

Decision-making Process When the Elders Are Not Unanimous **Adapted from Countryside Bible Church, Southlake, TX**

For churches with at least four elders:

Since the Spirit has only one mind about any given decision, in the normal course of church ministry our goal is for all the elders to be of one mind in following the same Spirit (Phil. 2:2). Thus, we strive to be unanimous in all decisions. We endeavor to reach all decisions only after prayerful consideration and in a spirit of humility, with each elder regarding one another as more important than himself (Phil. 2:3-5).

However, we recognize that godly men sometimes differ (e.g., Acts 15:37-40). In the event we are unable to reach a unanimous decision with the first vote, we have unanimously agreed to use the following process.

VOTE 1:

1. If any matter receives a unanimous **yes** vote, then the elders' decision is **yes**, the matter is settled, and the motion should be carried out.
2. If a motion receives a greater than 25% **no** vote, the elders' decision is **no**, the motion should not be carried out, and the matter is settled (unless the elders agree to bring it up again at a later date for further consideration).
3. If any elder or elders vote **no**, but there are not enough **no** votes to settle the matter (that is, less than the required 25%), a second vote must be scheduled for a future meeting.
4. Before the second vote is taken, the dissenting elders (or elder) are responsible to gather additional information on the motion, engage in discussion with the key parties, and seek godly counsel. The elders will grant these men as much time as reasonably necessary to review the matter. After sufficient time to consider the additional information, discussion, and counsel, the elders will then allow additional time for prayer for all. Again, the desire is that all decisions will be unanimous, and the elders will work in good faith toward that end.
5. Once the necessary time has been allowed, the elders will schedule a second vote on the matter.

VOTE 2:

1. If 75% of the elders vote **yes**, then the elders' decision is **yes**, and the matter is settled.
2. If less than 75% of the elders vote **yes**, then the decision is **no**, and the matter is settled.
3. The elders agree that a decision will be final after the second vote.

Statement of Unity: Any decision finalized after following this process will be a unified **yes** or **no** decision by the entire board. All elders agree to be unified in the final decision, in public and in private, even though the final decision may not reflect their personal preference.

For churches with less than four elders:

In the event you are serving on an elder board with fewer than 4 men, consider the following:

Agree in advance to involve specific mature men who could assist in the decision-making process in the event you are unable to be unanimous. You would have to agree on at least enough men to have four, but could certainly have more.

These men could be from your church or could be pastors/elders of other churches. In the event that you are unable to reach an agreement with the existing elders, these men could participate with you on this particular decision. You could then follow the process outlined above.