

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

Best Practices for Church Boards

Episode 170

Clarifying the Roles of Church Boards & Staff (Part 2)

Over the last 11 years of working with churches we've found that church governance is a key difference between healthy, growing churches and churches that are stuck or in decline. In this week's episode Tony Morgan and Sean Bublitz dig into the best practices for selecting board members and structuring your church board. Before we get started, if you haven't had a chance to listen to Part 1, take a few minutes to do that and ask yourself the questions:

- Are we healthy based on what we heard?
- What areas do we have some work to do as a team?

Best Practices for Selecting Board Members

- Leaders should be appointed to the board based on gifting, qualifications and alignment with your mission and vision and doctrine at your church.
 - Rather than having multiple candidates run against each other, think about this as a vote of affirmation. (Having people run against each other fosters division in churches.)
- Follow through with the rotation of leaders. Too often churches don't follow through and simply have the same leaders continue to serve for years on end.
- When churches rotate leaders, they get more intentional about raising up new leaders.
- Rotating leaders also helps create a board that reflects the diversity of your community (ethnic, gender, and multi-generational) and fosters fresh perspectives.
- Giving everyone a voice in decisions is a very American thing to do, but it's not a biblical approach to decision making in the context of churches.
- Make congregational votes as few as possible as they open up the opportunity for congregational division.

Best Practices for Structure

- There should only be one lay leadership board that handles all the responsibilities of previous boards and committees. (Most denominations allow for there to be one unified board and do not require multiple committees.)

- There should not be any subcommittees on the board—this just ends up being new committees and creates complexity.
- Structure the board so that the only person on the staff team who gets a vote is the senior pastor.
 - Otherwise it gets dysfunctional very quickly if the staff team that the senior pastor is leading is also voting. And you also want to avoid having staff members' spouses on the board.
- There is only one person accountable to the board—the senior pastor. All other roles are the responsibility of the senior pastor.

Next Steps

- **As a senior pastor, process these questions with someone close to you (and possibly, with your board):**
 - Am I doing my part to ensure a healthy relationship with the board?
 - Am I promoting good communication flow with the board so they have the information they need to make wise decisions?
 - When a conflict arises, do I keep short accounts and work through the conflict until we reach a healthy resolution?
 - Am I inviting an honest and healthy dialogue with the board about my leadership and the direction of our ministry?
 - Am I modeling a life fully devoted to Christ, and am I encouraging the board to do the same?
- **Want to dig deeper on this topic? Watch the [replay](#) of our webinar, [3 Keys of an Effective Church Board + Staff](#)**
- **Sign up for [Unstuck Leadership Coaching](#).**
Does your church need help navigating and building a healthy relationship between your lead pastor and board? Do you see an opportunity for growth? We want to come alongside you to help your church take the next steps towards building a healthy future. We help pastors and boards navigate those conversations and build a healthy structure and strategy for the future.
- For the last 11 years, we've been providing pastors and church leadership teams with an ally—coaching them as they lead their church. We can help you change the way you lead as you lead change. [Learn how to get started.](#)

Listen to the episode on iTunes or at theunstuckgroup.com/episode170.