

Growth Points

with Gary L. McIntosh, Ph.D.

Volume 20 Issue 5

PO Box 892589, Temecula, CA 92589-2589

May 2008

Responsibilities of the Governing Board

Members of church boards most often see themselves as responsible for the spiritual life of a congregation. While this is certainly one aspect of board governance, increased litigation, misuse of funds, and inappropriate behavior of some personnel has alerted board members to the necessity of providing better oversight of the policies, resources, and practices of their church. Thus, the following is a suggested list of basic board responsibilities that

A church board must design processes to monitor the legal, ethical, and financial responsibilities of the organization.

church leaders should take seriously in our current ministry climate.

1. A church board must design processes to monitor the legal, ethical, and financial responsibilities of the church.
2. A church board must review the budget and financial plan regularly to make certain they are consistent with the organization's mission, values, and policies.
3. A church board must report the church's activities and financial condition routinely to all donors.
4. A church board must require clear and up-to-date information from staff members on the church's internal operations, programs, and finances.
5. A church board must evaluate the fruitfulness of the church's programs, ministries, and services.
6. A church board must develop a written policy outlining the respective responsibilities of the board, senior pastor, and staff.

7. A church board must clearly describe working relationships, lines of authority, and proper communication between staff, volunteers, and board members.

8. A church board must design written procedures for handling misunderstandings and conflicts between the board and staff.

9. A church board must review its own effectiveness, and provide training and education to improve performance.

10. A church board must keep a written record of all proceedings, decisions, and meetings.

How many of the items in this list does your church board do well? Which areas does your board need to work on in the coming year?

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Profile of an Ideal Board Member

What do you want in a board member?

What does an ideal church board member look like? Consider the following ideas when selecting future board members in your church.

Character

- Meets the biblical qualifications of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.
- Is God-oriented rather than self-oriented.
- Is a person of prayer.
- Is committed to honesty, openness, and excellence.
- Is a discerning critical thinker without being judgmental.
- Shows board-sized faith.
- Has a servant-leader attitude, and is willing to work hard.

Beliefs

- Agrees with the church's mission, vision, values, statement of faith, and has a Christian world view.
- Is supportive of the pastoral leadership and enthusiastic about the church's future.

Skills

- Gives financially to the church.
- Accepts the time commitment involved in board leadership.

- Brings one of three resources to the board: wealth, wisdom, and/or a willingness to work.
- Is actively involved in church ministry.

Experience

- Has a record to successful leadership in other fields of work or service.
- Is able to work as part of a team.
- Has a wide network of friends and professional contacts.
- Is able to delegate effectively.
- Has a spouse (if married) who is supportive of him/her being on the church board.
- Has no hidden agenda or conflicts of interest.



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For information about training workshops, seminars, and church consultations call 951-506-3086.

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