

Team Meetings

Strong relationships are the foundation of effective team meetings and harmony within the church. Conducting just church business with your leaders is not enough. Build strong relationships by creating social opportunities through shared meals, coffee outings, lunch appointments and light-hearted times together. Where possible, let these gatherings include leaders' spouses. Many will become very good friends. This not only strengthens the church's wellbeing but also helps keep emotions measured when differing viewpoints are expressed.

Decision making is a crucial part of pastoring and leading a team, where much grace and wisdom is needed. In the team it is important to build trust. To do this try to think in terms of *win/win* situations, not one person losing and another winning. We are part of an interdependent body in the church and God desires that we strive to live at peace with one another. For this reason, I am inclined more towards deciding by a consensus than by formal resolutions being passed and voted upon.

It is sometimes good to send out an agenda before a decision-making body meets, so that people can begin to think and pray through the issues that will be discussed. However, at that stage they may not be completely aware of all the issues involved. An agenda must never be used beforehand to boost arguments and support. Remember, try to think in terms of *win/win* and creative alternatives giving time for others to adjust to new thinking. If the agenda is important keep to it and don't waste time diverting.

It is helpful to begin a meeting with a good prayer time rather than leaving it until the end. This sets a positive tone and can significantly improve the meeting's effectiveness. Some teams also choose to open with a brief devotional thought, and this responsibility can be shared among different members.

A good chairperson does not have a hidden agenda but listens hard and gathers opinions. He will later crystallise those ideas into words for the benefit of the group and the discussion. The pastor is not always the best chairperson as they may feel very strongly about the issues discussed and a good chairperson needs to be generally less emotional though firm. It is up to that person to draw the discussion to a conclusion.

Important decisions should be recorded and carried out without being added to or altered outside of the meeting, unless the other team members are consulted first. Keep minutes brief where they are referred to in the next meeting. Before the next meeting is held, it is useful for the chairperson or a leader to contact the 'worker' to check that the task allotted to them has been done or at least started. Sensitivity may be required here as many people are very reliable in carrying out tasks delegated to them.

If team members do not handle any responsibility, they may initially feel pleased that little is required of them but later feel dissatisfied that their involvement seems to count for nothing. Give them responsibilities. It helps them grow and mature.