

CHURCH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION

17-STEP PROCESS

Step #1: The (senior) pastor chooses a group of five volunteer leaders (including the senior pastor) (or no more than nine people total) who will be the planning team (committee) for the church government process. Collectively, this group of people will actually write the new form of church government, using principles they learned from the Church Government Consultation process. These will be people who are strong members of the church, with positive attitudes toward change. They need to be people who are in Bible study regularly. They should be good at management and influencers within the congregation. They must be willing to participate in the work of the planning team as it is described in the following steps, and especially be available to attend the evening teaching session with the consultant regarding the various elements of a biblical church government (step #4 below). If they are unable to attend that evening teaching session, they must be informed beforehand that they cannot be on the planning team. This planning team is to be chosen prior to the onsite visit, with a list of their names, addresses, and e-mails sent to the Consultation Coordinator at Church Doctor Ministries at least 15 days before the onsite visit.

Step #2: All of the leaders and staff of the congregation participate in taking the Church Government Consultation Survey that is sent by Church Doctor Ministries. It is to be returned by the date signified by the Consultation Coordinator. There are three additional forms (Composite Membership, Historical Membership, and Per-capita Giving) to be filled out by the church and returned with the surveys. Once the surveys are completed the staff and leaders must read the *Restructuring the Church* monograph.

Step #3: The pastor leads the congregation (do not include any staff or leaders) in an opportunity, for those who are interested in the church government issue, to meet in a certain room at a certain time (perhaps following worship services). Those people who are interested are invited to take the same Church Government Survey the staff and leaders have already taken. Taking this Church Government Survey certifies each person to be an active participant at an Oral Report congregational meeting, to be led by the consultant. (Congregation needs to take survey at least one month before Oral Report.)

Step #4: The consultant comes to the church and begins with a late afternoon introductory meeting with the (senior) pastor. They then have a working meeting with the pastor and other key staff or leaders. This is followed in the evening for staff and leaders with teaching about church government, provided by the consultant. This should be in a setting with tables and there should be refreshments available. The consultant

shows the results of the survey and utilizes PowerPoint slides to teach the various elements of a biblical church government. This is followed by a question and answer session in which staff and leaders are allowed to process the information.

Step #5: The planning team meets with the consultant the next day to develop a plan of implementation and a process of change that will direct a new biblical church government, with sensitivity to the uniqueness of your congregation. The consultant takes notes during this planning team meeting. During the dinner hour, the consultant meets with the pastor and staff / or the planning team / or the staff to continue discussing the government issues of the congregation.

Step #6: After dinner, during the evening, the consultant presents to the same group of staff and leaders the implementation plan developed by the planning team. The consultant provides an opportunity for questions and answers, which provides further processing for that group.

Step #7: The consultant writes a report that includes the results of the survey, the planning and implementation direction developed by the planning team, which is refined in the discussion (step #6) during the evening.

Step #8: Thirty to forty days later the report will be sent to the church, in care of the senior pastor.

Step #9: The consultant returns to the congregation to provide an Oral Report. The consultant works during the day with the staff and planning team for approximately three hours (approximately 3:00 p.m. — 6:00 p.m.).

Step #10: In the evening the consultant gives the Oral Report, providing the results of the Church Government Survey taken by those members who expressed interest in the church government. The consultant provides teaching while showing the comparison PowerPoints of the staff/leaders and congregational members survey data. Active participants are allowed to respond with questions and answers written on 3 x 5 cards, collected and given to the consultant during a break. Members who did not complete the survey are allowed to attend the meeting, but are passive to the process and may only come to the meeting to listen. They may be seated in a “gallery” section of the seating, on the side or in the back. The consultant will explain why it is important to limit the discussion to those who have taken (and learned from) the survey.

Step #11: The planning team will come together again to write approximately 10-20 Action Plans (or one Action Plan with 10-20 steps) and will send this to the consultant for review. (Two months from the Oral Report.)

Step #12: The consultant reviews and returns a response in writing concerning the Action Plan(s) developed by the planning team.

Step #13: The consultant is available for support (via phone and e-mail) while the congregation implements the new church government. If there is a decision-making governance group that needs to decide whether or not to move forward on this new form of church government, when they meet to make that decision the planning team must be present, even if they are already on the governance group. The leadership of the church should be notified to **not** focus on the consultant's report, but on the planning team's report of the church government form they have chosen, so everyone realizes that the form of church government is not from the consultant. The consultant merely led people to recognize the biblical principles involved, while a group from the church actually developed a form of government based on how those biblical principles will look for your particular church.

Step #14: The church engages in a six- to twelve-month trial period of this new form of biblical church government (time length determined by the planning committee, with input from the staff).

Step #15: The staff, leadership, and planning committee conduct an open forum at the end of the trial period in which this church has been practicing the new form of biblical church government. The leadership may offer small changes based on the experience gained during the trial period.

Step #16: The planning team (or a group they choose) may rewrite the Constitution to reflect what the congregation has been practicing during the last six to twelve months.

Step #17: The congregation uses whatever system is necessary to approve this new Constitution, according to its polity. Some congregations, depending on their tradition or church body, may be required to also submit this new Constitution to some other authority for approval.

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