

# Session Starter #27

## Consent agenda

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### Prayer

Almighty God, we turn to you as the alpha and the omega, Lord of all time. We give thanks for this time together during which we seek your will and serve the church. Help us to use this time wisely and to be worthy of the trust placed in us. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

### Introduction

All reports and other papers intended to be brought before the court are called for and are received by the clerk. A docket of business is then prepared, consisting of business arising out of the minutes; of new business; and the order in which the several matters shall be taken up is determined.

*Book of Forms section 36*

### Scripture

Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.

*1 Corinthians 4:1-2, NRSV*

### A Brief Commentary

Paul had been unjustly judged by some in the Corinthian community. In response, he identified himself as a servant of Christ and a steward of God's mysteries. Paul serves as a role model in this way. We, too, should strive to be good stewards of God's mysteries, including the mystery of time.

### Reflection

One way elders can be good stewards of the time God grants is to use, when appropriate, a consent agenda at meetings.

What is a consent agenda? It is a tool that allows a number of recommendations to be adopted together without discussion. By adopting a group of recommendations at once, more time can be

devoted to issues that need further discussion before the vote is taken.

How does a consent agenda work?

Those who submit reports and recommendations to the session decide which of their recommendations will not likely need discussion and identify these to the clerk of session. As part of the docket, the clerk gathers these recommendations together to become the consent agenda.

The clerk ensures the elders receive the consent agenda, and all the documents needed to understand the consent agenda recommendations, well before the meeting so they will know what is being proposed. The elders pray and think about the consent agenda in preparation for the session meeting.

During the session meeting, when the consent agenda comes up on the docket, the clerk says, "I move that the circulated recommendations be adopted by the consent of the session." At that point, any elder may request that one or more of the recommendations be removed from the consent agenda if he or she feels the matter needs further discussion. The removal of recommendations from the consent agenda should not be resisted since this is a safeguard against issues being decided before all the elders are satisfied that no further discernment is required.

Once the consent agenda is adopted, the session goes on to deal with the "removed recommendations" and the rest of the business properly brought before it.

### Discussion

1. Discuss time as a gift from God.
2. Would a consent agenda help us to be better stewards of God's time?
3. How could we experiment with a consent agenda?