

Decision making in the local congregation

To follow the purposes of God in the church, a congregation needs vision and an understanding that decisions need to be taken to follow that vision.

Once the vision is in place, there are decisions that need to be taken at different times. These are decisions about mission and ministry priorities. These decisions are not all same - some will take longer to make than others; some will involve the whole congregation or the Church Council; others can be made by one or two people: they all demand trust and the realisation that in making decisions, no one can get it right all the time!

Below is an outline of how we can view the leadership and decision-making processes in the life of the local Church.

Type 1 **Consensus** about the future direction and overall mission goals of the congregation.

The annual congregational meeting is the ideal place for enabling a local Church to move towards reaching a mission vision, since that is where you will be

- celebrating the past twelve months
- addressing goals for the next twelve months
- thinking about where you want to be in 2, 3 or even 10 years time

Some congregations find it helpful to have a special weekend, day or evening in preparation for this annual meeting. Such times provide an opportunity for more in-depth discussion. The key thing is to enable as many people as possible to express their hopes dreams and fears.

Type 2 **Directions** that help to achieve the Church's goals

It is the job of the Council to put the vision into a portable form and communicate aims to the congregation. This involves taking decisions that set a course for the congregation to work out the objectives which have been identified.

Type 3 **Exploratory decisions** of Working/Task groups keep the momentum going

Task groups are set parameters and given responsibility to put into practice policies of the Council. In doing so, each group will have to make quarterly or monthly decisions, most of which do not require a meeting of the Church Council. The team or task group always reports to the Council.

Type 4 **Day to day running decisions**

These are entrusted to one or two people, especially those who have been given clear responsibility for specific areas of the Church's life, acting in keeping with the overall direction of the congregation, and preparing rotas, programme details, etc.

