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There is no best or ideal building committee. With careful recruiting, however, most churches are able to develop close working groups that make substantial contributions to the quality of the building program. For all the work, the Building Committee job can be a once-in-a-lifetime rewarding opportunity.

Each Community should determine the best organizational structure to be most effective. While each Committee is unique, the issues they must deal with are similar from project to project. It is our observation that certain arrangements can help foster good communication and decision-making.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

To most accurately define the Building Committee’s role, it would be appropriate to call the group the “Project Development Committee.” The group is charged with representing the Church in rendering decisions and instructions for getting the Project built. The members will be dealing with a broad range of issues, from permitting and legal contracts to design and liturgical needs. The Committee should communicate effectively with the Congregation, and possibly outside groups as well. Of course, construction and cost items will be important. In many ways, the Committee acts like a developer in working with professionals, contractors, and other team members in setting budgets, schedules and priorities for the project.

MEMBERSHIP:

The most important ingredients for the success of the Building Committee are the people. These key individuals will be asked to volunteer their time, energies, and expertise for one or two years minimum. The ability of everyone on the Committee to work well with others and adjust to changes and new circumstances will be essential. The group should be balanced to represent the major activities and interests of the ministry. Past experience or professional expertise in any area of law, facilitation, construction, finances, design, or management are all useful, though not required.

SITE AND ORGANIZATION:

The best size is determined as a balance between two opposite poles: the need for the broadest representation, and the need to render decisions quickly and definitively. A typical committee will be five, seven, or ten members with the Pastor as an ex-officio member. The Church Council may be represented either through one or more designated Council representatives, or the Council Chair may serve as an ex-officio member. An odd number of voting members prevents split or tie votes.

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS:

Committee members should be prepared for the regularly scheduled meetings, special events and emergency meetings during the length of the project development and construction time-frame. Committees typically schedule one meeting a month, with special meetings as deadlines or emergencies arise.

ADVICE AND ENCOURAGEMENT:

Participation on a building committee will be a learning process. For volunteers with little or no building experience, you will have a “behind the scenes” look at the planning, drawings, documents, budgets, schedules, permits, etc. that are part of the building and construction industry. For those volunteers who already know something of construction church building involves many unique elements having to do with liturgy, art, design, programming and group dynamics.

For all committee members, your time and talents will be rewarded by the building that remains as your legacy to your congregation and community.

We wish you a wonderful project!