

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

Church Governance: Moving from Meetings to Ministry - Episode 271

Effective Church Boards & Governance Models (Part 3)

The best volunteer engagement strategies will only work within the right governance framework. If we don't get governance right, the wrong people have control. The wrong roles get filled. The wrong priorities get promoted. And the wrong contributions get celebrated.

Not only does this impact the level of volunteer engagement in a church, it has consequences impacting the overall health of the ministry as a whole.

You can't be a healthy, thriving, growing church while prioritizing participation on boards and committees over engaging the ministry and the mission of the church. This week, Sean and Tony are unpacking three strategies to tackle these problems and encourage more people to move from meetings into ministry.

Three Steps for Moving from Meetings to Ministry

Step #1: Begin with governance changes.

Prune committees and boards as much as possible. Reduce the number of board members (ideally 5 to 9, regardless of church size) and reduce the number of additional committees (ideally NO additional committees).

A unified board model combines all the functions of committees into one board. Instead of these committees, you need a team of people to *do* the ministry rather than sitting in a meeting talking about how other people (staff and volunteers) should do the ministry. The more people we have sitting in committees, the fewer people we have actually engaging the mission of the church.

Step #2: Change your language and reporting structure.

Language: Eliminate "committee" and replace it with "team." Remove the perceived authority/control of a committee and replace it with a ministry role. Equip people to actually do the work of God.

Reporting: Make sure every team reports to a pastor or staff person.

Committees usually work the other way around—the pastor and staff are supposed to answer to the committees. It gives power, control and decision-making authority to people who, many times, are less qualified spiritually and professionally than the pastors and staff they are trying to direct. More importantly, it’s not biblical. Pastors and church staff are supposed to equip God’s people to do the work of God—not the other way around.

Step #3: Change what gets celebrated.

Celebrate the volunteers doing ministry... not the people serving on committees. If you’re going to recognize anyone on Sunday morning, bring your team volunteers forward to celebrate them and pray for them. Regularly share stories of team volunteers who are making a difference in someone else’s life. Thank team volunteers publicly and privately.

Celebration begins with building the team itself. **Don’t** promote or announce openings on boards and committees. **Only** promote and announce opportunities to volunteer on a ministry team.

Next Steps & More Resources

You can’t just prune committees and end meetings—you have to replace it with something more important to God’s plan for our lives: Cast vision for a more significant opportunity and responsibility of ministering to other people. Raise the bar for being involved in ministry.

Help people see that using their spiritual gifts to serve others is far more fulfilling than sitting in meetings. God has created us for **this** purpose. God did *not* create us to serve on a committee.

- **Read:** [15 Random Thoughts on Volunteer Engagement](#)
- **Watch:** “[How to Engage More Volunteers & Leaders](#)” Webinar Replay
- **Listen:**
 - [The Unexpected Benefits of a Healthy Volunteer Culture – Episode 256](#)
 - [Moving People from Services to Serving – Episode 257](#)
 - [Helping People Become More Like Jesus – Episode 258](#)
 - [Staffing to Increase Serving – Episode 259](#)

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Free Webinar: How to Get Your Church Governance Unstuck

Want to dive even deeper into this series' topics? On December 1, Tony Morgan, Amy Anderson, and special guests will help you identify the governance issues that may be holding your church back from healthy growth in 2023.

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