

## **Guideposts In my Relationship with my Brethren**

Being your leader, I am your brother and your servant.

We are co-equals in our dignity as children of God. We are equally important in our calling as co-workers in our community. As your leader, I will not lord it over you, but will only seek to serve God and involve you in this task. In this I have been given authority by God, which authority I will use as a servant, always conscious of my own unworthiness. I will be authoritative but not autocratic. I seek nothing but to glorify God and to participate in building His kingdom on earth. This is your privilege as well.

Being sinful, I may not perfectly discern God's will, or strictly follow God's ways, and so I will make mistakes or say and do things wrongly. I look to you to correct me—openly, directly and honestly. I welcome fraternal correction. I will not resent it. I will not be onion-skinned. I will accept correction as your manifestation of love for me.

Given the vast extent of my responsibility, I look to you to help me. You can do this in various ways.

Give feedback proactively and unhesitatingly. Then trust me to act on your input as the Spirit leads me.

Allow me to be a father to all. While we have our pastoral-organizational structure, allow me to go to anyone for anything, and allow anyone to go directly to me for anything. Sometimes you might feel "bypassed." Again, trust me, enough to have confidence in my wisdom to discern whom to engage, and in turn whom to direct to our structure for proper engagement by others. Our structure is for pastoral and not for bureaucratic purposes. Let us learn not to cling to legalism like the Pharisees. At its worst, legalism blocks compassion.

Always give me straight talk. I will respect your opinion. Do not beat around the bush. Do not couch your words to the point of missing the point. On the other hand, accept what I say as straight talk. I have no hidden agenda. Do not try to read between the lines, as there are no messages there. If you feel something I have said is not quite right, just tell me so outright. Then together we can work towards clearing the air.

When we are discussing a difficulty you are having with someone, I might appear to focus on your shortcomings or faults and make you think I am favoring the other party. Know that when I in turn talk with the other party, I would then be focusing on his/her shortcomings and faults. Call it a style or strategy. The important thing is for you to know and understand that I play no favorites. I am just trying to be objective, and using the occasion to form you.

I am always ready to listen. I am always open to your inputs. Never hesitate to tell me anything you think is of value. But please do not think that if I do not act favorably on your input, that I have not listened to you.

As I play no favorites, I have no greater loyalty to one against another. My loyalty is to God, and then to the brethren who follow and obey God. I accept you with all your shortcomings and faults. I will try to help you become a better person and grow in holiness.

I look for no honors or acclaim. I need not be extolled. But the Lord does look to your showing respect to me as His appointed servant.

I may not be very expressive in my social relationships. But know that I love each of my brethren deeply.

What we do is God's work, and what we live is God's way of life for us. I will always need your prayers.

Frank Padilla  
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