

These are the 5 Basic "Agendas" You'll Face as a Commissioner



1. **DEBATE AND ACTION:** Some decisions we are called to make require that we talk about them before we vote. Our discussion may be to clarify an issue, to share different views, to understand alternatives. Adopting a presbytery budget, approving major expenditure of presbytery funds, examining candidates for ministry and ministers seeking to accept a call to one of our churches - all these and more may be included. Your role is to listen, to share in the debate as you feel led to do, and to vote as Christ directs your conscience. If you don't understand what is happening, let the moderator know about it. We'll take the time we need to see the issue more clearly.
2. **EDUCATION:** Just being here is a chance to learn about our Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Sometimes we have visits from missionaries, representatives from one of our homes, colleges, or seminaries, reports from presbytery or synod staff members, news of educational resources or of people who are available for special training, updates on social concerns - to give a few examples. Your role is to share what you are learning with appropriate groups or individuals in your own church.
3. **INFORMATION:** You'll get lots of information to share with your session and congregation. You'll hear about opportunities at Bethelwoods, new resources, programs, special events. You will be asked, occasionally, to share information about your own church for directories, reports, and planning. You will hear about programs in other congregations that might be useful in your own church. Again, your role is to be a communicator, to pass news and information along to your session and local leaders.
4. **CELEBRATION OF OUR COMMUNITY:** We worship and sing together at each meeting, hear a sermon or meditation, pray for each other and for our world, share in the Lord's Supper at least once a year, enjoy mealtime fellowship, give thanks for special achievements, commit ourselves to mission and witness, and enjoy each other's company. Your role is simple: **JOIN THE PARTY!** Being a Christian - even a Presbyterian Christian - can be fun!
5. **PRESBYTERIAN PROCEDURES:** As in any organization, part of our work is fairly routine: adopting of an agenda, approval of minutes, receiving communications, checking the roll. Some of our tasks reflect our partnership with each congregation: approval of property transfers and major expenditures, review of session records, naming moderators for pastorless churches. We will receive and dismiss ministers, form special committees, update the Presbytery Manual. Each recommendation will have been reviewed by a committee or by the councils. You will receive the

Commissioner's Handbook in time to read about the requested actions well in advance of the meeting and to plan for any needed clarification. We'll handle some business in what we can a "Common Consent Agenda," actions that are either routine, non-controversial or housekeeping in nature. And your role in this is to be a patient, responsible, thoughtful participant in this necessary (and sometimes unexciting) routine.

WHEN THE PRESBYTERY IS MEETING, the people who lead and represent reports will try to make it clear where their reports are located. They will not read them to you; you must read them prior to the meeting. They will make some brief explanatory remarks then move the adoption of their recommendations. Be alert. Be prepared. Take notes. And report to your session and congregation when you get home. A "Presbytery-in-Brief" will be written by the Stated Clerk and included in the next INFO Pak to help with your interpretation. Remember that our purpose is to build up the body of Christ, the Church. Know that you are a vital and valued part of this ministry.