

Session and Board of Managers

Session Starter #19

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Prayer

God of amazing grace, we give thanks for your promised presence and your extravagant love. We have gathered in your holy name with a sincere desire to serve you well. We are humbled by the realization that you have placed this congregation in our care. May the decisions we make plant seeds of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control in all our ministries. In the name of our saviour we pray. Amen.

Introduction

If a board of managers is elected by the congregation, the session will work closely with it to ensure that all aspects of the financial affairs of the congregation are managed in keeping with directives of the courts of the church.

Book of Forms, 113.6.4

Scripture

For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.

Romans 12:4-5

A Brief Commentary

Paul does not promote the message of “self-esteem at all cost” that permeates so much of our society. Instead, he instructs Christians in Rome not to think too highly of themselves but to live together in genuine humility. Why? Paul reasoned that each person is a child of God filled with a certain measure of faith granted by God. Consequently, we are not all the same and we are called to a variety of functions within the church. All those functions are interwoven so we become one body united in Christ.

Reflection

Sometimes conflicts arise between the elders of the session and the members of the board of managers. No one will be surprised by that statement. This conflict can sometimes be described as a power struggle. Often the struggle is over money.

A pattern frequently repeated goes something like this. The elders come up with a vision for the congregation. “Let’s hire a part-time youth worker and establish exciting programs for the young people of our church and community,” they say. A request for \$2,000 a month is forwarded to the board of managers. The members of the board reply, “Nice idea, but there is no money to pay for it.”

Beneath the surface bubbles another, often unspoken, struggle. This struggle is over the question: Who is in charge?

Section 109.1 of the *Book of Forms* clearly states that the session is responsible for the supervision and oversight of all associations connected with the congregation. In other words, the session is endowed with authority - even over the board of managers. But before the elders begin to think too highly of themselves, it is wise to remember how imperative it is to serve in harmony with the board. The session and board have different tasks, although a great many of them overlap. As section 113.6.4 states, the session will work closely with the board. Once again an image of being one body, united in Christ, comes to mind.

Discussion

1. Talk about a time where there was conflict between the session and the board of managers?
2. How was the conflict resolved?
3. What steps can the session and board take to work more closely together?