

The Role of a Church Trustee

A church trustee usually refers to a church volunteer who oversees physical aspects of a church such as finance, property, and buildings. Trustees are usually voted on by a local church or selected by elders representing church members for certain periods of time.

In the early church, seven men were selected to oversee particular needs within the church ([Acts 6:1-7](#)) so the apostles could focus on teaching and prayer. Deacons were later added to local churches as official servants who handled certain areas of church ministry. While deacons generally dealt with the needs of people within the church, the role of a church trustee has developed in recent generations to serve the needs related to finance and property issues.

Since the role of the trustee is not defined in the Bible, a church can choose to use trustees in a variety of ways. This role is not required in Scripture, though some U.S. states legally require trustees for organizational purposes. Certainly, those who serve as trustees should be people of high character and have abilities in appropriate areas, such as skills in finance, construction, or building maintenance.

In some churches, trustees also serve on the official board of directors of the church as a non-profit organization. In these cases, those serving should be people with organizational and leadership abilities who are able to successfully conduct the business of the church according to biblical principles. Accountability should also be set up and provided, as trustees will likely oversee church finances and spending.

Many churches with trustees also include the responsibility of risk management and liability issues. In these cases, involving trustees with knowledge of insurance, liability, and legal issues related to non-profit organizations would be of tremendous assistance.

Still other trustees are involved in long-range congregational planning and church vision. While this planning should also include the church's other leaders, such as elders and deacons, these combined efforts can greatly assist a church to best navigate future plans and communicate them effectively with church members.

As trustees, each individual must also be willing and able to work together as a team. First Corinthians 12 notes that each person is important, yet must also work together to operate effectively.

First Peter 4:10 also comments about fitting the roles of church members with their abilities: "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace."

What Are the Duties of a Church Trustee Board?

by Samantha Laros

The board of trustees acts as a financial steward for the church. The board of trustees is the governing body that represents the interest of the patrons of a church. Members of most trustee boards are elected by vote of the congregation. The board assumes responsibilities as a whole as well as assigns specific duties to individual members.

Budgetary Duties

Trustee boards are typically in charge of budgetary matters within a church. The board defines a budget and appropriations at the beginning of each year and develops a uniform system to accept offerings and donations, pay bills and make purchases. All revenues and expenditures are documented by the board and evaluated periodically during trustee meetings.

Ministry

Development of new ministries and outreach programs usually falls to the pastor or other church clergy, although the board of trustees plays an important role in supporting these efforts. For example, if a congregation member is interested in starting a Bible study program, he must first ask the pastor and later, if the program requires financial backing, it may be discussed before the board. To foster a cohesive environment, the board must understand the philosophy and missionary goals of the church.

Property Maintenance

Another role of the trustee board is to maintain the building and property owned by the church. In many cases, trustee boards make policy decisions regarding whether or not outside organizations may rent and use space within the church. The trustee board may also be tasked with assessing property insurance liability risks and ensuring that the church is in compliance with neighborhood and zoning regulations.

Delegation

Most church trustee boards appoint officers from within. The highest officer is the president or chairperson, who prepares the agenda and presides over each meeting. In some churches, the president is given the legal authority to enter into contracts on the institution's behalf. The vice president assumes the president's duties in his absence. The secretary provides clerical support and keeps track of meeting minutes, and the treasurer prepares budgetary reports and ensures financial accuracy.

The Trustee Ministry manages the material possessions and oversees the financial matters of the church with spiritual sensitivity. The church's physical property, financial obligations and all other assets are the responsibility of the Trustee Ministry. Trustees enable the execution of God's mission through stewardship and individual spiritual gifts. Acting as one body, the Trustees provide direction, leadership, facilities, processes, capability and capacity to help further God's word..

In fulfilling this solemn responsibility, the Trustee board follows a set of Guiding Principles. Some of those principles are listed below:

Spiritual Sensitivity: We have a love for the Lord and consequently the church body. We will be sensitive to its needs and will endeavor to administer our responsibilities in a manner that provides a robust and fruitful worship environment.

Teamwork: We team with our church family and others on the basis of trust, understanding, and love.

Accountability: We accept responsibility and are accountable to God and the congregation for the proper administration of our stewardship duties.

Communication: We will proactively communicate with the church body and others in a clear, open, and honest manner. The Trustee Board is available to serve God's people.