

WORKING WITH PEOPLE

The following principles should be considered important by the leadership of any church. Recognizing the value of good interpersonal relationships between members of the body and its leaders, concerted efforts should be made continually to think and act in harmony with the following procedures, practices and attitudes. A knowledge of these things can enhance the working relationship between leaders and members of any congregation.

- 1. RECOGNIZE TALENTS AND UTILIZE THEM.** Try to observe carefully what people's talents, abilities, strengths and weaknesses are so they can be provided with opportunities for serving at their best for the Master. People should become involved in what they are interested in, what they like to do, or what they can do well, as much as possible. A "service information sheet" can be valuable in learning who is willing to serve and in what capacity.
- 2. APPRECIATE WHAT PEOPLE DO AND TELL THEM SO.** People need to know that they are *really* appreciated for every task, job and effort they put forth for God as part of the church. They should hear *often*, "Thanks a lot," "You did a good job," "You're a big help around here," "We value your service (help, cooperation, input, etc.)." Sincere compliments go a long way in keeping people encouraged and productive.
- 3. ASSIGN RESPONSIBILITIES WITH SENSITIVITY.** Everyone has numerous responsibilities at home, on their jobs, and with their families, as well as other life priorities. While people should be taught that God and His work come first in their lives, a proper perspective of this principle involves many home, family and occupational responsibilities. No one should be overloaded. If a person's service for the Lord produces problems or frustrations, leaders need to be sensitive to this. Every effort should be made to help relieve the pressure and stress of an overbusy life and schedule while allowing people to serve at their best.
- 4. AVOID SHOWING PARTIALITY.** Everyone in the body should be treated the same, with no one being given "favored status" (I Tim. 5:21). People need to be ministered to on the basis of *their* needs, not because they are especially likable, friendly, or wealthy. Certainly there is the tendency to have greater rapport with some people, and such relationships may be more enjoyable than others, but great care should be taken to guard against showing preference to some, at the expense of neglecting others. Leaders must be constantly on the alert that they do not become perceived by the congregation as "hanging out" with only a favored few.

5. **TREAT PEOPLE WITH KINDNESS AND COURTESY.** Saying “Please” (when asking for something) and “Thank you” (when receiving something) should become second nature with church leaders. Others are to be put before ourselves (Phil. 2:3-4). “Kindness” should be a trait observable in all interpersonal relationships (II Tim. 2:24 NIV). With so much unpleasantness in the world, the church should be the place where people can find a lift and encouragement. Leaders need to constantly seek how they can make people’s lives more enjoyable, fuller, brighter and happier. Speaking and acting in ways that take into consideration people’s feelings are an important aspect of accomplishing these desirable traits.

6. **BE CLEAR AND DECISIVE IN ALL DEALINGS.** People need always to have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Specific times, places, people and circumstances involving them need to be carefully spelled out. They should never be left “hanging,” unsure or confused about what is expected of them. Leaders *owe* it to people to keep them informed, so they will be able to serve more effectively and enjoyably. They need to “know what’s going on

7. **STAY POSITIVE, EVEN ABOUT NEGATIVE PEOPLE AND SITUATIONS.** Leaders can sometimes become disappointed with people and situations. Even when diligent efforts to do what God wants are put forth, sometimes things just don’t turn out well. Even well-meaning people sometimes neglect their responsibilities, perform below expectations, and show indifference to important matters. In such cases, leaders must remain positive, hopeful (I Cor. 13:7) and confident. The mood, attitude and disposition they demonstrate will have a decided effect on the congregation, either for the good or the bad.

8. **BE RESPONSIVE TO NEEDS.** Good leaders want to respond to people in ways that will bless them and help them become more Christlike. While having their own private lives and families, they still want to “be there” for people when they need prayer, counsel, encouragement or whatever. But in a growing body, the number of such needs grows proportionately. People should be urged to have understanding and patience. While leaders desire to be of help, they can’t work miracles. It is important to teach people God’s Word and urge them to listen to Him, talk to Him and have a personal reliance on Him. While leaders should help all they can, *people* must ultimately assume personal responsibility for their *own* spiritual growth (Gal. 6:5).

9. **FULFILL YOUR MINISTRY.** (II Tim. 4:5). Doing what God has called leaders to do is not always easy, but it’s always right! Sometimes it involves telling people what they may not be open to hear or willing to obey. Preaching, teaching and counseling sometimes involve “reproving and rebuking” (II Tim. 4:2). While leaders must do this with patience and gentleness (II Tim. 2:25), the responsibility of people is to accept God’s truth with an open mind and a

willing spirit. If people have a “*right*” to expect leaders to minister to them in a Godly way, leaders have a “*right*” to expect people to respond in loving obedience (Col. 1:28).