

## **Using a Timekeeper to Keep Meetings Running on Time**

If your meetings tend to run longer than expected and those attending the meeting have voiced their concern over the length of your meetings, ask the group if they would like to appoint a timekeeper. Also ask the group to consider timing each agenda item. The time to begin each discussion as well as the allotted time would be outlined on the agenda. The appointed timekeeper will help the group stay on track. (This duty should be rotated to allow all members to understand the role of the timekeeper). If a discussion goes over the allotted time, have the group decide if the discussion should continue. If using this method, it is a good idea to circulate the agenda at least a couple of days before the meeting.

Items that need more discussion can also be tabled until the next meeting or sent to a committee for further consideration/discussion and a report for next time.

Spend the last few minutes of your meeting evaluating your meeting and planning for the next meeting. Consider a flip chart with "+" on the left and "-" on the right. Identify the things that went well in the meeting that you want to retain and those that need improvement for future meetings. Discuss items that need to be on the agenda for the next meeting. If you notice continued discussions in the parking lot after your meeting, ask the group "what thoughts or feelings are likely to be discussed in the parking lot after the meeting?" These considerations, if accepted without defensiveness, will provide information that the group needs to learn collectively.

Another effective way to keep your meeting on time is to start on time. Dr. Leonard Young suggests that while using a gavel to start the meeting may seem too formal for your group, it is an excellent way to signal that the meeting is starting. Another way is to have the chair greet attendees at the door. When the chair takes their seat, this should be a signal to the others that the meeting is starting.

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