

# Setting Building Program Schedules



*By  
Earl Myler  
President/C.E.O.*

One of the first things you will be doing when you start your church building program is to develop a master church building program schedule. This type of schedule is usually developed by breaking the project down into the various major phases or stages that have to be completed, and then developing timelines for completing each of the major phases or stages of the building program. The major phases or stages of a building program are usually broke down into the following categories: Planning; Design; Funding; Working Drawings; Permitting; Bidding; Construction Financing; and finally, Construction.

It is not uncommon for church leaders to be unaware of the time it takes to get through a building program. If you use the traditional linear approach in accomplishing all of the above major tasks, it could take as long as 22 to 31 months from the time you hire an architect or design-build firm until you complete your project. Here is a typical time line using the linear approach in completing each major phase, stage or task before you start the next one:

Planning: 1 month  
Working Drawings: 2 to 3 months  
Design: 1 to 2 months  
Permitting: 1 to 3 months  
Funding: 3 to 4 months  
Construction Financing: 2 to 4 months  
Construction: 12 to 14 months

Most churches like to get their church building programs completed as quickly as possible. In these cases, some of the major tasks can be completed in an overlapping manner, which enhances getting the project done quicker.

One of the best ways to develop a master building schedule is to work "backwards". Determining when you want to occupy or actually be using your new facilities will help determine how fast all major tasks have to be completed in order to meet the occupancy date. It will also help determine whether or not the occupancy date is a practical and reasonable one to meet.

Some of the things to consider in developing your master building program schedule that may impact your schedule are these:

1. The month you wish to start construction. In some areas of the country, it is better to start in the spring of the year, than it is to start in the dead of winter.
2. Holidays and special events that your church may be conducting may affect your schedule.
3. Funding programs are not usually advisable to be conducted in December, January, or February. This may impact your schedule.
4. Frequency of how often you meet with your design and construction professionals may affect the schedule. Some church leaders want to meet only once a month, while others will meet more frequently.