

5 Ideas for Efficient and Productive Meetings

The word “meeting” does not have to make us cringe. Well-meaning ministry leadership teams can grow frustrated with meetings. . . . lack of preparation, no end in sight, meandering conversations, dominating personalities, getting off topic, and lack of accountability . . . to name a few of the frustrations leaders experience.

The following list is a selection of some top ways to have efficient and productive meetings:

1. **Submit and read minutes, reports, and proposals in advance of the meeting**
- Email the agenda, reports, minutes, and proposals to the leadership team at least three business days in advance of the meeting. Eliminate general discussion of reports. If there are issues to discuss related to any of the reports, add those issues to the agenda as discussion items.
2. **Start on time and end on time** - Honor people’s time by starting on time and ending on time. Agree upon the length of your meetings and stick to it. If you must run a meeting longer than the allotted time due to some urgent matter, then agree upon the number of minutes added.
3. **Restrict Old Business and New Business items to formal proposals** - Action items should have written proposals submitted in advance (no open-ended discussion topics). After the introduction to a motion, be sure to get a motion and a second before formal discussion. The discussion needs to stay on topic (the chairperson needs to insure this). The motion will be passed, tabled until a future meeting, or defeated. (Have a separate section in the meeting for discussion topics).
4. **Control discussion items** - Stick to the topic at hand (the chairperson needs to insure this). Prevent going off on tangents. Once people are repeating themselves, dominating the conversation, or losing control of their emotions, it’s time to rein in the conversation. Consider assigning a subcommittee to address the issue before the next meeting and bring forth a written proposal with the necessary background information and rationale.
5. **Build in an accountability piece** - Healthy accountability is a good thing. If any participants committed to an action item/task at the last meeting, check to see if it was accomplished.

Remember that leaders lead - It is difficult and impractical for a leadership team to decide multiple items by committee; this usually leads to indecisiveness and paralysis. Ministry is propelled forward when leaders bring well thought out formal proposals to which the rest of the team can react.