



Tips for Facilitators:

- Remain neutral
- Focus the group's energy
- Keep the group on task
- Direct processes
- Encourage participation
- Protect members or ideas from attack
- At the end of each agenda item, take time to agree on next steps and establish specific commitments and clear deadlines
- Elicit clarity concerning meeting follow-up (send out follow-up emails on commitments made including clear and concise meeting notes)



Four "P's" for Attendees:

- **Prepare.** Prepare for every meeting by reviewing the agenda and previous meeting notes; additionally, read all pre-meeting study material
- **Pray.** Include the parish in your prayer intentions
- **Participate.** Participate in the discussion, listen carefully to others; focus energy on the issues at hand; make a commitment to regular and on-time attendance
- **Perform.** Follow through on any commitments that you make

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PASTORAL SERVICES

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Recommendations for Church Meetings



**Department of
Pastoral Services**



What makes a Church Meeting Different?

Mission. At the heart of everything we do as a parish is the mission of Jesus Christ proclaimed by the Gospels and taught by the Church. Everything we do should be animated and inspired by Jesus' words in Matthew 28:19-20 "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you, and behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

Community. Prayer helps Christians experience the value and joy of community both with God and with other members of the people of God. It is a source of personal and communal integration. Set aside at least 15 minutes of each meeting for prayer. Offer members the opportunity to pray with one another in order to deepen their individual and communal holiness and provide a foundation for the meeting's work.

A resource for prayers and faith sharing can be found on the Pastoral Services webpage: <https://ps.dor.org/pastoral-council-and-parish-governance/>

Meeting Practices

- Provide an agenda and any pre-meeting study material prior to meeting
- Start on time
- Open with prayer and faith sharing
- Set expectations
- Stay on topic
- Time check regularly
- Close with prayer
- End on time

Agendas

- List previous action items, specific commitments, and deadlines
- Include a timeline identifying who is responsible for presenting each item
- Incorporate topics related to one of the areas of Church Mission (Worship, Service, Evangelization, etc.)

Meeting Notes/Minutes

Items to be included:

- The date of the meeting
- Members present, excused or absent
- Agenda items discussed or tabled
- Recommendations and decisions
- Open action items (including who is responsible, what is to be accomplished and by when)
- Date, time and location of next meeting

Facilitating Meetings

During each meeting, it is important to have someone responsible for keeping the conversations on track and to ensure that each member's voice is heard.

Facilitators are:

- **"People" people.** Facilitators recognize that all members have something valuable to contribute.
- **Active listeners.** Facilitators give the speaker full attention in a deliberate effort to understand the speaker's position including any underlying needs or concerns.
- **Multitaskers.** Facilitators are required to keep track of various items simultaneously: time, questions, outstanding issues to be addressed, and who is waiting to speak. They keep everyone on track. Sometimes two people share these roles.
- **Excellent Communicators.** Facilitators know what questions to ask in order to encourage participation. They are patient and respectful communicators. Facilitators summarize what has been said in order to aid clarity.
- **Valuable Liaisons.** Facilitators seek connections between seemingly competing ideas in order to find the common ground. They summarize where the individual members stand on a particular issue and they invite the group to continue with a productive dialogue in order to achieve agreement.

Good facilitators help members work effectively together. They manage over talkers both inside and outside of the meeting, pointing out the need for others to speak up while expressing appreciation for their contribution.