

Secretary of a Group

Secretaries of specific groups and organizations in the church take minutes, see that background material is prepared before meetings and see that correspondence is sent out.

Common Practices

Occasionally someone is asked to take minutes about the time a meeting is starting, but generally people are elected to a term of office as secretary for groups and organizations within the church. Their duties depend, in part, on the facilities of the church and the wishes of the group's chairperson. The secretary of the church sometimes types and distributes minutes and agendas for all church groups. In a few cases, the church secretary may attend meetings and take minutes. Sometimes chairpersons handle correspondence on behalf of the group.

Secretaries are accountable to the group, which determines whether the minutes are correct and makes changes. They also work closely with the chairperson and help make the chairperson's job easier.

Responsibilities

A major portion of your responsibilities concerns taking minutes of the actions of the group. Those responsibilities are outlined in the "Minute Keeping" article in this resource. Additional responsibilities may include:

- Handling correspondence for the group. The chairperson or another member of the group may write letters which you type and mail, or you may have responsibility for writing as well. Then the chairperson should be given a copy of the correspondence.
- Forwarding correspondence and other documents to the chairperson and to others, as appropriate, on the committee.
- Sending notices of meetings to members well in advance of the meeting date. If possible, include an agenda and any materials members should have to help them work effectively.
- Helping in setting the agenda. Maintain a list of items deferred until later meetings and give a copy to the chairperson to include in the appropriate agenda.
- Typing and distributing the agenda.
- Having copies of documents and correspondence to distribute or for reference at a meeting. Keep them in order as they relate to the agenda.
- Maintaining a list of tasks assigned to members of the group at previous meetings and providing a copy for the chairperson.
- Maintaining a list of items referred to other groups and methods of following up these referrals. Provide a copy for the chairperson.
- Keeping a list of all policy decisions and taking them to each meeting.
- Remaining an active member of the group while taking minutes.
- Attending all meetings and being on time.
- Serving on the executive committee of the group.
- Working closely with the chairperson.
- Maintaining membership lists of names, addresses and telephone numbers.

Skills and Attributes Needed

- Interest in the group.
- Ability to keep an open mind and record an unbiased account.
- Ability to listen.
- Ability to concentrate.
- Ability to organize.
- Attention to detail.
- Neatness.
- Punctuality.
- Promptness in completing tasks

Ways to Increase Skills, Knowledge and Effectiveness

- Practice typing or computer skills.
- Talk to people who held your position previously.
- Talk to secretaries of other groups to see what helpful hints they can share.

- Be in close contact with the chairperson.
- Have the group evaluate the minutes occasionally.
- Study the information on "Minute Keeping" in **The Leaders' Box**.

Questions

- Do you know which of these responsibilities are yours in addition to taking minutes?
- Do you need help in any particular area?
- Have you reviewed the information on taking minutes? Are there any particular skills you need to develop in order to take minutes?