

## **COMMUNICATION DO'S**

### **View communication as a ministry**

- \*The ministry of communication is about stewardship and discipleship
- \*Understand that church communication is about “transformation,” not just exchanging information. Lead by example and start the dialogue.

### **Listen.**

- \*Communication is a two-way process. Learn to listen actively and compassionately.
- \*God gave us 2 ears but only 1 mouth for a reason, listen twice as much as you talk.
- \*Don't make it about yourself giving examples of your similar experiences. Just listen.

### **Know and honor your audiences**

- \*Be sensitive, realistic, and respectful of your audiences. Speak the Truth in Love.
- \*Begin not with “What do we want to tell people?” but rather with, “What matters to the people with whom we are communicating?” What do they need?

### **Use normal, everyday language**

- \*Try not to talk above or below people.
- \*Don't assume everyone knows what you know, especially “churchy” stuff.
- \*If you are not sure that people are familiar with a phrase or name, briefly explain it.

### **Use open-ended questions**

- \*“What” and “how” questions are more likely to encourage dialogue than questions with a “yes” or “no” answer. For example:

CLOSED Ended Question: “Did you like the Youth group meeting?”

OPEN Ended Question: “What did you think of the Youth group meeting?”

### **Use body Language**

- \*A nod of the head or “uh-hum” will let the person know you are listening.
- \*Eye contact will help the person feel that you are focusing on him/her and will encourage the person to continue to speak. Try not to cross your arms.
- \*Pay attention to the other person(s) body language.

### **Focus and concentrate on what is being said and acknowledge people's feelings**

- \* Discuss only one issue at a time instead of holding simultaneous conversations.
- \*Silence your phone and put it away; try not to be distracted or let others interrupt.
- \*When a person is expressing feelings of confusion, frustration or anger, try to acknowledge their feelings. Don't dismiss the feelings or try to be too logical.

### **Be mindful of how you express yourself**

- \*Talk about your feelings using “I” statements. Ownership in solving the problem and how “I” am going to contribute to the solution are very important.
- And when asking for something, state what you want; not what you don't want.
- Many times problems start because of the WAY we say what we have to say.

### **Reflect what the person has said**

- \*Restate in your own words the feelings and ideas that the person communicated  
-e.g. - “What I hear you saying is you're upset about...”

## ...and DON'TS

### **DON'T Sermonize, preach or give orders**

\* Stay away from words like "YOU MUST" or "you should"

*WHY?* – People may feel defensive, angry or feel they are being treated like children.

### **DON'T Dismiss other people's feelings**

\* Stay away from phrases like, "We all have that problem. It's no big deal."

*WHY?* – People may feel ignored and they may close off to you.

### **DON'T Be too critical and too sure of yourself**

\* Stay away from too quickly saying, "This won't work or we tried this before"

*WHY?* – Because some may shy away from participating out of fear of being criticized.

### **DON'T Assume people know the "rules" of communication**

\*Remember that effective communication is required of everyone in the Church. Set clear lines of communication and clear roles and responsibilities for everyone involved.

*WHY?* – Because confusion and chaos create a negative, conflictive environment.

### **DON'T Be Possessive**

\* Stay away from phrase like, "This is my group" or "this is my ministry"

*WHY?* – We are all in this together. It is God's mission; we are just helping along the way.

### **DON'T Attack the other person(s) with your comments/words/actions**

\* Confront the issue, do not attack each other. Communicate without blaming the other.

\*Do not use sarcasm and no name calling. Choose your words and your tone carefully.

*WHY?* – Words and tone greatly affect the interpretation of the message we are conveying.

### **DON'T Sweat the small stuff and don't blow things out of proportion.**

Pick your battles and learn to let go of insignificant disagreements.

*WHY?* - Life is too short; lighten-up and try to see the positive side of the problem.

### **DON'T Use the silent treatment.**

\*When asked: What's wrong? Do not say "Nothing" pretending everything is OK if there is something bothering you. Do not ignore the problem pretending it does not exist.

*WHY?* – Problems do not go away by themselves; sometimes the longer you wait to resolve it, the worse it can get, so not taking action will only make matters worse.

### **DON'T Dominate or monopolize the conversation**

\* Even if your ideas are good, it may inhibit others from talking.

*WHY?* – It may prevent you from hearing a great idea, particularly from quiet people.

### **DON'T Be Defensive**

\* Don't take every criticism as a personal attack. Ask for suggestions to do things differently.

*WHY?* – Because it is good to see issues from the other person's perspective.

### **DON'T Forget to be a Servant Leader**

\* One of the principles of servant leadership is helping others achieve their full potential.

*WHY?* – Because this is what Jesus taught us. Sacrificial Love is putting the good of the others before our own. So even if you don't like what they are saying, listen and try to communicate effectively.