

**WEEK 8: CHURCH RECORDS**  
**DAY 1: RECORDS**

1. Records of the church are important. They should be kept from the time the church is first started. Minutes of the very first meeting which record who started the church, how it began and what decisions were made can be important years later.

When should a church begin to keep records? \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. A church should begin to keep records from the time it is first started. A special book for recording minutes of meetings should be kept in a safe place. The church secretary or church clerk should learn how to write down the minutes in a clear way. Without this record of decisions, a church can forget what was decided about something.

Why should a church keep minutes of all business meetings in a safe place?  
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3. Without a record of decisions, a church can forget what was decided about something.

God keeps a book in which He writes the names of each person who is born again. He keeps those records very carefully and will refer to them during the judgement. Read about God's record Book of Life in Revelation 20:12 & 15.

Whose names are being written in God's record book? \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. God is writing the names of each person who is born again. If God considers it important to write down the names of those who belong to Him, surely it is important for a church to keep careful records of church membership. The church should have a record book which lists names and how and when each person became a member and how that person leaves, if he/she leaves. This record helps the church to remember and care for every member.

Why should a church have a record book which lists names and information about members?

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5. The church should have a record book which lists names and information about members so that the church will remember and care for every member.

Only those whose names are recorded are members of the church. They are the ones who have asked for church membership. They are the ones who have been accepted as members of the church in one of the ways the church accepts new members. Only believers, whose names are written in God's record book, will be allowed to take part in life in heaven. Only members, whose names are recorded in the church membership record book (or roll) should be allowed to take part in the decisions of the church. The church secretary or clerk should be very careful to record the names.

Who will be allowed to take part in life in heaven? \_\_\_\_\_

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Who is allowed to take part in the decisions of the church? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Only believers, whose names are written in God's record book, will be allowed to take part in life in heaven. Only members of the church, whose names are recorded in the church membership roll should be allowed to take part in the decisions of the church.

In the record book it should be carefully recorded by what method each person became a member (1. Baptism 2. Transfer by letter or 3. Statement), and the date when that person became a member. Other information such as address of where the member is staying, married or not, children or not, service in the church, and any other information that would help the church minister to that member could be in the record book.

What information, in addition to a name, should be recorded in the church membership roll book?

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7. How each person became a member (Baptism, Transfer, or Statement) and the date should be recorded in the church membership roll book. It can also be helpful to record other information such as address, married or not, children or not, and service in the church.

Another church might write and ask for information about a member wanting to join their church. That information needs to be presented in a church business meeting so that the members know that one is leaving the church. Then a letter should be written giving all the information from the record book. Whether a member leaves in this way, or by dying, the records need to show it, with a date.

Where does the church secretary get information to write to another church that asks about someone moving their membership?

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8. The church record book should have all the information needed by the church secretary in order to write a letter to another church. When a member leaves by moving membership or by dying, that information and the date needs to be written into the record book.

What records should be carefully kept by the church secretary? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. The church secretary should carefully keep minutes of all church business meetings and a record book which lists names and information about all church members (A church membership roll).

**WEEK 8: CHURCH RECORDS**  
**DAY 2: FINANCIAL RECORDS**

1. What records should be carefully kept by the church secretary?

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2. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. The church secretary should keep (1) minutes of all the church business meetings and (2) a church membership roll.

The church finance record is very important. The members give their tithes and offerings. They have worked for that which they give. The church should keep a good record of their gifts. The church that does not keep a good, clear and accurate record of its receipts and expenses will soon have problems. Church members are not willing to give when they do not know what happens to their offering.

Why is it important to keep good finance records? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Problems will come to the church that does not keep good finance records. Church members are not willing to give when they do not know what happens to their offering.

We have an example of keeping good financial records in the New Testament. Read 2 Corinthians 8:20-21. An offering had been collected by the churches. Paul and his fellow workers wanted to be careful that there was no criticism of the way they handled the funds. They did not want to leave any room for someone to question their honesty. They wanted to do right in the eyes of God and man.

Why were those who handled offering funds in the New Testament careful about how they did it?

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4. They did not want to leave any room for someone to question their honesty. They wanted to do right in the eyes of God and man.

The church treasurer should record in a book the totals of all money received and all money paid out. The book should be kept in a safe place. If the offering was received for a special purpose, instead of for the regular church budget, it needs to be recorded that way.

What should the church treasurer record in the finance record book?

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5. The treasurer should record the totals of all money received and what its purpose was.

When it is possible, it is best for the treasurer to deposit all the money in a bank. To protect the treasurer, receipts should be required every time money is paid out. Receipts are important to prove where the money has been spent. If a bank account is used, cheques can be written for larger expenses or for cash to use for several small expenses. But, receipts for all paid out should still be required.

Why are receipts important? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Receipts are important to prove where the money has been spent. They protect the treasurer.

A box to hold receipts, cheque book, deposit records and the financial record book can help the treasurer. This way all the records are kept together in one place and nothing is misplaced easily. If the box is a metal box, rats and ants cannot destroy the papers.

Where can the treasurer keep the finance records so that they are kept all together?

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WEEK 8: CHURCH RECORDS  
DAY 3: FINANCIAL RECORDS

1. All the money received by a church is to be used by the church for God's work. By carefully making a budget, the church decides how the money should be used.

How does the church decide how the money received by the church should be used?

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2. The church decides how the money received by the church should be used by carefully making a budget.

The treasurer should not be asked to pay for something that is not in the budget. If there are needs not in the budget, the finance committee should make a recommendation to the church about such needs. The church, in a business meeting, makes the decision about how to pay for that need.

How can something not included in the church budget be paid for?

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3. The church, in a business meeting, makes the decision about how to pay for something not included in the church budget.

The church budget should include, first, money to be used for missions and outreach. The church that looks first at its own needs and has no concern for others cannot expect God's blessings. That church is like a member who does not give to God first.

What should be included first in a church budget? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Money to be used for missions and outreach should be included first in a church budget.

A good plan used by many Baptist churches is to plan in the budget to give a certain percentage of the total income every month to missions. This can be to a National Mission Board that sends out and supports National missionaries in areas where there are people not yet reached with the Gospel. Your church might be sponsoring special outreach Bible studies with the plan to plant new churches. Other plans have been made by Baptists in other countries. The method is not so important as the giving.

What plan does your church have to give to missions and outreach?

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5. Plan to discuss this in class.

The pastor should not be the one to handle the money or keep the financial records. If the pastor must handle the money, problems may arise. It is even best if a committee is chosen to count the money and then give it to the treasurer to record and deposit in a bank account. If the treasurer is the only one who counts and handles the money, problems may also arise.

What kind of problems may arise if the pastor or the treasurer alone counts and handles the money?

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6. You are sure to have many examples of how money is "eaten", or lost, or loaned. It is a great responsibility to handle God's money. The church should not make this responsibility more difficult by giving the added burden of one person having to answer for everything. Talk this over in class. Remember that in a Baptist church decisions about finances are the responsibility of all the members of the local church. No other group tells the local church what they should do with the money received.

Who decides what is to be done with money received by a local church?

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7. All the members of the local church make decisions about how money received by the church will be used.

A mission board, or union/convention or association offices can provide a way for putting together money from all the churches to make large projects possible.

One small local church would not be able to support a missionary alone, but with money from many churches there is enough to support several missionaries.

One small local church would have difficulties printing tracts and literature, but with money from many churches this is possible.

One small local church would not be able to have a training institution for training church leaders, such as a Bible school or seminary, but with money from many churches good schools can be maintained.

One small local church would not be able to carry out a large relief programme in a needy area, but with money from many churches there would be enough.

What is one plan that can make it possible for small local churches to support large projects?

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8. Many small local churches putting some of their money together can support large projects.

In the New Testament the churches collected money for the poor and put it all together to make enough to really be helpful. Read about this in Acts 11:27-30 and 1 Corinthians 16:14.

Many Baptist churches decide on a percentage of all the money received by the church, or a certain amount monthly, to be sent to a union/convention or association elected treasurer to support projects. It is the local church that decides how much money will be sent for these causes.

**WEEK 8: CHURCH RECORDS**  
**DAY 4: OTHER RECORDS**

1. Who decides how much money will be sent from the church funds to support large or nation-wide projects?

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2. The local church decides how much money will be sent to support large or nation-wide projects.

If the church is to show they care about every person who comes to a worship service or meeting, they need to keep a record of that person coming. Members of the church need to visit, as soon as possible, with those who come for the first time to attend a service. A guest book or papers for recording the name and information about the visitor are important. Directions for how to find the place the visitor is staying are necessary if someone is going to visit that person during the week.

Why is it important to record information about visitors to a church service?

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3. It is important to record information about visitors so that they can be remembered and visited later.

We learned that the primary purpose of the Sunday School, or Sunday Bible Study, is to teach the Bible. Another purpose of the Sunday School is to reach out to people in the community and grow the church. Keeping records of the Sunday School are important and helpful.

The primary purpose of the Sunday School is to teach the Bible. What is another purpose of the Sunday School?

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4. Besides teaching the Bible, another purpose of the Sunday School is to reach out to people in the community and grow the church.

If the Sunday School teacher marks a list of all those who are regular attenders

in Sunday School, he/she will easily see when one is absent. Without the list it is easy to forget someone. If a person is absent, the teacher or a class member needs to visit to see why that person was absent. The names of absentees can be assigned to class members. This is caring for other members and can also teach class members how to care.

How does marking a list of Sunday School class members help the teacher?

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5. Regularly marking a list of Sunday Class members helps the teacher remember each member and know when one is absent.

The Sunday School records also need to include a list of ones who have visited the class. A person who has visited a Sunday School class has shown an interest in learning about the Bible. Class members can be assigned the names of these people to visit and invite them to come again. This teaches visitation and also reaches out to new people.

Why should a record be kept of who has visited a Sunday School class?

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6. A person who has visited a Sunday School class has shown an interest in learning about the Bible. That person's name and where he/she stays needs to be remembered so that he/she can be invited to come again.

A good Sunday School has classes divided according to age, or sometimes place in school. The list of class members for each Sunday School class should include the age, especially of children. Once each year that record will help the Sunday School Director know who should be changing to a new class.

Why should the Sunday School record include the age or place in school of the members?

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7. Once each year there should be a promotion to the next age group of children who have passed the ages in their class.

**WEEK 8: CHURCH RECORDS**  
**DAY 5: OTHER RECORDS**

1. We have seen how record keeping can help the church visit and reach others in the community. We have learned how record keeping can help church members care about each other.

There are also records that must be kept for legal purposes. The church is a living body of baptized believers. The church also needs to be a legally recognized and registered organization. Without some sort of legal recognition it is very difficult, and often impossible, for a church to own land or buildings.

Other legal matters call for official registration, too.

Why does a church need to be legally registered? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. The church needs to be legally registered in order to own land and buildings, or property. In any legal matter the church needs official registration.

Baptists in different countries do this registration in different ways, according to requirements.

How do local Baptist churches in your country become legally registered?

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3. You will have to discuss this in class to find the answer. If your church is not registered in any way, find out how to do this as soon as possible.

The document that certifies the registration of the local church must be kept in a safe place. Any time the church wants to perform a legal action, such as buying land, this registration certificate is probably going to be called for.

Where is the Registration Certificate for your church kept? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Discuss this in class and decide if the certificate is being kept in a safe place.

If the church obtains land and builds a building it needs to carefully keep the documents that show ownership or lease, building occupation permit, or whatever might be required. Sometimes problems or questions can arise about ownership of land or buildings. If the papers have been carefully kept there should be no problems to disturb the church.

Why should the documents showing ownership or lease of land and buildings be kept carefully? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Having all the documents concerning the land and buildings of the church can avoid problems or questions. Many churches elect trustees to have the official duty of keeping and signing all legal papers. The trustees are not usually changed from year to year as some other church officers are. Some countries require churches to have elected trustees. What is the duty of church trustees?

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6. The duty of church trustees is to keep all legal papers and to sign them for the church. What church records have we learned about this week?

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3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

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7. This week we have learned about:

1. Minutes of church business meetings and keeping the church membership role
2. Financial records and church budgets
3. Visitor and Sunday School records
4. Legal papers - registration and property documents