

## **How to Run a Successful Meeting**

**State The Purpose:** Clearly state the purpose of the meeting. Many meetings are doomed before they start by improperly set expectations.

**Greetings And Introductions:** Meetings happen through speaking and listening. Greet each person and provide the opportunity for each person to get to meet others.

**Have An Agenda:** Prepare the agenda and send it out to committee members before the meeting. Make copies for those who don't bring the agenda. At the beginning of the meeting, ask if there is something members would like added to the agenda.

**Minutes:** Go over minutes from last meeting.

**Be On Time:** Start on time and end on time. Set limits for each agenda item. Have a time-keeper. If you feel that you require more time, ask permission to go over, or you can arrange for another time.

**Be Prepared:** Often this means making phone calls before the meeting and gathering needed materials. Make arrangements for someone to take minutes on the agenda, discussion points, and action items.

**Maintain Focus:** Give people something to look at as well as to listen to. Have participants *involved*. May need a monitor—one whose role is to call attention to the times when the discussion is off the topic. You can have a prop that can be picked up and waved by anyone. The main thing here is to have some process for handling getting off track.

**Converting Words Into Action:** Accomplishments happen when people take action. One way to move into action is with a request. You can ask, "Does someone want to do this?" Sometimes this works, but when it doesn't try asking, "Jim—will you ask the minister if we can paint her cat blue and report back on what she said at our next meeting?" The structure of the request is simple: Who will do what by when. A well-formed request says what is to be done and how will we know it was done. Also, a request without a due date seldom produces action. To be effective, requests are recorded, tracked, and reviewed at each meeting.

**Review The Meeting:** Successful meetings take effort and produce accomplishment. Schedule time near the end of the meeting to review what happened and acknowledge the effort. When people feel good about themselves and what's happening, they are more likely to make an extra effort to get things done.

**Set the Next Meeting Time:** It's a good idea to have people bring their calendars to every meeting.

**The Last Word:** Allow each person the opportunity to say whatever they wish as a last word for the meeting. Pay attention, because this may be where the most valuable contribution is made.