

CFC-FFL
GUIDELINES FOR BUSINESS DEALINGS BETWEEN OR AMONG MEMBERS

A. GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. **BASIC COMMITMENT.** The commitment to love and serve one another takes precedence over the pursuit of profit or economic gain. Our commitment is to be ready to meet one another's need by our personal help and resources and to look upon one another's welfare as our own. (1 Pet 1:22)
2. **RIGHTEOUSNESS.** We are committed to a life of righteousness and holiness, not just individually but also as a body. All our business dealings are to be conducted in a righteous and just way, in accordance with Christian tenets and principles pertinent to the particular business situation at hand. (Prov 16:8, 10:29, 15:27; Lk 16:13; Eph 4:24)
3. **PROPER STEWARDSHIP.** We are stewards of the talents and resources entrusted to us by the Lord. It is our duty and responsibility to harness, develop and utilize them properly and to exert our best efforts to preserve the viability and profitability of our business in order to contribute to the common good and continue to serve each other's needs. (Lk 19:13,15-26; Col 3:23; Prov 10:4)

Business decisions are to be based on sound judgement and exercise of reasonable discretion in the light of and rooted in Christian teachings, particularly regarding the role of business profit in God's plan. (Prov 15:22, 19:20, 20:18)

4. **GUIDANCE.** Problems and differences arising from business transactions may lead to a breakdown of relationships. Such conflicts not only affect the members' commitment to love and serve one another but also the unity and peace of the body. (Gal 5:14-15). Business dealings with members should therefore be shared with one's household leader for information and guidance. The Household/Unit Servant should handle the situation according to his level of competence. (Heb 13:17)
5. **HOUSEHOLD SERVANT'S NEUTRALITY/INDEPENDENCE.** It is wise policy for a Household Servant to generally inhibit himself from entering into business with any of the members under his care in order to safeguard and ensure his freedom in giving objective input or direction affecting not only the personal life of his household members but also their business affairs. (1 Pet 5:2-3)
6. **SPOUSES.** Husbands are to be open to their wives in whatever business deals that may participate in or be involved in. A wife is to secure her husband's approval before entering into any business relationship. (Eph 5:22-33)
7. **SPEECH.** Sharing by others of any information, particularly those arising from business difficulties, should always be guided by righteous and prudent use of speech. (2 Cor 12:19; 1 Pet 2:1)

8. **OPENNESS AND FULL DISCLOSURE.** We each have the duty to fully disclose the material facts and the attendant risks relative to a business proposition. At the same time, there exists the concomitant responsibility of each member to seek answers and clarifications to his questions and other matters he may be unclear about. Misunderstandings should always be avoided to preserve peace and harmony between and among members.

Full disclosure must also be made regarding all facts and circumstances surrounding or in connection with the business transaction which might give rise to a possible conflict-of-interest situation or may cause any undue influence or may impair the objectivity or impartiality of one's judgment or decision on any business matter.

There may be a tendency for members to take each other for granted. There is also the possibility of a member abusing his relationship with another member. Therefore, as much as possible, put all agreements and other important matters in writing as a record of the commitments and mutual expectations of the members concerned. The spirit of the agreements, written or verbal, is to be honored at all times. When appropriate, regular or periodic reports are to be made to keep members concerned abreast of developments. (Eph 4:15; Ex 17:14a; Mt 5:33; Gal 6:10; Rom 13:8; Prov 25:9)

9. **WORKING OUT CONFLICTS.** Being members of the same body, we are duty bound to exert every effort to resolve any conflict or misunderstanding in an amicable manner to preserve loving personal relationships and to prevent harm to the body. If the controversy cannot be resolved by the members involved, the dispute should be elevated to the Chapter Servant or to whomsoever he may ask or designate to handle the dispute. Court litigation should not normally be resorted to. (1 Cor 6:1-7; Dt 17:8-11)

B. SPECIFIC BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS

1. **SUPPLIER/PROFESSIONAL-CUSTOMER/CLIENT.** Profit not being the only consideration and recalling our commitment to meet and serve the needs of our buyers/clients, a supplier of products or services has the obligation to look after the welfare of his buyer/client. However, the pricing of products or services must be in the light of teachings on proper stewardship in which no member is required or expected to suffer a business loss or to impair the assets of his business enterprise or prejudice the interest of his other partners or investors. Nevertheless, the obligation to be generous to one another remains but need not be limited to business transactions. Assisting a member from one's own personal resources may be called for. (Rom 16:2; Mt 22:39, 25:37-40; 1 Jn 3:17; 2 Cor 8:13-14; 2 Cor 9:6-12)

It is incumbent also upon the client/customer to clarify himself about the products or service so as not to have false or erroneous expectations.

Once agreements are entered into and commitments are made, each member must faithfully comply and be steadfast to his word. (Mt 5:37; Rom 13:8; Gal 6:10)

2. **EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE.** The employer can expect of a member-employee the same level of performance as he would demand of a non-member, in terms of diligence, faithfulness, loyalty, honesty, etc. in the work environment. On the other hand, the employer must deal with all his employees righteously and fairly, relating to them not as units of work but as human beings deserving love and respect. In the spirit of 1 Tim 6:2, the employee must strive to serve with greater zeal and efficiency as one serving a brother. The relationship should always reflect and witness to God's love, power, truth, justice and righteousness. It should be characterized by a spirit of openness. Should there be any conflict that cannot be resolved in the workplace, the matter should be submitted to the community leaders.

3. **BORROWER-LENDER.** As a general rule, we discourage borrowing by one member from another (unless it is the lender's official business). While we are encouraged to help one another with our resources, we recognize the dangers for community relationships inherent in personal loans, when debts are not paid. Thus if there has to be borrowing/lending, we should see to it that this be done with the knowledge of the Household Servants of both borrower and lender, or when required by the particular circumstances of the members involved, with the approval of higher leaders. Such will help ensure that the borrower's needs are met or serve as an opportunity for the borrower to grow in the area of putting order into his finances. Openness serves to protect and preserve good personal relationships. (Rom 12:5; Col 3:16; 1 Jn 3:21; Eph 5:8-11)

A Household Servant should NOT borrow from his subordinates. If he needs to borrow from another community member, he should first seek guidance and approval from his household leader.

It is advisable to put the loan agreement in writing, including the terms of payment. Punctual payment of the debt should be a primary concern of the borrower. (Rom 13:8)

4. **BROKER-CLIENT.** A broker is committed to look after the welfare of his fellow member-client and should therefore fully disclose all known available facts, circumstances, risks, etc. Unless otherwise specified, the broker should make it clear and the parties should realize that he does not warrant anything. Parties to the transaction must remain good stewards.

(SG. Dec 25, 2010)