

PROPER PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Why Parliamentary Law in a Christian organization?

But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way (1 Corinthians 14:40 NIV).

One of the most effective means for individuals to take action as a group is through the proper use of parliamentary procedure. Properly used, it maintains the basic principles of:

- Order — consideration of only one subject at a time
- Justice and equality — rule of the majority; right of the minority to be heard
- Courtesy — partiality toward none
- Right of absentee to be protected
- Everyday good manners and common sense all practiced in love and respect for one another.

Efficiently handled business in your group means:

- More time for program and fellowship
- More confidence on the part of your members as they participate in meetings.

Besides proper parliamentary procedure, other factors are of prime importance in developing a successful meeting. A drawn out, unplanned, disorganized, and uninteresting business meeting is a waste of time and results in boredom and frustration and discourages attendance at the next event.

Plan the Meeting:

1. Have an executive committee meeting early. Make sure each officer has a current copy of the *LWML Handbook* and guidelines for her respective office and a clear job description. The *LWML Handbook* and officer/committee guidelines can be downloaded from LWML website (lwml.org/posts/leadership/leader-development-and-training-tools).
2. Prepare an AGENDA well in advance of the meeting.
3. Keep it as short as possible, not cluttered with items that could be handled by a committee or the executive committee.
4. Ask the secretary to check the minutes of the last meeting for items of unfinished business. (The secretary should provide a copy of the minutes to the president soon after the meeting.)
5. Alert committee personnel as to their responsibilities at the meeting.
6. Perhaps have their reports typed and handed out in packets.
7. If a report is to be given orally, provide a time allotment.
8. If an item on the agenda will take considerable discussion, see that members have the information well before the meeting, so they have time to consider the item beforehand.

Before the Meeting:

1. Arrive early. Check physical arrangements: seating, lighting, ventilation, coffee breaks, visual aids, materials for distribution, offering procedure, instruction for meal service (if there is one).
2. An effective leader checks the little things one last time and makes discreet changes quickly.

During the Meeting:

1. Begin on time!
2. Introduce guests and program participants. Don't assume all know each other.
3. Preview meeting format, items of business to be discussed, projected time of adjournment. (This can be done with a printed program.)
4. Follow the agenda as closely as possible. Keep things moving without abruptly cutting off necessary and meaningful discussion.
5. Adjourn the meeting on time!

Shortly after the Meeting:

1. Thank the host group, guests and members who assisted in the program; it is nice to phone or send notes a few days later.
2. Evaluate the meeting: what worked well and what might be changed next time.
3. Follow through on decisions that were made, taking the necessary action to implement them.

Useful Resources Available for Download from the LWML Website:

- *LWML Handbook* (lwml.org/posts/leadership/leader-development-and-training-tools)
- *Parliamentary Basics for Everyone* (lwml.org/posts/handbook-resources/meeting-basics)
- *Parliamentary Procedures and Terms* (lwml.org/meetings)
- *Voting by Email* (lwml.org/meetings)
- *President Guidelines* (lwml.org/posts/handbook-resources/meeting-basics)
- Use the search window at lwml.org to find many useful tools by searching parliamentary or meetings

Other Helpful Resources:

- *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* (make sure you have the latest edition) available at lwml.org/meetings
- *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised in Brief*