

Three Models of Pastoral Councils

Diocesan Research and Planning Office

Council of Ministries Model

1. *Membership*: Council membership is selected from the parish's commissions and committees with a few persons elected from the parish at large. The size of this council depends on how many commissions and committees (ministries) there are in the parish.
2. *Selection Process*: members at large are usually elected from different willing candidates from the parish; members from commissions are either selected by the commission chair, elected or volunteer to be on the pastoral council.
3. *Task*: to plan and coordinate the standing commissions and committees which then implement the plans.
4. *Scope*: pastoral planning and also coordination and implementation of parish policies, plans and programs.
5. *Commissions and Committees*: in this model the commissions and committees of the parish report to the pastoral council. The pastoral council monitors the work of the commissions and committees.
6. *Meetings*: in the Council of Ministries model much of the meeting is taken up with reports from the various commissions and committees. The goal is to foster good communication between the Council and the commissions and committees. Decision making usually uses Roberts Rules of Order and voting to arrive at conclusions.
7. *Possible Positives*: high accountability, broad aim, wide participation
8. *Possible Negatives*: extravagant scope, representative politics, committee driven

Comprehensive Planning Model

1. *Membership*: there are usually ten to twelve council members in this type of council.
2. *Selection Process*: council members are selected through a participative selection process or a discernment process. The goal is to see if the prospective council member feels called to this ministry of service on the pastoral council.
3. *Task*: pastoral planning in designated areas, (e.g. parish indicators - worship, community, service, education/formation or one of the subcategories - capturing the diocesan vision)
4. *Scope*: pastoral planning in designated areas so that the parish expresses the diocesan vision (or pastor's vision) in their own way, appropriate for this parish.
5. *Commissions and Committees*: this council does not have any commissions or committees of the pastoral council.
6. *Meetings*: one third of the meeting is used for scripture study and prayer. Decision making is done through consensus and discernment; focus is at the direction of the diocese or the pastor
7. *Possible Positives*: reflects the diocesan vision for this parish, no commissions or committees, prayer and consensus.
8. *Possible Negatives*: may be too ambitious in scope, diocesan driven (diocesan vision may not be appropriate for this parish at this time), pastor may not buy into diocesan vision.

Pastoral Instrument Model

1. *Membership*: this model is made up of ten to twelve people.
2. *Selection Process*: non-juridical “representatives” of God’s People chosen for their experience, prudence and faithfulness. Members can be selected through various processes including appointment by the pastor, selection by the council as a whole or the council can set up a selection ad hoc committee to assist the council. This selection process must also emphasize that membership is a ministry that one is called to.
3. *Task*: to investigate pastoral matters, to ponder them and to draw practical conclusions.
4. *Scope*: the scope is as narrow or broad as the pastor desires as he provides the leadership for the examination of pastoral matters for this parish.
5. *Commissions and Committees*: this council may set up commissions and committees to assist the council in its work. In addition, there may be additional parish commissions and committees that are not in a direct relationship with the pastoral council.
6. *Meetings*: prayer is an important part of this council’s meetings; meetings should have an agenda; focus of meetings is pastor directed; decision making by consensus and discernment
7. *Possible Positives*: this council addresses clear tasks; tasks are pastor-driven; deals with realistic expectations
8. *Possible Negatives*: focus can be narrow; may appear to de-emphasize lay leadership