

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

5 Key Roles of an Effective Church Board

Episode 169

Clarifying The Roles of Church Boards & Staff (Part 1)

Your church board can either be a barrier or catalyst to your church's health and growth. All too often we see dysfunction between the staff team and the board. But it doesn't have to be that way. In this week's episode, Tony Morgan and Sean Bublitz dive into the details of the 5 key roles of an effective church board and common mistakes we see that churches can avoid.

Church Governance Can Be a Barrier to Health

- You might think that more voices equals better decisions. But the opposite is true. Stuck churches have 40% larger boards and 2x as many people involved in committees. Complexity leads to stuckness.
- Many churches have the same structure they started with and it hasn't grown with the growth of the church. Structures need to grow with the church.
- In stuck churches, leaders usually aren't empowered to actually lead. In this season especially, churches need to make significant pivots but when the governance model is broken it prevents them from making the critical changes they need to make in order to survive and thrive moving forward.
- Thriving churches are led by lay leadership teams that streamline decision making and then empower the pastor to lead strong.
- Read through the book [High Impact Church Boards](#) with your team.

5 Key Roles of Board Members at Churches

- **Model spiritual leadership** in the congregation. Are they demonstrating full devotion to Christ?
- **Provide encouragement and accountability** to your lead pastor. Often boards focus just on the accountability side, but encouragement is essential. Pastors need people around them who are lifting them up.
- **Protect the established mission and vision** of the church. (But this does not mean the board is involved in the strategy and execution side of ministry.)

- **Make any significant stewardship decisions** for the church. There needs to be a balance of responsibility. For example, the board should identify the overall staffing budget but the lead pastor should determine specific salaries for specific roles.
- **Advise the lead pastor**, when requested, on strategy decisions that the staff leadership is processing. As trust increases between the board and the lead pastor, there should be a healthy “give and take” on vision and key strategic decisions.

Common Mistakes We See with Boards

- The most common mistake for smaller churches is that the board gets involved in the strategy and in the day-to-day execution of ministry.
- The most common mistake for larger churches is that the board doesn’t take the lead on succession strategy and planning.

Next Steps

- Go through scriptures with your team and see if you can answer these questions:
 - What are the characteristics of healthy leaders in church?
 - What is the role God intended for these leaders?
 - What structure would best empower qualified leaders to engage their roles more effectively?
- **Want to dig deeper on this topic? Watch the [replay](#) of our webinar, [3 Keys of an Effective Church Board + Staff](#)**
- **Sign up for [Unstuck Leadership Coaching](#).**
Does your church need help navigating and building a healthy relationship between your lead pastor and board? Do you see an opportunity for growth? We want to come alongside you to help your church take the next steps towards building a healthy future. We help pastors and boards navigate those conversations and build a healthy structure and strategy for the future.
- For the last 11 years, we’ve been providing pastors and church leadership teams with an ally—coaching them as they lead their church. We can help you change the way you lead as you lead change. [Learn how to get started.](#)

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