

# LIFT

## Ministry Group July Resource

### Choosing the Right Meeting Format

**“Don’t call a full meeting when a five-minute conversation will do.”**

**-Patrick Lencioni-**

There is an architectural principle that applies to designing buildings, which can also be applied to designing meetings.

#### ***Form Follows Function***

Not every decision needs a boardroom. Sometimes a hallway chat can accomplish more than a sit down meeting. In fact, choosing the wrong format can waste the right people’s time.

A key leadership principle to remember is that the meeting should determine its format-not the other way around.

**Discussion:** How many meetings do you have with your leadership team? How long are those meetings? Does the form fit the function?

(Cont. on back)



### Meetings that Matter

*“The Holy Spirit can guide a boardroom just as powerfully as a sanctuary.”*

Although I couldn’t find the source to attribute this quote to, I wholeheartedly agree with its sentiment. The work of the Holy Spirit isn’t limited to our Sunday morning church services.

It’s easy to think of the sanctuary as the place where the Spirit moves-where we worship, pray, and feel God’s presence tangibly. But when we gather as church leaders around a table, not an altar, we must remember that we are still on holy ground.

Just as the Spirit of God can transform lives in a worship setting, the same spirit can transform a meeting from mundane to meaningful. The decisions made around those tables matter deeply. They shape ministries, impact lives, and steward God’s resources. We are not just managing a church, we are shepherding its mission.

**Discuss:** What is your general temperament towards meetings? What makes for a great meeting? What makes you want to avoid them?

### Choosing the Right Format Cont.

Let's look at a few types of meetings and the formats that best suit them:

1. **Classic Business Format** is best for board, finance and formal meetings. They should always include an agenda, should have minutes recorded, and follow a form of Roberts Rule of Order. These should last 90 minutes-2hrs max.
2. **Discussion Centered Format** is best for ministry team meetings and planning groups. Less formal, group discussion, assigned tasks, and follow up. These should last about one hour.
3. **Vision/Strategy Sessions** are best for annual planning and long-term direction. These are longer in nature, sometimes off-site to encourage brainstorming, goal setting, assigning responsibilities, and setting timelines. These major directional meetings may last from 4-8 hours.
4. **Stand-Up Meetings** are best for syncing up quickly, sharing key updates, aligning calendars, and troubleshooting immediate issues. These should only last 5-15 minutes.
5. **Sunday Morning Pre-Brief** is a way to connect with staff and volunteers prior to a worship service to pray, review key logistics, share a short devotion, and discuss any last minute concerns. These should last 10-15 minutes.
6. **Weekly "Pulse" Meetings** are a way for directors, staff, or teams to rehearse wins, discuss prayer needs, look ahead to the next two weeks, and discuss ministry expectations. These should last 20-30 minutes.

### How do we make a meeting meaningful in our local ministry context?

Meetings become more meaningful when we move beyond sharing updates and making decisions to aligning hearts, sharpening focus, and inviting God into the center of our conversations. Let's talk about some practical ways we can do that:

#### 1. **Start with prayer, Scripture or a short devotional.**

Rotate this responsibility among the group so that everyone has a voice. This empowers participation and prevents a one-person leadership culture.

**2. Revisit the mission.** It's good to remind everyone around the table why they are there. Re-state your ministry's mission, vision, and values. This can keep your team from drifting into maintenance mode.

**Discuss:** How often does your team meet without referencing the mission of your church? Is it assumed or is it communicated regularly?

**3. Check in with your team-spiritually.** Find out how they are doing on a spiritual level. How's their prayer and devotional life? The spiritual condition of your team will impact the decisions that are being made around that table.

**Discuss:** If not during these meetings, when and where do you discuss spiritual life with your key leaders?

#### 4. **Focus on discernment, not just decision-making.**

Often we rush to make a decision when we need to leave more time for reflection and prayerful consideration.

**5. Streamline the administrative stuff.** Share the agenda, financial reports, and updates ahead of time via email with your team. Use the meeting time for dialogue, not just date-sharing. It also improves efficiency and enables your team to show up better prepared mentally and spiritually.

**6. Foster open, respectful discussion.** Create space for diverse opinions and Spirit-led discussions. Use this time to promote vision beyond routine decisions.

**7. Celebrate progress.** Acknowledge wins, ministry successes, and growth moments. Celebration fuels hope.