



## Leading Boards & Committees<sup>1</sup>

Elders are members of the Church Board and often asked to serve on other church committees and boards. (Even though the *Church Manual* lists elders as Church Board members, in large churches, for practical reasons, often only a select number of elders serve on the Church Board.)

According to the *Church Manual*, the pastor is the chair of the Church Board although the pastor may designate an elder as Church Board chair. (Neither the Church Board nor the Church Business Meeting (on recommendation of the Nominating Committee) have the authority to elect the elder as chair of the Church Board. Only the pastor has the authority to designate the elder as chair of the Church Board.)<sup>2</sup> If you serve as chair of the Board or other committees, this section provides helpful guidance.

In order to fulfil their mission, churches need quality boards and committees. Effective leadership enables the church board to be a positive influence on the mission of the congregation. If you are asked to chair the board, these steps will help you provide effective leadership of the board. Even if you do not chair the board, this section offers valuable information for all board members.

- If the pastor asks you to serve as the board chair, you need to work closely with the pastor. Both of you need to know the agenda and review it before the meeting.
- Have an agenda — the agenda should be prepared and ideally distributed with the supporting material before the board meeting.

---

<sup>1</sup> Taken from <https://www.nadministerial.com/leading-boards-and-committees>

<sup>2</sup> *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, 19<sup>th</sup> edition., rev. 2015 (Silver Spring, MD: Secretariat of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2016). Pages 32, 74 & 131 state that the pastor may ask an elder to chair the church board.



- Give others the opportunity to submit items for the agenda; be certain to have a cut-off time for submission.
- Understand in advance what each agenda item is all about. For example, if the deacon or another person submits an item labelled “building needs,” the chair needs to know what that means. Does “building needs” mean expanding the building, major repairs to the building, or replacing a door? Is the individual submitting this item prepared to identify the needs and suggest some solutions? If a room needs new carpeting, is sufficient information (price, colour, choice, etc.) available so that the board can make a decision? If sufficient information is not available, the discussion may be time-consuming without a decision being made.
- Have a designated period of time for the board meeting. If properly planned, board meetings usually do not need to be longer than about 90 minutes. The board has the authority to designate the length of its meetings. If board members know the planned ending time, they will collectively work for that goal.
- Do not ask at the beginning or end of the meeting “Does anyone have anything else?” While the question sounds helpful, it opens the doors to unplanned discussion and potential conflict. If the item is important, the appropriate individuals or groups should have prepared in advance. If someone has an emergency item, that person should talk to the chair before the meeting begins.
- Remind the board members that they should be able to state their opinions on the agenda items and that the discussion is confidential. Board members are not authorised to reveal board meeting discussions outside of the church board setting.