

Sample Committee Handbook

Leadership, Committees, and Decision Making

Purpose

This sample is designed to help churches create clear, usable leadership and governance resources. It should be adapted to fit the church constitution, bylaws, doctrinal commitments, polity, size, staffing model, and applicable law.

Use Note

This document is a sample resource, not legal advice. Church leaders should review all final language with qualified legal counsel and ensure it matches the church's governing documents.

How to Use This Sample

This handbook provides a practical framework for committee members, committee chairpersons, staff liaisons, and church leaders. It is intended to clarify expectations, improve meetings, protect unity, and help committees serve the mission of the church.

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Tip: In Microsoft Word, you may insert or update a table of contents after editing this sample.

1. Introduction

Committee service is an act of stewardship. Committee members help the church make wise decisions, support ministry leaders, and strengthen trust within the congregation. Committees do not exist merely to hold meetings. They exist to help the church fulfill its mission with clarity, accountability, and care.

Sample Scripture

For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Romans 12:4 to 5, ESV

2. Biblical Foundation for Shared Leadership

The church is a body made up of many members. Healthy committee service recognizes that God gives different gifts to different people for the building up of the church. Shared leadership should never replace pastoral leadership or congregational responsibility. Instead, it should help the church steward wisdom, discernment, and accountability.

3. Purpose of Committees

- To help the church carry out its mission faithfully.
- To provide prayerful counsel and accountability in assigned areas of ministry.
- To support staff and ministry leaders rather than duplicate their responsibilities.
- To make recommendations, review information, and complete assigned work within the authority granted by the church.
- To model unity, humility, and spiritual maturity.

4. Expectations for Committee Members

- Maintain personal spiritual growth through worship, prayer, Scripture, and obedience to Christ.
- Support the mission, doctrine, and governance of the church.
- Pray for the church, its pastors, staff, ministries, and members.
- Attend meetings faithfully and arrive prepared.
- Speak truthfully, charitably, and constructively.
- Keep confidential matters confidential.
- Complete assigned tasks in a timely manner.
- Help clarify misinformation and foster unity within the church.

5. Meeting Practices

- Meetings should have a clear purpose and written agenda.
- Meetings should begin and end on time.
- The chair or staff liaison should identify the decision rights for each agenda item before discussion begins.
- Members should listen well, speak clearly, and avoid personal attacks.
- Prayer should be a meaningful part of committee work.
- Minutes or a decision log should be maintained for all official actions and recommendations.
- When possible, materials should be provided before the meeting.

6. Committee Organization

Role	Primary Responsibilities
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Role	Primary Responsibilities
Staff Liaison or Ministry Leader	Develops agendas, provides needed information, connects committee work to ministry operations, and communicates with appropriate staff or church leadership.
Committee Chair	Helps guide the meeting, keeps discussion focused, clarifies decision rights, ensures assignments are tracked, and reports recommendations when needed.
Committee Member	Participates prayerfully, prepares for meetings, offers counsel, completes assigned work, and supports final decisions.
Recording Secretary or Assigned Recorder	Maintains minutes, attendance records, decision logs, action items, and follow up notes.

7. Decision Making

Committees should know what kind of decision they are making before they begin discussion. Some decisions are recommendations to another body. Some are decisions delegated to the committee. Some are simple input sessions. Confusion about authority often creates unnecessary conflict.

Decision Type	Description	Example
Input Only	The committee offers advice, but another person or group decides.	The staff asks the Facilities Committee for input on room setup options.
Recommendation	The committee recommends action to the church, council, board, or another authorized body.	The Personnel Committee recommends a ministerial staff hire.
Delegated Decision	The committee has been given authority to decide within defined boundaries.	The Stewardship Committee approves a budgeted expenditure within its authority.
Congregational Decision	The matter must be presented to the congregation under the bylaws.	Calling a pastor, adopting bylaws, purchasing property, or approving a major capital project.

8. Sample Committee Descriptions

Committee	Sample Purpose	Suggested Meeting Rhythm	Accountability
Church Council	Coordinates major policy and ministry direction, reviews policy recommendations, and helps ensure alignment between church mission and church administration.	Monthly or as needed	Church or bylaws
Nominating Committee	Recommends members for elected committees and ad hoc teams according to the bylaws.	As needed	Church Council or church
Personnel Committee	Assists with staff related matters, personnel policies, compensation recommendations, and ministerial staff search processes as assigned.	As needed	Church or bylaws
Stewardship or Finance Committee	Provides oversight and recommendations related to budget, financial reporting, internal controls, and stewardship policies.	Monthly or quarterly	Church or bylaws
Trustees	Serve as legal officers or property representatives according to the bylaws and state law.	As needed	Church
Facilities Committee	Reviews facility needs, maintenance priorities, safety concerns, and long range property stewardship.	Quarterly or as needed	Church Council or staff leadership

9. Sample Agenda

Agenda Item	Time	Decision Right	Notes
Opening prayer and Scripture	5 min	N/A	Focus the group spiritually.

Agenda Item	Time	Decision Right	Notes
Review previous action items	10 min	Chair manages	Confirm completed and pending items.
Ministry or financial update	15 min	Input only	Members ask clarifying questions.
Main decision item	30 min	Recommendation or delegated decision	Clearly state the decision before discussion.
Assignments and next steps	10 min	Leader decides with input	Assign names and due dates.
Closing prayer	5 min	N/A	Pray for unity and faithfulness.

10. Sample Minutes Template

Item	Information
Committee Name	
Date and Time	
Location	
Members Present	
Members Absent	
Staff Present	
Opening Prayer	
Summary of Discussion	
Decisions or Recommendations	
Action Items	Name, task, due date
Next Meeting	
Minutes Prepared By	

11. Committee Member Acknowledgment

I have received and reviewed this Committee Handbook. I understand that committee service is a spiritual responsibility and that I am expected to serve with prayerfulness, preparation, humility, confidentiality, and unity.

Name	Signature	Date