



## First time at a meeting of Eastminster Presbytery?

Got questions?

Here are some answers.

Welcome to this meeting of Eastminster Presbytery. We hope you'll find it to be an interesting and uplifting experience. It's called a meeting, but it's really much more than that. It's a combination of a meeting, a worship service, and a "pep rally" where we celebrate what God is doing in our presbytery. We worship and laugh a little and pray a lot. Here are a few things you might like to know:

1. If you've been commissioned to this meeting (officially sent here as a commissioner by your session), be sure to **register when you arrive. As a commissioner, you have both "voice" and "vote"** meaning you have the right to speak during the meeting and to vote on motions. First time commissioners should be prepared to stand and be introduced by their pastor. If you haven't been commissioned, register as a guest. **Guests are welcome, but may not vote at all and may not speak without permission.** If you are a guest and wish to speak, ask a commissioner. Commissioners can request that guests be allowed to speak.
2. Here's the deal on dinner. You are asked to make a dinner reservation a week or two before the meeting. An email is sent out to all churches and pastors requesting that. **Purchase your dinner ticket after you register.** The host church serves a nice dinner for \$7.00. Ask at the registration table where to buy your ticket, or just look around for the expectant-looking person with the moneybox.
3. If you're a commissioner, **no one can tell you how to vote.** Listen to the discussion and listen for how you think God is calling you to vote. Then, as the ads say, 'Just do it.'
4. The person running the meeting is the Moderator of the Presbytery. The person helping the Moderator keep track of it all is the Stated Clerk, who also makes sure we do things according to the Book of Order and Robert's Rules of Order. (Without which, of course, Presbyterian life as we know it would be impossible.)
5. **We follow the "docket,"** (church talk for "agenda") in your meeting packet. There are numbers at the ends of some lines to refer you to support materials inside. These numbers will help you flip back and forth to better follow the more complex presentations.

6. **When you want to speak**, please move to a microphone in the center aisle, and wait for the moderator to recognize you. Identify yourself and your home church, and then speak your piece, addressing your comments to the moderator. (“Madam Moderator, I have a few concerns about this motion...”) In your comments, be respectful of the opinions of others, no matter how they may seem to you.

7. The **Family Remembrances** are joys and concerns for leaders and other members of the presbytery’s congregations – often requests for prayers for them.

8. The **Consent Agenda** is a list of routine “housekeeping” actions that is expected to pass without objection. It’s usually approved in one motion, but any commissioner (including yourself) has the right to ask that any item in it be removed and discussed individually.

9. Most of the meeting takes the form of committee reports. (Of course – we’re Presbyterians!) Typically, the moderator of a committee will present its report, and let us know if the committee needs us to vote on anything.

10. The **Worship Service** might seem a little unusual. We frequently experiment and do some different things in our presbytery worship services in order to develop and share ideas that we can take back to our own churches. An offering is taken during the worship service. The Presbytery Meeting Coordinating Council has designated a presbytery cause that was approved by the presbytery prior to the service. We hope you enjoy the experience. And since there are lots of pastors and choir members at presbytery meetings, the singing is great – it’s like standing in the middle of a huge choir. (Here’s a secret, though: most pastors find it scary to preach at presbytery, because there are so many other pastors in the pews.)

11. If debate gets long on some motion, someone might make a **motion to end debate**. (They might say, “I call the previous question,” which is the same thing.) Some people just bellow this out, but that’s not correct – you still have to be recognized by the moderator.

12. **Ask questions!** Parliamentary procedures can get a little complicated sometimes. The Stated Clerk is very good at explaining things, so feel free to walk to the microphone and ask for clarification.

13. It’s considered bad form to leave the meeting early, which is why pastors headed out the door early have sheepish looks on their faces. **Stay to the end**, and remember that the last will be first.

Thank you for joining us in serving God this way!

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