



How do you know when it is time for a church Governance change?

1. Acknowledge that the structure is broken:

- Conduct an assessment within your church leadership
- What is our current structure?
- How do decisions get made? (authority) How do things get done? (structure)
- Is it working? Why or why not? (Is our current governance structure serving as a “sail” or an “anchor”? Is our current governance structure easy for someone new to the church to understand?)

(Suggested Reading: [Fruitful Organizational Structures](#)) – *coming soon*

2. Communicate findings:

- First with staff and Council/Board/Head Team (you may discern after the assessment that the system is not broken and not go ahead with the governance change)
- Explain that governance change is usually a two year process
- If you discern a governance change is necessary, communicate this to the larger congregation. Explain to them that there will be moments of grief, anxiety, chaos, and conflict in the midst of the process, but that is all normal and at times, necessary.
- Expect some push back (this may be a good time to establish a Relational Covenant if you don't have one or remind people of it if you do).

(Suggested Reading: [“Samples of a Relational/Behavioral Covenant”](#))

3. Establish a task force:

This task force should include 5 to 7 people. Two people from the council three to five members from the congregation.

Within this group of people there should be a:

- parliamentarian: (someone who loves parliamentary procedure and navigating the church constitution),
- a few strategists: strategy and systems is their thing!
- a prayer warrior: someone who will help the group maintain spiritual focus, will make sure prayer is woven in and around the process.
- someone who is going to make it a fun and creative process: interject joy and creativity into the process

*Notes to the task force:

- Make sure task force, staff, and council are continually on the same page
- Make sure all members of the task force have a working knowledge of the current governance structure and the church constitution

(Suggested Reading: [“Five Reasons Why Church Organizational Changes Fail”](#))

4. Have the task force engage resources:

- Have a working knowledge of the existing structure and what about it that is broke (is the church culture overriding the governance structure?)
- Talk to other churches and pastors who have gone through the process (can contact the Central Conference for a current list of pastors to consult with)
- Determine what type structure would fit better addressing the broken aspects of existing structure

5. Determine what Constitution and/or bylaw changes need to take place:

- Constitutional changes ultimately need to be approved by the Central Conference

Recommended Books:

- Governance and Ministry by Dan Hotchkiss
- Winning on Purpose by John Edmund Kaiser
- Sticky Teams by Larry Osborne
- High-Impact Church Boards by TJ Addington