

**Baptist General Convention of Virginia
Church Meeting Open Discussion Guidelines
& Robert's Rules of Order, Revised
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Church Family,

In the upcoming, quarterly Church Meeting, we will be voting on what would become (if passed by the congregation) standing guidelines for Church Meeting Open Discussion and Comments. So that you can make your vote knowledgeably and informed, the following Robert's Rules of Order information (which is a part of our Church Constitution) is provided for your information.

Article VI (Church Meetings) and Section 6 (Parliamentary Rules) states that, "Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedures for all business meetings of the church." (See page 23 of the church constitution.)

The sections of Roberts Rules of Order, Revised that relate to our Church Meeting Open Discussion (Debate) are found in Article VII of Robert's Rules. These sections are sections 42 and 30. For your convenience, I have provided below the two (2) URLs where you can review the information directly from the Robert's Rules of Order site. They are: <http://rulesonline.com/rror-07.htm> and <http://rulesonline.com/rror-05.htm#30>.

The Open Discussion Protocol for _____ Baptist Church Meetings is a reflection of the Parliamentary Rules that are mentioned in the Church Constitution of _____ Baptist Church.

The Robert's Rules of Order (Revised)
Article VII.
Debate. 42. Debate.

[How to Make a Motion]

1. ...a member shall rise and address the chair by his title, and be recognized by the chair as having obtained the floor;
2. and that the member shall then make a motion which, after being seconded, shall be stated by the chair,
3. [The Chair] shall then ask, "Are you ready for the question?" The question is then open to debate.

[Open Debate/Discussion]

1. No member shall speak more than twice during the same day to the same question (only once on an appeal),
2. nor longer than ten minutes at one time, without leave of the assembly;
3. and the question upon granting the leave shall be decided by a two-thirds vote without debate.
4. No member can speak a second time to a question as long as any member desires to speak who has not spoken to the question.

[Dr. Bill's Notes on Limiting Church Meeting Debate/Discussion]

Robert's Rules of Order allows members to speak twice for ten minutes each time on any given question on the floor. However, it also allows for the membership as a body to reduce/limit the amount of debate time allowed to each member.

Article VII. 42. Debate.

1. So the debate, by a two-thirds vote, may be limited to any extent desired, as shown in 30. (See 30. Limit or Extend Limits of Debate from Robert's Rules of Order below.)
2. The member upon whose motion the subject was brought before the assembly, is entitled to close the debate with a speech, if he has not previously exhausted his twenty minutes, but not until every one else wishing to speak has spoken. He cannot, however, avail himself of this privilege after debate has been closed.

30. Limit or Extend Limits of Debate.

Motions, or orders, to limit or extend the limits of debate, like the previous question, take precedence of all debatable motions, may be applied to any debatable motion or series of motions, and, if not specified to the contrary, apply only to the immediately pending question.

1. If it is voted to limit the debate, the order applies to all incidental and subsidiary motions and the motion to reconsider, subsequently made, as long as the order is in force.
2. But an order extending the limits of debate does not apply to any motions except the immediately pending one and such others as are specified. They are undebatable, and require a two-thirds vote for their adoption.
3. These motions may be amended, but can have no other subsidiary motion applied to them. They yield to privileged [14] and incidental [13] motions, and to the motions to lay on the table and for the previous question.
4. ...This motion to limit or extend the limits of debate may be reconsidered even though the order has been partially executed, and if lost it may be renewed after there has been sufficient progress in debate to make it a new question.