

Reflection on leaders and their attitudes towards their fellow-workers

Our attitude towards our fellow-workers determines how well they function on our teams. If we have thoughts like “I’d rather not have this person on my team” or “I don’t really like the way this person performs” etc., then the person will without fail feel this.

It will affect our relationship with them. Even if we say nothing, we will keep our relationship with the person in a semi-formal manner. There won’t be the closeness. The person will not feel respected.

It will also affect their ministries. He/she will lack in motivate to carry out their ministries. “What’s the use,” they’ll feel, “because I’m not a wanted member on this team.”

God wants us to accept the ones He sends us with open arms -- as they are the ones He has chosen to serve with us. But He has also given to us the responsibility of care for them and to help them grow in the faith. They are not perfect people. They will make mistakes. They will do things differently. They will need space. Also guidance.

But accepting them as they are is what God calls us to do. It’s a fundamental teaching in relationships and ministry.

I’m writing this out of my own personal experience with Dona. I have not found our relationship easy. I have also not really warmed to her approach in ministry, and to her emphases. We are very different. And I have not expressed my appreciation for her and have communicated to her in one way or another that I do not fully accept her with wholehearted enthusiasm on my MTS team. I have opened doors for her ministry but even these have sometimes been with inner conflict wishing that I could give this ministry to someone else.

But more recently I have come to realise her value on the team and have expressed my appreciation for her openly. And this has brought us into a new relationship together and also blessed her with a new sense of well-being on the team. And this has in turn released her to begin functioning with greater freedom and joy.

What this means in summary form is:

- Deal with their own inner thoughts and attitudes towards the person -- if we hold on to negative thoughts towards the person, then we need to repent of these before God and throw them out
- Obey God’s command to accept all the brethren with our whole hearts and to love them sincerely, from the heart -- not with a conditional love or on the basis of their performing in a way that is acceptable to us -- receiving them on our teams as those whom God has sent to us both for the purpose of ministry but also for the purpose of personal growth and spiritual development
- Express appreciation to the person even for little things -- help them feel wanted on the team -- show them that they matter to you

- Commit oneself to helping the person grow and work through weaknesses -- even taking some tough measures in the process for the person's own wholeness
- Work to build a close relationship with the person, even if they are very different to ourselves -- getting to know them and their particular background
- Open doors of opportunity for them to serve in keeping with their spiritual gifts -- keep affirming even if their performance in ministry doesn't match up completely to your own high standards