

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

June 2023

Parliamentary Procedures

Made Simple (sort of)

Handling a Motion

1. A member **makes** the motion
 - The member must be recognized by the chair before stating his/her motion.
 - The motion must be put in writing and given to the chair when stating the motion.
 - Common form: *"I move that..."*

2. Another member **seconds** the motion
 - It is not necessary to be recognized to second a motion
 - The name of the seconder is not recorded in the minutes.
 - Common form: *"Second" or "I second the motion."*

3. The chair **states** the question, i.e. he/she states the exact question and indicates that it is open to debate.
 - Common form: *"It has been moved and seconded that... Is there discussion?"*

4. The members **debate** the motion
 - The maker of the motion has the privilege of discussion first.
 - Each member must be recognized before he/she discusses the motion.
 - Discussion is strictly limited to the motion on the floor.
 - All debate is directed to the chair or through the chair to the other members. Members never speak directly to one another.
 - Every attempt will be made to alternate between pro and con positions on a motion.
 - Ordinarily, each member may speak only twice on the same motion, and speakers are asked to be short and concise. The organization may adopt other rules that limit debate.

5. The Chair **puts the question**, i.e., takes the vote.
 - The affirmative vote is taken first, then the negative.
 - Common form: *"Those in favor of the motion, say aye.
"Those opposed to the motion say no."*
 - Abstentions are not counted.
 - A majority vote means a majority of those who voted for or against a motion. Members present but not voting are not counted. A majority is more than half.
 - The chair may vote only when his/her vote affects the results, i.e., to make or break a tie vote. A tie vote is always a negative vote.

6. The chair announces the results of the vote.
 - The vote on any motion is not considered final until the chair has done this.

Amendments

General Considerations:

1. Amendments, like main motions, require a second, are amendable, are debatable, and require a majority vote.
2. An amendment should be stated so that it indicates exactly what is being done to the main motion. Like the motion, it must be handed to the chair in writing when making the motion.
3. An amendment must always be handled before voting on the motion to which it was applied.

Debating and Voting

Rules of Debate

1. After it is stated by the Chair, every member is entitled to discuss a debatable motion.
2. No member may speak more than twice during the same day to the same question (only once on an appeal) nor longer than ten minutes at one time, without leave of the assembly; and the question granting the leave is decided by a two-thirds vote, without debate.
3. No member can speak a second time to a question if any member who has not spoken to the question desires to speak.
4. Debate may be limited by a two-thirds vote.
5. The member who proposed the motion is entitled to close debate if he/she has not previously exhausted his 20 minutes, but he/she may not do so until everyone else wishing to speak has spoken. He/She cannot avail himself/herself of this privilege after debate has been closed.
6. The maker of the motion, though he/she can vote against it, cannot speak against his own motion.
7. Debate must be confined to the merits of the immediately pending question.
8. In debate, a member must avoid personalities, referring to "the member who spoke last," or "the previous speaker," etc.
9. If a member wishes to ask a question of a previous speaker, he/she must address his/her remarks to the chair, the Chair then asks the speaker the question. All remarks are addressed to the Chair.

The Assembly can close debate or limit the length of speeches and allow each member to speak only once on each question, and take action to end, limit, or extend the limits of debate, by a two-thirds vote.