Resources for Staff-Parish Relations Committees

Giving and Receiving Feedback

Feedback IS:
• Sincere and plain-speaking
• Self-revealing on the part of evaluators
• Humbly invited, humbly offered
• Conversation contains useful insights
• Dialogue with a pastor
• Personal and interactive
• Tool for improvement
• Ongoing process in the midst of ministry
• At its best, love in action

Feedback IS NOT
• Winning a point or coercing another
• Passing rumors
• Hiding behind what someone else says
• Advocating a theological perspective
• Something done to a pastor
• Weapon to be used against an enemy
• Defending one’s self or others
• Saving up complaints for a one-time session
• Objective truth

Asking for and Receiving Feedback
• Specify the feedback you seek and why you are asking.
• Be sure those giving feedback understand what they are being asked to do.
• Have adequate time and a setting where you will not be interrupted.
• Assume positive motive and intention on the part of those giving feedback.
• Invite feedback givers to offer specific observations from their own experience.
• Repeat and rephrase comments to be sure you understand what they meant to say.
• Be aware of your feelings, breathing, physical comfort.
• Call for a break if needed.

Giving Feedback
• Have adequate time and a setting where you will not be interrupted.
• Be clear about confidentiality.
• Agree what can be shared from evaluative session.
• Avoid ganging up as a group on the one receiving feedback.
• Assume positive motive and intention on the part of the one receiving feedback.
• Speak from your own experience.
• Give specific details.
• Invite questions for clear understanding.
• Did the person hear what you meant to say?
• Divide the feedback itself and conclusions from feedback into different sessions.

Adapted from: Art Gafke, *Ministry Assessment Process: Giving and Receiving Feedback*, General Board of Higher Educational and Ministry

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