felt the Lord leading us. We support the decision and put our full efforts behind it to see it succeed, even though we may have voted against it. To criticize the decision, spread division, or impede its progress after the vote is grounds for disciplinary action ranging from a verbal reprimand to dismissal from the board.
- **Confidentiality:** We want to handle the sensitive information we receive in board meetings responsibly. Do not share confidential information or financial giving outside the meetings. Do not share the individual voting of other board members. What is said in the board meeting stays in the board meeting, unless it is decided that it is to be shared with the congregation or certain individuals who are not part of the board. **Only those designated to share shall make the communication.** If someone asks you about an issue and you have not been assigned to speak on it, direct the person to the pastor or the appropriate person. This responsible handling of information will facilitate free and open sharing in our meetings. The inappropriate sharing of information is grounds for disciplinary action ranging from a verbal reprimand to dismissal from the board.

- **Honest, Open, Loving Communication:** Sometimes when we are discussing ideas or situations, the pastor or another board member will share something that you feel is wrong or off-base. Maybe everyone else agrees with them, and you are the only one sitting on the other side of the table. It is important for you to openly share how you feel. Sometimes one comment is all it takes to shed light on the issue at hand and to give it a whole new perspective. Jesus said, "...the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). At the same time, we must speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). Once we have shared, we let it go and not try to keep pushing our own agenda. Having open, transparent dialogue will help your team make wise decisions for the church.

Designing the Board Meeting – 3 Kinds of Agenda Items

A printed agenda order should be distributed at least a couple of days before the board meeting so that board members know what is on the docket, one week is even better. Maybe a note is attached to it that explains certain items that are going to be talked about. IMPORTANT: NOTHING IS ADDED TO THE PRINTED AGENDA UNLESS IT IS PRESENTED AT THE TOP OF THE MEETING AND THE BOARD AGREES TO INCLUDE IT ON THE AGENDA. If it is approved, the pastor will decide where it best fits with the flow of the meeting. Many fantastic board meetings have been ruined because someone waits until the end and brings up an issue that leaves a bad taste in everyone's mouth. When that happens month after month, everyone begins to dread board meetings. A good structure can facilitate a great meeting while a poor structure can cause a train wreck. Here is a suggested order for a board meeting:

- **Call to Order, Worship, Prayer:** The pastor calls the meeting to order. Prayer needs are shared by those present. Individuals can share personal needs or needs of people in the church. But prayer should also be offered up for the needs of the church: ministry opportunities, upcoming church events, anointing for the services, laborers for specific ministries, problems the church is facing, or wisdom for decisions the board is considering.

After prayer needs are shared—DO NOT PRAY. INSTEAD, WORSHIP FIRST! Worship draws us closer to Christ which we desperately need as we make decisions for His Church. As board members come to the meeting from a long day at work, we all need a time of refreshing from the Lord. Praise and worship recalibrates us to God's perspectives on life. Our struggles and concerns are minimized in God's omnipotent presence. God fills the room as He inhabits our praises and is enthroned in our hearts on them (Psalm 22:3).

For this worship time, select a few songs. Two or three are good to start with, but experiment to see what works for your setting. Get the lyrics from online and put them all on a sheet of paper and make copies for everyone. You can sing acapella. Maybe someone can play a guitar. Or you can have the songs ready on CD or YouTube videos.

When you are finished with worship, then move into prayer, praying over the needs that have been shared. As God lays a need on your heart, lead out for it. When you are finished, then someone else prays for the same or another need. Don't rush this time of prayer. Oswald Chambers once said, "Prayer is the slender nerve that moves the muscle of God's omnipotence." The Church board is not like a corporate board that just makes decisions. You are leadership in the Body of Christ and need to invoke the wisdom, power, and presence of Jesus, the Head of the Body.

Many pastors have found that including time for worship and prayer does not lengthen the meeting much if not at all. Sometimes, it even goes shorter. Somehow when we put God first, He accomplishes more than if we just tried to do it on our own (just like tithing). When the prayer time is done, we now move into the three kinds of agenda items.

- 1) **Information Items:** This part of the meeting is about sharing information. You can commonly cover all of these in 10-15 minutes.
 - ⇒ Approve the minutes from the last board meeting. The minutes should be distributed before the meeting along with the agenda. Board members should read through the minutes **before the meeting** and check them for accuracy. If everyone has done this, the minutes do not need to be read through which saves time. Make any corrections or clarifications and then approve them. If the minutes have not been distributed beforehand, they should be verbally read through.
 - ⇒ Approve the recent financial statements. The financial statements should also be distributed before the meeting along with the agenda. Maybe include a sheet that explains any big line item purchases for the month. Board members should read through the financials **before the meeting** and come with any questions. Doing so can remove the need to go over them line by line saving time.
 - ⇒ Review the calendar, attendance reports, etc. Note any special church events coming up. These can be printed on the bottom of the agenda so board members can keep them in prayer during the next month. Go over attendance and any other information items at this time.
- 2) **Discussion Items:** These are items that you will discuss, but you will not take a vote on them at this meeting. It is not wise to make decisions with only a few minutes of contemplation and very little prayer (Proverbs 21:5). Discussion items give everyone time to adequately process all angles and perspectives of the item at hand without feeling pressured to make a decision. During this discussion time, everyone needs to air their feelings. Questions need to be asked. Long term effects of actions or inaction need to be evaluated. When discussion is finished, board members go home and seek the Lord until the next meeting for His will on the matter.
- 3) **Action Items:** Action items are items that you can vote on. Something cannot be an action item until it has first been a discussion item in a previous meeting. Sometimes you may be ready to vote on the action item immediately or in just a minute or two. Other times you may have a lengthy discussion about it item before voting on it. **Special Notes:**
 - ✓ Just because something is an action item, does not mean you have to vote on it if as a board you are not ready. Some action items may be discussed and forwarded to the agenda of the next meeting if needed. This process may happen more than once.
 - ✓ Many times for the optimum flow of the meeting, it works best to place the action items **before** the discussion items on the agenda. This is especially true when you know there may be some long discussions on other items and you want to be sure to vote on some crucial issues and not be rushed as you make the decision.
 - ✓ This process requires the pastor to adequately plan ahead, almost a month ahead of time. (S)he cannot come to a meeting and expect a decision to be made on the spur of the moment.

- ✓ Special meetings sometimes need to be called if a decision cannot wait until your next regular meeting. There may be some emergency situation that requires you to meet a couple days or a week later to discuss and vote on this one issue.
- ✓ Some situations do not require you to wait a meeting because of actions you have taken in past meetings. For example, maybe several months ago the board established a policy that determines what you do in certain situations. So if that situation arises, you don't have to discuss it and then wait to vote on it. Your previous policy determines what to do. Another scenario may be you have established a set budget amount for building maintenance, and then your furnace breaks down and you have to spend several thousand dollars to replace it. If you still have money in that line item budget, then you can go ahead and replace it.
- **Adjournment:** When the agenda is finished, receive a motion to adjourn. Do not allow new agenda items to be presented that were not approved at the top of the meeting.

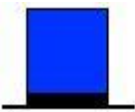
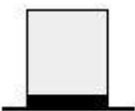
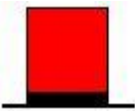
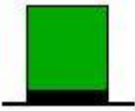
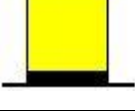

In the next section, we will learn about the Hats of Communication and how they can help you have healthy discussions so you can work through issues to arrive at unity and build the church for the glory of God.

Hats of Communication - Deciding Without Dividing!

(Based on Edward de Bono's "Six Thinking Hats")

The 'Six Thinking Hats' is a quick, simple, and powerful technique to improve your thinking. It does this by encouraging you to recognize what type of thinking you are using, and to apply different types of thinking to the subject.

We all use different types of thinking, usually without realizing it. For example, if we are feeling pessimistic about the situation, that is the only type of thinking we apply! This limits our ability to see all the issues.

	<u>Process:</u> (Blueprint) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishes the parameters of the meeting, conversation. - Worn by the facilitator. May be worn by the group in examining the parameter of the discussion. - A process that determines how things are going to go. - Blue=Color of sky—a higher perspective. Look at the big picture.
	<u>Information:</u> (Newspaper) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The data hat. It is important to know what you know. - Looks at facts, figures, information. - Identifies gaps in knowledge. - What do we know for sure, what are the facts?
	<u>Emotions:</u> (Heart-feelings) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do you feel about that? - Focuses on hunches, intuition, instinct, gut feeling. - The Holy Spirit moves on us, we know it is wrong but don't know why. - No need to justify how I am feeling, just express it.
	<u>Creativity:</u> (Newness) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be creative, cultivate new ideas, explore possibilities. - Considers other options. Looks for smarter, better solutions. - This might work... - IDEAS.
	<u>Optimism:</u> (Sun) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the benefits of this idea, the good points? - What are the positives? - How can we make this happen? - Enthusiasm, support, optimism prevails.
	<u>Judgment:</u> (Judge's black robe) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deals with weaknesses, flaws, & assumptions. - Critical, look at the downside, potential problems. - What are the negatives, pitfalls, shortcomings, weak links? - This is not of the devil. Don't brush off the critical thinker. The expression of healthy negativity is an important aspect of decision making. - Why could this fail? Is this feasible? - A cautious approach.

- All participants should wear the same hat at any given point in time.
- Brainstorming using six thinking hats is most productive when the participants come from varied age groups and backgrounds, thereby bringing different experiences to the table.
- The hats can be worn in any sequence and as many times as required. The sequence of white, red, green, yellow and black is a good sequence to start with when another pattern is not obvious.
- Judgment, caution, and cynicism should be completely avoided (easier said than done) while wearing the white, red, green and yellow hats.

You can also think of the hats as pairs: **White & Red** **Black & Yellow** **Green & Blue**