

TILL WE MEET AGAIN
Ten Strategies for Effective Church Meetings
By Kurt Bickel and Rich Bimler

CONTENTS:

- Introduction: The Top Ten Reasons to Meet Again
Strategy 1: Tell the Story
Strategy 2: Make a Covenant
Strategy 3: Keep the Main Thing the Main Thing
Strategy 4: Set Goals
Strategy 5: Keep Communication Clear
Strategy 6: Share Leadership
Strategy 7: Cultivate Humor
Strategy 8: Meet Healthy
Strategy 9: Pray
Strategy 10: Evaluate
Extra: Ten Interactive Devotions for Church Meetings

This book is...

- ...a resource of hope and promise for great meetings.
- ...a workbook for boards, committees, task forces, and any group that wants to improve and empower their meetings.
- ...for leaders, young and old, who hope to participate in or lead church meetings.
- ...a gift from the congregation to its boards and committees.
- ...a prayer that God would be with you, till we meet again.

THE TOP TEN REASONS TO MEET AGAIN

Meetings are all about telling THE story of Jesus Christ and what He has done for us. Meetings provide opportunities for God's people to live out their lives as "holy huddle" people, as "Grace Place" people, as "Shalom Zone" people, as the Friendly Flock. Meetings are nothing more, and certainly nothing less, than for God's people to gather in Christ's name to be intentional about "telling the story of Jesus and His love." Down with "meeting bashing." Sure, we all have been involved in meetings that were boring, that did not make much sense, that did not go anywhere. But perhaps that was because we forgot who we are and what we are about. Just because we eat a "bad" meal now and then, doesn't mean that we stop eating. No, meetings can be "bombs" or they can be "blessings," depending on how they are perceived, planned, and processed. We vote for the latter.



This is a sneak peak of "Till We Meet Again" by Rich Bimler and Kurt Bickel. Available with quantity discounts from Strobickan Publishing LLC. www.strobickan.com

This book is about helping people tell the story of Jesus Christ through meetings. This book endorses the concept that meetings are blessings because they are ways for God's people to gather to remember who they are and to be intentional about the ministries which the Lord has given all of us to carry out.

"Where two or three are gathered in my name" (Matthew 18:20) offers a significant definition of a meeting.

The hymn, "God Be with You Till We Meet Again," helps us to focus on the ultimate purpose of all meetings—to plan and work at telling the story of Jesus Christ so that we will one day meet again, in glory with the Lord.

God be with you till we meet again;
By His counsels guide, uphold you.
With His sheep securely fold you;
God be with you till we meet again.

Till we meet, till we meet, Till we meet at Jesus' feet.
Till we meet, till we meet, God be with you till we meet again.

TOP 10 LIST OF REASONS TO MEET AGAIN

10. A Time to Celebrate!
When God's people gather, for any reason, it is a chance to celebrate. Come to church meetings ready to share the joy in the Lord. As you prepare yourself to do this, exciting things can happen! Remember Psalm 126:3 as you begin meetings: "The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoiced."
9. A Time to Proclaim!
"Where two or three are gathered" ...there the Lord is, right in the middle of things! And meetings are great places to proclaim the faith that the Lord has given to us. As we prepare ourselves for meetings, let us come ready, not only to make decisions or gather information, but even more importantly, come to proclaim the faith that we have in the Lord Jesus. And watch how the mood changes in your meetings with this focus. All meetings are for proclaiming.
8. A Time to Forgive!
What a great opportunity for people of God to meet in order to forgive one another. Perhaps the beginning of each meeting can be a time to confess and absolve one another, since Christ has absolved us. Devotions could be focused on God's forgiveness of us in Christ. Come to meetings prepared to work and make decisions, but come also to forgive one another in Christ.



7. A Time to Learn!

Much can be learned at meetings. Come ready to hear new information, be open to reports and recommendations, and ask questions to understand all sides to an issue. Effective meetings become more effective if assignments are given between meetings. Do your homework, study the agenda before you meet, come prepared to help others learn.

6. A Time to Listen!

We have been guilty of missing significant information and discussion at meetings because we did not listen to others. At times we are too busy thinking about what we should say and not busy enough listening to others. Listen also to the Lord, as He speaks through others and us. In meetings where there tend to be differing viewpoints and opinions, work hard at listening to the “other side.” Try to put into words what you hear the other side saying. Pray that all sides will be heard. One church produced two buttons to hand out at crucial meetings. One button read, “Maybe you’re right!” and the other one said “Maybe I’m wrong!” It helped everyone listen to both sides of the issues.

5. A Time to Plan!

We like meetings where God’s people look ahead to the future. We like meetings that focus on the future. God’s people are called to “look ahead” as the Lord guides and directs us. The “status quo” is not good enough. God urges us to move into the future with His plans, because He is already there. Jeremiah says it well: “There is hope for your future, says the Lord...” (Jeremiah 31:17).

4. A Time to Tell Stories!

Each meeting should begin with a chance for people to tell stories about how God is working through them. “What did God do through you today?” is a good opener. What joy or “good news” happened in your life today? Share a “hurt” or a “hooray” with the group. We love to tell the story of Jesus and His love. Do it at meetings too. Meetings that take time to tell stories acknowledge the people who have given their time. It encourages them to see Jesus in all of life. It empowers them to move into action with joy and celebration which spreads the love of Jesus into their tasks and programs.

3. A Time to Affirm One Another!

Meetings are great opportunities to tell others how much God loves them. Come to meetings with the purpose of sharing something good that has happened to you, and then look for ways to say positive things about others. Marriage counselors say that the most important part of the day is the conversation between spouses in the morning. Do our opening words “affirm” or “infirm” those around us? We vote to “affirm.” It is too easy to find fault and criticize our pastor, the chairman, our fellow saints in the Lord. Instead, look for ways to encourage people in the Lord.



2. A Time to Connect!

No one of us is as effective as all of us together. That's what the Church is all about. We need to rely on the gifts of others in order to more fully serve the Lord. We do this as we connect people with others. The role of boards and committees is to involve others in ministry tasks, not to do it ourselves. The more people are involved, the more ministry happens. Look for ways to link others in your congregation and community, and link people of all ages together in the Lord. Children need adults; teens need retired folks. We need each other. It's called "the Church," the community of saints.

1. A Time to Use Your Gifts!

You have been gifted. We all have been gifted. Meetings are great opportunities to use and share our gifts. Do not think that someone else is more qualified than you. Do not convince yourself that you have "been there—done that," and someone else can now take over the leadership roles. Effective congregations need the involvement of all of God's people, the young and old, the experienced and the rookies, the males and the females, the veteran members and the new members. One congregation decided that the evangelism committee be made up of primarily new members of the church, since they often have the enthusiasm and experience to tell others about the exciting ministries happening through their new congregation.

This booklet offers ten strategies for planning, leading and participating in effective meetings. We are sure that you could think of ten more. Perhaps that would be a worthwhile challenge for your next meeting. Make your own top ten strategies for great meetings.

All meetings are reminders that "God is with us until we meet again." Work hard at making every meeting count. Plan meetings so that all members see themselves as a strong part of the Body of Christ! And what a great benediction to use at the end of your meetings GOD BE WITH YOU, TILL WE MEET AGAIN!

