

Roberts Rules of Order – Simplified

* Please note that the Bishop is chair of all sessions. The Bishop sees her role as facilitating and not dictating business discussion, ensuring that parliamentary rights of the majority and minority on any issue are honored, and keeping the business of the Annual Conference on track. Remember to first seek recognition by the Bishop before proceeding on business before the group unless in cases of urgency / emergency (see below). The Bishop will announce the applicable voting rules before required voting is conducted.

Guiding Principles:

- Everyone has the right to participate meaningfully if they wish, subject to limits in the Session or Standing Rules.
- Everyone has the right to know what is going on at all times.
- Only one thing can be discussed at a time.

All rules in Robert's Rules of Order arise from one of these three principles.

Motion:

A "motion" is the topic under discussion (i.e., "I move that we add a coffee break to this business session"). After being recognized by the Bishop, any member can introduce a motion when no other motion is under consideration. A motion requires a second to be considered. If there is not a second, the matter is not considered. Each motion must be disposed of (passed, defeated, tabled for later, or postponed indefinitely).

How to do things:

You want to bring up a new idea before the group.

After recognition by the Bishop, present your motion. A second is required for the motion to go to the delegates for discussion, or consideration.

You want to change some of the wording in a motion under discussion.

Move to "amend" by

- adding words,
- striking words or
- striking and inserting words.

A second is required. You can propose to amend a proposed amendment ("2nd degree").

You want to propose extensive changes beyond simple word changes.

Move to "substitute" your motion for the original language. If it is seconded, the Bishop will first see if anyone seeks simple changes to the original language ("perfecting" amendments). Then the Bishop will direct attention to your proposed substitute.

You want more time to study a proposal being discussed.

Move to postpone to a definite time or date within the annual conference business sessions.

You have heard enough discussion.

Move to close the debate. Also referred to as “calling the question”. This cuts off discussion and brings the conference to a vote on the pending question only. Requires a 2/3rds vote. Simple yelling out “question”, “call the question”, or “previous question” isn’t proper.

You want to postpone the motion until some later unspecified time during the conference.

Move to “table” the motion temporarily. The motion may be taken from the table for later consideration after 1 intervening item of business has been conducted. Moving to “table” a motion doesn’t kill it. If your intent is to kill the motion without voting directly on the motion, then move to “postpone indefinitely.”

You believe the discussion has drifted away from the agenda and you want to bring it back.

“Call for orders of the day.”

You want to take a short break or send everyone home.

Move to recess for a set period of time or to adjourn.

You are confused about a procedure being used and want clarification.

Call for "Parliamentary Inquiry" to the Bishop. The Bishop will ask you to state your question and will attempt to clarify the situation.

You have changed your mind about something that was voted on earlier in the same meeting for which you were originally on the winning side.

Move to “reconsider.” If the majority agrees, the motion comes back on the floor as though the original vote had not occurred.

You want to change an action that was voted on in an earlier business session.

Move to “rescind” if no action has been taken in reliance on the original action. A 2/3rds vote is required.

If a session or standing rule prevents you from taking a certain action.

Move to “suspend the rules.” Must be seconded. Requires a 2/3rds vote. You cannot suspend Book of Discipline, secular legal, or fundamental parliamentary rules.

If a matter is considered relatively minor or opposition is not expected.

Request “unanimous consent.” The Bishop will repeat the request and then pause for objections. The Bishop on her own can seek unanimous consent by simply stating that “without objection” a certain action will be taken. However done, if no objection is heard, the motion passes.

You may INTERRUPT when another has the floor if:

- parliamentary inquiry (seek opinion of the Bishop on a relevant parliamentary rule question)
- privilege (note interfering noise, issues of safety; severe discomfort like too hot or cold, etc. and seek redress)
- point of order (calling out a suspected breach of the rules or order)
- appeal (appeal to the delegates a ruling of the Bishop which you believe in error)
- objection to unanimous consent
- division of the house (seeking vote verification when unsure if the announced result of a voice vote is correct)