

## **FACILITATING MEETINGS:**

### **Steps and tips to planning and leading effective meetings**

- A few days **before each meeting**, send an **email reminder** with the **agenda** and **minutes** from the last meeting.
- Start and end the meeting **on time**, as scheduled.
- Have a **facilitator** and a **notetaker** for each meeting.  
**Notes:** These two roles can rotate among members. Mentoring future leaders/chairs can include giving them opportunities to facilitate meetings. It's best if the facilitator drafts the agenda (with review by the chair) and that the notetaker has experience taking notes.

#### **Creating an agenda: some helpful steps.**

- Look at the previous meeting's agenda and minutes to decide which items to include for continued discussion or updates. Place the most important or timely agenda items near the start of the meeting.
- Include a section on "old business" such as approving meeting minutes from the last meeting and sharing updates or reports on activities since your last meeting.
- Next to each agenda item, estimate how much time each item will take. Note which member will share each update or lead each discussion. (Let those members know they'll be asked to do that and ask how much time they'll need.)
- End each meeting with an announcement about the **next meeting**, including date, time, location (in person or Zoom), who will facilitate and who will take notes. If your group meets in person and provides snacks, decide who will bring snacks to the meeting. This information should be included at the top of the next meeting agenda.

#### **During the meeting**

- Start the meeting with a prayer or short devotion.
- Keep track of the time to help ensure the meeting will end on time, as scheduled, and to make sure the most important agenda items are covered. Adjust the agenda during the meeting to ensure priority agenda items are discussed.
- Ask members to raise their hands when they wish to speak - and then call on people.
- Ask each member for their input. Invite and respect different perspectives and opinions.
- Ensure each member has opportunities to speak.
  - When the meeting begins, ask members to be aware of how much they are speaking in order to allow other members time and space to speak.
  - Invite members who have not yet spoken to share their perspectives. Offer opportunities to provide input in smaller groups or in writing (such as CHAT on Zoom).
- To keep the meeting on track, do not be afraid to interrupt discussions or ask for a specific discussion to be handled at another time (perhaps by a "sub-committee").
- After each agenda item (as applicable) and at the end of the meeting, **summarize decisions** and **next steps**, including **who agreed to do what by when**. This is an important part of each meeting and should be reflected in the meeting minutes.