

A QUICK GUIDE TO PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Parliamentary Procedure is a set of rules for conduct at meetings. Its purpose is to make it easier for people to work together effectively and to help groups accomplish their purposes. Parliamentary procedure provides for democratic rule, protection of rights and a fair hearing for everyone.

Although the ultimate decision on an issue rests with a majority, all members have such basic rights as the right to be heard and the right to oppose. The rights of all members-majority and minority-should be the concern of every member, for a person may be in a majority on one question, but in minority on the next.

Members get their say by making motions. A motion is a proposal that the assembly takes a stand or takes action on some issue. Members can present motions, second motions, debate motions and vote on motions. There are four general types of motions. They are:

- **Main motions** Main motions introduce subjects to the assembly for its consideration. They cannot be made when another motion is before the assembly. They yield to privileged, subsidiary and incidental motions.
- **Subsidiary motions** Subsidiary motions change or affect how the main motion is handled. They are voted on before the main motion.
- **Privileged motions** Privileged motions are most urgent. They concern special or important matters not related to pending business such as a motion to adjourn.
- **Incidental motions** Incidental motions are questions of procedure that arise out of other motions. They must be considered before the other motion.

To present a motion:

1. Obtain the floor
 - a. Wait until the last speaker is finished
 - b. Rise and address the chair
 - c. Give your name and church
2. Make your motion
 - a. Speak clearly and concisely
 - b. State your motion affirmatively ("I move that we...", instead of "I move that we do not...")
 - c. Avoid personalities and stay on the subject
3. Wait for a second
 - a. The chair will call for a second
 - b. If there is no second, your motion will not be considered
4. Chair restates your motion
 - a. The chair must say, "It is moved and seconded that we..."
 - b. After this happens, debate or voting can occur
 - c. Your motion is now "assembly property" and you can't change it without consent of the members
5. Expand on your motion
 - a. The mover is allowed to speak first
 - b. Direct all comments to the chair
 - c. Keep to the time limit for speaking
 - d. You may speak again after all other speakers are finished.
6. Putting the question
 - a. The chair will ask "Are you ready for the question?"
 - b. If there is no more discussion, or if a motion to stop debate is adopted, a vote is taken

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE AT A GLANCE

	To do this:	You say this:	may interrupt speaker	second required	debatable	amendable	vote needed	may be reconsidered
Main motion	Introduce new business	"I move that..."		x	x	x	majority	x
subsidiary motions	Temporarily suspend consideration of an issue	"I move to table the motion"		x			majority	
	Limit or extend the limits of debate	"I move that debate be limited (or extended) to ..."		x		x	majority	x
	Amend a motion	"I move to amend the motion by..."		x	x	x	majority	x
	Give closer study of something	"I move to refer the matter to committee"		x	x	x	majority	x*
	Postpone debate to a specific time	"I move to postpone this matter until..."		x	x	x	majority	x
	End debate and amendments	"I move the previous question"		x			2/3	x
Privileged motion	Adjourn the meeting	"I move that we adjourn"		x			majority	
	Call an intermission	"I move that we recess for..."		x		x	majority	
	Complain about noise, heat, etc.	"I rise to a question of privilege"	x					
Incidental motions	Protest breach of rules or conduct	"I rise to a point of order"	x				chair rules	
	Suspend rules temporarily	"I move to suspend the rules so that..."		x			2/3	
	Vote on a ruling of the chair	"I appeal the chair's decision"	x	x	x		majority	x
	Request information	"Point of information"	x					
Others	Take up a matter previously tabled	"I move that we take from the table..."		x			majority	
	Reconsider previous action	"I move to reconsider the vote on..."		x	x**		majority	

* unless committee has already taken up the subject

** unless the motion to be reconsidered is not debatable