

Brenda Timmer - reflection on Society Exec held 22 January 2024

What happened:

This was our first Executive meeting of the year and also the first at which all the stewards of the amalgamated society were present. It was a very full meeting with 15 people attending. The agenda looked quite long as I wanted each portfolio and steward to present 3 priorities for the new year. The meeting ran to the agenda quite easily and finished in just under 2 hours. We spent quite a bit of time (45min or so) on devotions and discussing the sale of the hall. We had to come to agreement on how to handle the request of the buyer to have fairly immediate occupation. There was also discussion on the caretaker accommodation. Some useful ideas that had not been present before hand were raised in the course of the meeting. In the other portfolios not much new material was raised, but it was helpful to have people set goals for themselves so that there is something that they can be held accountable to. There was a positive energy and engagement.

What I did:

I led the meeting in a fairly informal and relaxed way. As I usually do I, we all sat in a circle. This does mean that there is nowhere for paper (perhaps a circle around tables in our halls that are now available might be better?). I prefer a circle set up as it equalises everyone and you do not have such a stark presentation of power. I had to call the meeting to order a couple of times. Working out what should be discussed in the meeting and what should be handled outside by task groups is becoming more challenging as the church recovers and more is happening. I also had to engage with one person who had offered themselves as a steward but, despite my meeting with them previously, was unclear of their role. Helping the stewards engage with their portfolio for leadership, apart from ministry activities they do personally is a challenge. We also had one steward tender her resignation in the meeting. I honestly felt it was for the best as she was not coping. As she vacillated I kept her to the decision, I will need to nurture her through finding new places to serve etc.

Wesley's Questions:

Reflecting on this meeting I paused at question 14 "Do I insist upon doing something about which my conscience is uneasy?" If I had allowed the steward to change her mind and stay on that would have been against my conscience, just because I didn't want people to think I was being unkind. I am glad I stuck to the decision.

Question 20: "Is there anyone whom I fear, dislike, disown, criticize, hold a resentment toward or disregard? If so, what am I doing about it?" - There is no one I dislike etc. I do struggle with the one steward LN (as mentioned above) - she finds it difficult to find her role now, aside from the past. I will need to be very kind and gentle with her (asking for grace) to help her find her role.

What did I notice/What will need my attention going forward:

I did notice that the stewards who had been around for a while dominated conversation and the newer members were quiet. I was concerned that they may feel left out, not wanted. I will need to work on ensuring space for those very competent leaders to leave their mark on the meeting. Maybe bring in the 11am and GWP info earlier giving space for those stewards to speak about their matters while energy is higher. I look forward to holding stewards more accountable for new work.

Any theory that applies:

The dynamic of new members entering and established group (group work theory) could be helpful. If my concern persists I will go do some reading on this.

I also realised that leadership theory is the last thing I ever want to read, perhaps some reading and thinking on leadership and alternate models - it is a growth area.