**ISSUES ROUNDTABLE**

**Instructions**

***What follows are the steps in an Issues Roundtable. In order for this to work effectively, the facilitator must be focused and he or she must be firm in keeping people on task. This means the facilitator cannot allow anyone to “chase a rabbit;” dominate the conversation; speak out of turn or drag the process out. Staying in control is essential to the successful Issues Roundtable.***

1. **Identify the question.** It is the role of the facilitator to help the person “on deck” to clarify the question they wish to have addressed. Typically, there is no single question; rather, there are a number of issues that are interrelated. In truth, you cannot treat a number of questions in one session. it is therefore imperative that the facilitator get the person “on deck” to identify the most crucial and pressing issue that needs to be resolved among any number of things that may be in play. When this is accomplished, the facilitator states the question succinctly and clearly for the group.
2. **Clarify the question. I**n this step, the facilitator (who always moves around the table to his or her right) asks each person at the table if they have any clarifying questions for the person “on deck.” This is not a time for anyone to wax philosophical or to offer solutions. The sole purpose of this step is to clarify the question. If the facilitator sees someone begin to drift off task, it is imperative that they call them on it and get them back on task; that is, to simply clarify the question. It is not uncommon in a large group that by the time the facilitator gets near the end of the circle people begin to say “Pass.” At this point, there may well be nothing left to clarify and taking a pass is a completely legitimate thing to do.
3. **Offer suggestions to the person “on deck.”** At this point, the facilitator (once again moving around to his/her right) asks each person to offer any solutions they may have addressing the question on hand. During this phase, the person who is “on deck” may ask no questions. They must be focused on what each person is saying to him/her and making notes. Make sure they understand they will have an opportunity to ask any clarifying questions after—and only after -- every solution has been offered. As with the clarifying questions, in a large group, it is not uncommon to have people begin to “Pass” as you get near the end of the circle.
4. **Clarifying the suggestions.** Once every suggestion is made, the person “on deck” may then go back and ask any clarifying questions they may have of anyone who has made a suggestion. The goal is to make sure they are satisfied they understand everything about the suggestions they need to know to make a decision.
5. **Possible actions for the person “on deck.**” The person “on deck” may reject every solution without prejudice. Alternatively, they may immediately accept one or more suggestions. If they do, a covenant is formed. They are obligated to faithfully work the suggestion/s for at least 90 days or until the issue is resolved. The persons around the table are obligated to pray for this individual and this initiative until it is either resolved or it is brought back to the table for reconsideration. Only one other option exists. The individual “on deck” may demure on making a decision because they need time to think and pray about it. They have no more than 72 hours to make a decision. By the end of that time period, they must let the people around the table know by e-mail what they have decided to do.