



A SIMPLE GUIDE TO

CHURCH MEETINGS

*The Secrets to Meetings People Actually
Want to Attend*



Don't Just Meet to Meet.

Research reveals that there are numerous reasons church attendees don't participate or desire to be present for church meetings. From a lack of sensitivity to time to meeting without a clear purpose, people feel that church meetings are more of a necessary evil than a joyful fellowship. Therefore, there was a need to develop a tool that guides leaders and teams in hosting meetings that are meaningful and sensitive to the needs of those who attend. To this end, this book was written.

To offset or address the myth that we should meet as a matter of routine or "because we were scheduled to meet," I suggest that meetings should only take place when the following five factors are present:

1. The meeting **serves a critical purpose** in the organization's effectiveness in fulfilling its mission.
2. The meeting has been designed to **provide all present with a meaningful and valuable voice**.
3. The meeting **reflects the best stewardship of the time** of those present.
4. The **goal of the meeting is clear**, and the outcomes are measurable.
5. The meeting's **high-quality execution** affirms the congregation's commitment to excellence in business, ministry, and community.

By only meeting when these factors are present, our gatherings will have a different sense of purpose and function. Also, the participants will feel as if their time, energy, and lives are considered and valuable to those calling the meeting and the congregation.

This book has been written to provide a simple guide and blueprint for how to design, create, and implement meetings that will be meaningful, fulfilling, and based on clear, measurable goals that can be articulated and accomplished.

Though this book is primarily designed for churches, it can also serve any organization, group, family, or person who desired to streamline and upgrade the quality of their meetings.

Informational

M E E T I N G S

What is the purpose?

The purpose of these meetings is to share information or reports concerning ministry function, previous activity or planned activity.

Types of informational meetings

*Business Meetings
Committee Meetings
Ministry Meetings
Leadership Meetings
Team Trainings*

Pre-Meeting

C H E C K L I S T

Who should participate in the meeting?

Only invite those for whom the information is relevant to their role or their team's role in the organization. In certain instances, you may invite other leaders or teams whose function may be impacted by the information shared or who may provide helpful insight.

Who should lead the meeting?

Identify the key roles to be involved in leading the meeting. Some recommended roles may be:

- a. *Moderator* (usually the team President, Pastor, CEO, or Chairperson)
- b. *Recording Secretary* (to take notes from the meeting)
- c. *Parliamentarian* (for meeting decorum and order)
- d. *Time-keeper* (to track and provide alerts pertaining to time)

How much time should be allotted for the meeting?

Plan for enough time for highlights, detailed discussion, and a question-and-answer period. Provide an allotted time for each item (including opening and closing) and use that as your total time period. Set the total time in 15-minute increments (eg. 1:15pm, 2:30am)

Where should the meeting be held?

Choose an area that can accommodate the entire group of invitees, if possible, and provide seating that allows them to face each other during the conversation. Use a space with a clear line of sight for the speaker(s).

Who will be making presentations at the meeting?

Decide who will moderate the meeting. Also, consider whether there are multiple speakers and how long the transition between speakers will take. Will the moderator introduce all speakers or will the current speaker introduce the next one?

How will the information be presented?

Determine how the information will be presented. Consider whether the information will be presented verbally, in print, electronically, or on a screen. Consider this for each of the following areas:

- a. The meeting agenda
- b. Reports
- c. Main Presentation(s)
- d. Polls (for voting)

Always consider how those involved will store the information and what might make record-keeping easier. Also, consider how to dispose of remaining materials after the meeting. Have you considered recycling or shredding to protect sensitive information and promote eco-friendliness?

What will be the meeting times?

Consider the available window and determine the time that works best for the location and travel arrangements of those involved. Next, decide whether the meeting should be in person or online. Also, evaluate the sensitivity of the information being shared to choose the appropriate platform. Some of the more popular online meeting platforms are:

- a. Zoom
- b. Microsoft Teams
- c. Free Conference Call (audio only)

******For emergency meetings, If the meeting is time-sensitive, an online or conference call might be the best option if the group involved is more than five people.

How should the information about the meeting be communicated?

Meeting communication should be sent at least two weeks prior to the meeting. The message should include the following:

- a. Group or Nature of Meeting (Planning Committee, Deacons, etc.)
- b. Date
- c. Time
- d. Location
- e. Goals / Items of Discussion

For a one-time meeting, you can use text messaging or a platform such as Eventbrite or Evite (to provide a system to RSVP).

To notify people about regularly scheduled meetings, you can create a group chat using an app designed for this purpose or use group text messaging. Here are some recommended group text apps:

- a. GroupMe
- b. Slicktext
- c. Slack

Use the scan below to download all links mentioned:



What belongs on the meeting agenda?

First, identify the meeting's goals. *Identify the top three to five goals this meeting will accomplish.* List them from most important to least important. This will help you prioritize the time to ensure the primary items are covered. Second, consider which items will allow you to meet those goals and add them to your agenda. Consider the following items to include:

- a. Meditation / Devotion / Prayer Time
- b. Updates (last 30-60 days)
- c. Upcoming Events (next 30-60 days)
- d. Sub-committee Reports
- e. Financial Report
- f. Special Presentation
- g. Mission Highlights
- h. Thank You's

Finally, add the items to the agenda that will accomplish the goals. Assign allotted times to each item (provide time for discussion, as needed).

Scan this link to download a meeting agenda template:



Hint: For further information concerning meeting structure, voting, decorum, or parliamentary procedures, the standard document is **Robert's Rules of Order**. Scan the code below to visit the site or buy the book.



Pre-Meeting Cheat Sheet Checklist

- o What is the purpose of this meeting?
- o Who needs to participate in this meeting?
- o Where should we host the meeting? Will it be in person or online? If online, which platform needs to be used?
- o How much time should be allocated for the meeting?
- o What are the start and end times for the meeting?
- o What are the top five goals for this meeting?
- o Who will be presenting at the meeting? Who will be moderating the meeting?
- o What presentations need to be included in the meeting?
- o How and when should the meeting be communicated?

Meeting

IMPLEMENTATION

Prepare to begin 30 minutes before the start time

To prevent the appearance of unreadiness, position yourself and the setup team to complete your preparations well before the meeting begins. This allows early arrivers to see that the space has been thoroughly prepared for the participants.

For example, if the meeting is scheduled for 8:00 AM, the room should be fully prepared by no later than 7:30 AM.

Offically open the meeting

Formally open the meeting by calling it to order and clearly stating the purpose of the meeting (e.g., “I call the Pastor’s Anniversary meeting to order.”).

Provide a meeting overview

After officially opening the meeting, provide a brief overview of how the meeting will proceed according to the agenda and let the participants know if there are any changes to the agenda at this time.

Follow the written agenda (with corrections)

Once the meeting begins, follow the agenda as outlined.

Offically close the meeting

Before closing, review any key items discussed, thank the presenters and participants, and check for unaddressed concerns. Formally close the meeting with prayer and adjournment or dismissal.

Protect the meeting time

Because you have identified start and end times, it is the moderator's job to guard the agenda in such a manner that honors that window. This means that the moderator will:

- a. Protect against "extended" responses or discussions.
- b. Keep the meeting moving from one item to the next.
- c. Establish clear ground rules for discussions that will be time-sensitive.

Make room for "audibles."

An 'audible' is a football term that refers to a player changing the expected play at the last minute. There will be occasional moments when the moderator or a participant may notice an organizational or cultural issue that is inconsistent with the values or desired outcome of the organization or the presence of an emergency that must be addressed. To address it, the agenda may need to be paused to "express" the standards of the organization or address an immediate need. The following situations may require an audible:

- a. A participant expresses an emergency or loss that requires immediate prayer or emotional support.
- b. A participant exhibits a behavior that is inconsistent with the organization's values.
- c. A procedural concern arises, and the bylaw or prior decision needs to be referenced for clarity.
- d. A medical emergency happens, requiring an immediate crisis response.

As much as possible (and according to circumstance), the audible response should be limited to 5 to 7 minutes. In rare cases, the meeting may need to be entirely redirected to address the issue and achieve a proper resolution. In cases of the latter, depending on the severity of the issue, the meeting may need to be rescheduled.

Post-Meeting

F O L L O W - U P

Follow-up “Thank you”

Within 72 hours of the meeting, send a thank you message to the participants. This message should not only express appreciation of attendance, but also it should include a reminder of the next steps to be taken. It can also include a ‘save the date’ note that informs them of the next meeting date. Finally, you can include meeting highlights or key bullet points as a brief summary of the meeting.

Review the Meeting Notes

Take a moment to review the notes for any action items that the moderator may have recommended or committed to completing. Set a date and time to complete each action.

Prayer of Gratitude

After the meeting, spend a moment in prayer and express gratitude to the Lord for a productive meeting. Here is a prayer you can use:

Heavenly Father, thank you for another successful meeting period. Now, let us align our hearts with your will for this team and the organization as a whole. Grant us the diligence to carry out every assignment and adopt those actions discussed in a way that increases our personal proficiency and the productivity of our organization. In Jesus’ name, I ask this, Amen.