

THE
DISCIPLESHIP
PLACE

Exploring Nazarene
History and Polity



SESSION 10

Local Church Administration

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Local Church Administration

SESSION OVERVIEW

Church Meeting

Church Board

Church Finances

Church Staff

Church Discipline

Application

Exam

Discussion Guide for Mentor and Participant

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you should:

- understand and explain the *Manual* stipulations on the administration of the local church

INTRODUCTION

This session considers some of the issues concerning administration at the local church level. Church meetings, Church Board, staff ministry, discipline, and finances are addressed in the *Manual*. The issue of discipline raises the connected topic of conflict resolution.

CHURCH MEETING



NOTES

The shared democracy of the Church of the Nazarene polity was dependent upon two important structures of government, the church meeting and the Church Board. While the Church Board continues to function, the church meeting still exists but is not as vital in many settings. In fact, many congregations bypass the oral reports of former church meetings to publish them in a booklet. Even though the vitality of church meetings may have lessened in many congregations, there is formal business that must be transacted in a business meeting format. Thus, these meetings require general guidelines and procedures. (*Manual*, paragraph 113-113.15)

The church may have annual or special meetings. Public notice for annual meetings is an announcement from the pulpit for at least two Sundays prior to the meeting. Special meetings must receive public notice in two preceding regular services. The pastor or Church Board may call these special meetings after receiving permission from the pastor, district superintendent, or the general superintendent. Those voting in the meetings must be active members who have reached their 15th birthday. If the civil law requires particular procedures for calling or conducting annual or special meetings, then these procedures are to be followed. The pastor, district superintendent, general superintendent, or a representative of the latter two may conduct the meetings.

Two of the primary acts of business at the annual meeting are reports from various officers of the church and election of officers and delegates to the District Assembly. The reports may be distributed in a book form and the elections are often conducted outside of the meeting itself if the church has a polling area in the church. Special meetings may elect a pastor or review the relationship between the pastor and the congregation.

A nominating committee is required to create the ballot for the elections. The pastor chairs the committee of three to seven members. The candidates must indicate they are in harmony with paragraph 33 of the *Manual*. This paragraph requires that church officers must profess the experience of entire sanctification. Their living must reflect a Christian lifestyle, and they must be in agreement with the doctrines, polity, and practices of the Church of the Nazarene. Finally, the candidates must support the church with their tithes and attendance.

CHURCH BOARD



NOTES

The traditional format of a Church Board has been the division into stewards and trustees. In addition, there are those officers who are members of the board because of their elected position, such as the Sunday School superintendent and the presidents of the local chapters of the Nazarene Youth International and the Nazarene Missions International.

The stewards focus upon the business of church growth, care for the needy, new membership, service opportunities, worship, and assistance in the Lord's Supper. The trustees hold the responsibility for the church property and the finances of the local congregation. A local church, with the approval of the district, may configure their board in alternative ways. The secretary of the Church Board holds a significant place of responsibility in the local church. He or she reports the votes concerning the new pastor to the district superintendent as secretary of all annual and special meetings; is the recorder and holder of official minutes and papers of the church; and signs legal documents of the church with the pastor.

The second office is church treasurer, who keeps the financial records of the church and supervises the handling of offerings and funds within the church. The church board takes office at the beginning of the church year and shall have at least a bimonthly meeting and shall meet specially when called by the pastor or district superintendent. The Church Board represents the shared power between lay and clergy within the local church. The Church Board has indirect responsibility over each activity of the church. (*Manual*, paragraphs 127 - 144)

CHURCH FINANCES



NOTES

The local administration of finances has certain stipulations placed upon it by the *Manual*. (See paragraph 32 – 32.5) One of the tasks of a minister is casting the vision of stewardship of time and money. The pastor may also be required to raise funds for special projects. Certainly, the economic context of the local church and its parishioners affects the nature of the enterprise. Yet, all ministers are bound by certain guidelines.

The obligation of stewardship is to be brought before the congregation. The *Manual* bases its understanding of stewardship on the view that God owns everything and we are held to be accountable to God. The admonition is given: “To this end all His children (of God) should faithfully tithe and present offerings for the support of the gospel.” (*Manual*, paragraph 32)

The concept of stewardship and tithing extends beyond the individual to the church. This returns our discussion back to the General Budget or the World Evangelism Fund. Local churches are expected to have the vision of supporting the Nazarene community at its various district, educational, and general levels, including the task of evangelizing the world.

Since the 1920s, the budget system has been the method through which Nazarenes have supported concerns beyond their local church. Both the individual and the local church must catch the vision of stewardship. The individual must see his or her responsibility to support both the local and the general church.

The raising of funds carries certain stipulations by the *Manual*. The method of support is to be through voluntary contributions through tithing and offerings. Caution is given that no fund-raising method should be employed that detracts from the principle of regular tithing.

The Church of the Nazarene does not endorse games of chance or any other means of raising funds that would supplant the tithes and offering within a local congregation. The *Manual* also regulates any financial appeals to other local churches or members, by requiring such appeals to be within the assembly district of the local church, and to have the approval of the district superintendent and the District Advisory Board. (*Manual*, paragraphs 32.2 and 156)

NOTES

The trustees have the lay responsibility for financial planning and the raising of funds. The church treasurer is to receive, disburse, and keep records, and present annual financial reports. The *Manual* places restrictions on the handling of funds by the pastor. “The pastor and members of his or her immediate family are prohibited from creating financial obligations, spending funds, counting moneys, or having unrestricted access to financial accounts of the church. The church board or church meeting may, by majority vote, request an exception from the District Advisory Board and district superintendent. If the district superintendent and a majority of the District Advisory Board approve the exception, the district superintendent will provide written approval of the request to the church board secretary, who will record the action in the church records. Immediate family shall include spouse, children, siblings, or parents” (*Manual*, paragraph 127).

The *Manual* regulates entering into debt through the purchase of real estate, the renting of real property, the building of a new building(s), or a major remodeling of current facilities. The local church must have the approval of the district for these actions. The local church may not purchase or sell real estate, enter into a mortgage, or conduct similar business without the approval of two-thirds of voting members in an annual or special meeting. One additional stipulation is that a church cannot mortgage its real estate in order to meet current expenses. (*Manual*, paragraphs 103 - 104.2)

CHURCH STAFF



NOTES

Assistants in the local church have a special relationship in terms of supervision and employment. Caution is first given in the *Manual* that paid assistants should not replace the voluntary ministry of laypersons and should not be a financial burden. The staff ministry is nominated by the pastor and elected by the Church Board. The assistant works primarily under the direction and discretion of the pastor. The assistant will not normally continue in employment without the support of the local pastor. (*Manual*, paragraphs 159 - 159.8)

Two additional issues apply to staff ministers. First, they cannot serve on the Church Board. When a pastor leaves, a staff minister may continue only if the Church Board makes the request for him or her to stay in the interim period. A new pastor may decide not to continue the employment of staff ministers. The *Manual* stipulates certain procedures to be followed in cases where the staff minister is dismissed prior to the end of his or her contract. (*Manual*, paragraph 159.4 - 159.5)

CHURCH DISCIPLINE



NOTES

Discipline in the local church can apply to both the pastor and lay members. The pastor may be removed from his or her position because of moral failure or other crises. A lay member may be removed from membership because of unchristian conduct. The lay member may be declared an inactive member because of his or her lack of involvement within the local church. The *Manual* contains the procedure for all of these situations. (*Manual*, paragraphs 109-109.5, 538 and 600 – 605.3)

The Membership Search, Audit, and Care publication gives guidance for the procedure to be followed in cases where members might need to be removed from membership. In addition to these particular situations, the pastoral review process exists to improve communication between pastors and congregation as well as to work through existing problems.

The issue of discipline raises the two issues of accountability and resolution of conflict. We are responsible to each other. The church must take action to attempt to rescue a minister or member who is destroying his or her witness and himself or herself because of unchristian conduct. The church also has an obligation to protect the innocent. The second issue of conflict resolution points to the significance of learning how to solve problems and to work with people. A church structure modeled on shared power, pastor, and congregation must learn to work with each other. The need for cooperation makes communication even more important during the interview process, to determine if a good fit exists between pastor and people in terms of their respective philosophies and goals of ministry.

APPLICATION

**NOTES**

1. Seek permission to attend a Church Board meeting to see how business is handled in your local church.
2. Secure a copy of the church budget and schedule a time to talk to the pastor about his or her philosophy of fund raising.
3. Read *Manual* paragraphs:
 - 113–114.1
 - 127–159.8
 - 500–502.6

See: http://whdl.org/sites/default/files/resource/book/EN_manual_2013-17.pdf

EXAM



NOTES

1. Annual meetings must receive public notice in an announcement from the pulpit for at least _____ Sundays prior to the meeting.
 - A. one
 - B. two
 - C. three
 - D. six
2. Special meetings must receive public notice in two preceding regular services.
 - A. True
 - B. False
3. Those voting in church meetings must be active members who have reached their _____ birthday.
 - A. 12th
 - B. 15th
 - C. 18th
 - D. 21st
4. Acts of business at the annual meeting do NOT include _____.
 - A. renewal of the pastor's tenure
 - B. reports from various officers of the church
 - C. election of officers
 - D. election of delegates to the District Assembly
5. _____ chairs the nominating committee of the local church.
 - A. Sunday School superintendent
 - B. Secretary of the Church Board
 - C. pastor
 - D. chairman of the trustees
6. _____ is the holder of official minutes and papers of the church and signs legal documents.
 - A. head trustee
 - B. pastor
 - C. secretary of the Church Board
 - D. treasurer

 **NOTES**

7. The following are stipulations for raising funds set forth by the *Manual* _____.
 - A. method of support is to be through voluntary tithes and offerings
 - B. contributions should come through tithes, offerings, and game revenues
 - C. tithes are assigned by the Church Board each year
 - D. members can purchase their own seats in the church

8. The Church of the Nazarene encourages games of chance or any means of funds that would add to tithes and offerings within a local congregation.
 - A. True
 - B. False

9. The pastor and members of his or her immediate family are prohibited from creating financial obligations, spending funds, counting moneys, or having unrestricted access to financial accounts of the church. The church board or church meeting may, by majority vote, request an exception from the District Advisory Board and district superintendent. If the district superintendent and a majority of the District Advisory Board approve the exception, the district superintendent will provide written approval of the request to the church board secretary, who will record the action in the church records.
 - A. True
 - B. False

10. No pastor or any member of his or her immediate family shall be authorized to sign checks on any church account except upon the written approval of the district superintendent.
 - A. True
 - B. False

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR MENTOR AND PARTICIPANT



NOTES

Be prepared to discuss the following with your mentor.

1. Do you know the regulations for public notice of a church meeting? What are they?
2. Do you understand what is involved in raising, budgeting, and handling finances? Talk about the process.
3. Do you understand the obligations of a church for discipline of its ministers and members? Talk about how disciple can positively impact the person and church.
4. How would you persuade someone to support the local church with his or her time and money?