

Parliamentary Procedure Basics

“Parliamentary procedure” is a set of rules for conduct at meetings that allows everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion.

Basic Principles

- ☐ All members have equal rights, privileges, and obligations.
- ☐ No person can speak until recognized by the Chair.
- ☐ Personal remarks during debate are out of order.
- ☐ Only one question at a time may be considered, and only one person may have the floor at any one time.
- ☐ Members have a right to know what the immediately pending question is and to have it restated before a vote is taken.
- ☐ Full and free discussion of every main motion is a basic right.
- ☐ A quorum must be present for business to be conducted.
- ☐ A majority decides a question except when basic rights of members are involved or a rule provides otherwise.
- ☐ A 2/3 vote is required for any motion that deprives a member of a right in any way (e.g., cutting off debate).
- ☐ Silence gives consent. Those who do not vote allow the decision to be made by those who do vote.
- ☐ During debate, the Chair should remain impartial.

Motion: The main method used by members to express themselves, a *motion* is a proposal that the entire membership act or take a stand on an issue.

Every Motion Has Six Steps

1. **Motion:** A member rises, raises a hand, or approaches a microphone to signal the Chair (the Bishop).
2. **Second:** Another member seconds the motion. (If no one seconds the motion, the motion is lost.) Motions that come from a committee do not require a second.
3. **Restate Motion:** The Chair restates the motion.
4. **Debate:** The members debate the motion.
 - a. The person who proposed the motion may speak first and may not speak again until other speakers are finished, unless called upon by the Chair.
 - b. Debate is closed when discussion has ended or if there is no discussion. A motion to close debate affirmed by a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote.
5. **Vote:** The Chair restates the motion, and then first asks for affirmative votes, and then negative votes.
6. **Announce the Vote:** The Chair announces the result of the vote and any instructions.

Amendment – Before the vote is taken on a motion, it may be amended by:

- Striking out words
- Inserting or adding words
- Striking out words and inserting others in their place
- Substituting one (1) paragraph or resolution for another
- Dividing a question to consider parts of a motion separately

General Rules of Debate

- All discussion must be relevant to the immediately pending question.
- No member can speak more than twice to each debatable motion. The second time takes place after everyone wishing to debate the motion has had an opportunity to speak once.
- All remarks must be addressed to the Chair – no cross-debate is permitted.
- It is not permissible to speak against one's own motion (but one can vote against one's own motion).
- Debate must address issues not personalities – no one is permitted to make personal attacks or question the motives of other speakers.
- The presiding officer must relinquish the Chair to participate in debate and cannot reassume the Chair until the pending main question is disposed of.
- Members may not disrupt the assembly.
- Rules of debate can be changed by a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote or general consent without objection.

Rules of Debate Specific to the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas' Convention

The Rules of Debate for Diocesan Convention are on page 29 of your Convention Booklet. Some excerpts from the rules for debate are:

1. Whenever possible, speakers will be called in alternating order of their positions on the issue under consideration.
2. Speakers will be limited to two (2) minutes on an issue under consideration, except that:
 - a. A speaker may speak again to any amendment, with a two (2) minute time limit again applying; and
 - b. A speaker may answer questions of information.
3. While motions to call the previous question (close debate), limit debate, postpone to a set time, postpone indefinitely, or commit are acceptable at any time, the motion will be effective only after all speakers already at the microphone have had an opportunity to speak.

Requesting "Points"

Certain situations need attention during the meeting, but they don't require a motion, second, debate, or voting. It is permissible to state a point during a meeting where the Chair needs to handle a situation right away.

- ☐ **Point of Order:** Draws attention to a breach of rules, improper procedure, breaching of established practices, etc.
- ☐ **Point of Information:** A member may need to bring up an additional point or additional information (in the form of a nondebatable statement) so that the other members can make fully informed votes.
- ☐ **Point of Inquiry:** A member may use point of inquiry to ask for clarification in a report to make better voting decisions.
- ☐ **Point of Personal Privilege:** A member may use point of personal privilege to address the physical comfort of the setting such as temperature or noise. Members may also use it to address the accuracy of published reports or the accuracy of a member's conduct.
 - This can also be used at any time to request the meeting be halted for prayer.