

The principle which we find throughout the New Testament is that God calls different people to different ministries. We are not all gifted in the same way, and we are not all called to serve God in the same way. Acts 6 contrasts the “ministry of the word” with the “ministry of tables”. Both are Christian ministries. Both are ways of serving God and his people. The difference between them lies in the form the ministry takes, requiring different gifts and different callings. In the church we need to emphasise the wide range of gifts which God has given to his people and through which he calls on them to serve him and his church. Serving God by being a member of the Congregational Committee is an important area of service requiring particular gifts.

So what kind of people should you select for the Congregational Committee?

The New Testament gives us some clear guidelines. In Acts 6 the qualifications are that the people chosen to help the apostles in their work be “full of the Spirit and wisdom”. In 1 Timothy 3, Paul deals at greater length with the qualifications of deacons.

There are really two points to remember - one to do with character and one to do with competence. When you select a person for the Congregational Committee you must consider a person’s character. What type of person are they? Paul lists all kinds of character traits to be found in those who serve the church in practical ways.

- They are primarily to be Christian people. “They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.” Those selected in Acts 6 were “full of the Spirit”. There was clear evidence of devotion and love for Christ. If a person is not a sincere Christian, they will not understand the basic mission and purpose of the church, and will

be unable to guide the church in the wise use and management of its resources.

- They are to be controlled people. Paul mentions as key characteristics how a person handles money, alcohol and his family. The picture he paints is of a person whose life is under control. The task of the Congregational Committee is to manage the resources of the congregation, particularly the property and finances. Members of the Congregational Committee will only be able to do that well if they first of all give evidence of having been able to manage their own lives and their own families. If they can’t make good choices and decisions for their personal lives, then it would be foolish to ask them to make decisions that will affect congregational life.
- They are to be committed people. They are to be committed to Christ, to their family and to your congregation. You may be able to identify fine Christian people who live controlled lives, but whose commitment to your congregation is less than wholehearted. They may have other interests. Some will have an interest in very worthy and commendable pursuits. But those who are selected should be people who will see Christian service within your congregation as a priority in their life.
- But in addition to all these important character traits, people are also needed who are competent. There are probably some fine Christian people in your congregation who are controlled in their lives and committed to your church, but they just don’t have the gifts or the competencies for the Congregational Committee. To select them to serve on the Committee would be to do them, and the congregation, a disservice.

So what does a Congregational Committee actually do?

The responsibilities of the Congregational Committee could really be summarised under three categories: administration, finance and property.

- The Congregational Committee needs people with organisational skills - people who can figure out how to get information out to the members of the congregation, how to organise the collectors for the offering, or the drivers for the minibus. Some people are good at that. They get a buzz out of organising and arranging and making sure that things run smoothly. The Bible actually lists “administration” as a gift from God.
- People are needed with skills in handling and managing our finances. Some of us can look at a page of accounts and be totally confused. And others can look at that page and get excited! We need to be sure that our funds are managed with great care and much wisdom so that the goals and mission of the church are achieved.
- People are needed who know and understand about the construction and the maintenance of property. It is important that church properties are well-maintained and that repairs are carried out at appropriate times. If a congregation plans to extend or improve its facilities, it is essential that the Congregational Committee is advised by people who know about the construction and maintenance of buildings.

There are many other tasks that a Congregational Committee must attend to, and you should be proactive in seeing that all the gifts of all God's people are being used to their fullest extent within your fellowship.

Notice how Acts 6 ends. "So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith."

Think carefully and pray about those whom you will nominate. Ask God to give your congregation a team of people who will serve Christ and his church in a way that will cause Christ's kingdom to advance.

You ought to remember that all elders are ex officio members of the Congregational Committee. That means that those who are already elders should not be voted for in an election of the Congregational Committee.

Questions to ponder as you make your choice:

- Is this person a committed Christian?
- Are they in control of their personal lives?
- Are they committed to the life and work of the congregation?
- What particular competencies and gifts would they bring to the work of the Congregational Committee?

Choosing A New Congregational Committee

