

Feedback in the Bible

- **Proverbs 27:6** Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.
- **Colossians 3:16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another.
- **Proverbs 12:1** Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge but he who hates correction is stupid.
- **2 Timothy 3:16** All scripture is... useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training.

Receiving Feedback

- Listen carefully with an open mind; look for the measure of truth in the content.
- Look for patterns in what people say. If there is common ground their perceptions may be accurate and need to be taken seriously.
- If there is a pattern then ask questions to get further information.
- Implement changes with a minimal cost that bring considerable advantages.
- When receiving praise, do not devalue it by self-effacing remarks. Thank the person, but then ask a probing question such as 'How did it help you?'

Giving Feedback

THE AMOUNT

- 'See everything, overlook a great deal, correct a little' Pope John XXIII.
- Quantity of feedback we give is determined by the amount of change we want to see.
- Tendency to expect too much change through impatience or over-optimism.
- Better to say too little rather than too much, but stay focussed on key issues.
- In a church with no feedback there may be random learning but members are not able to capitalise on the experience gained by others. Everyone receives comments but the learner.
- When we are reluctant to give and accept feedback we provoke gossip.

THE TIMING

- Give feedback as close as possible to the event or behaviour. This minimises repeated mistakes and avoids the setting of a pattern hard to break later.
- Feedback should be given at the best time emotionally for the learner. Ask them.
- Beware of generalisation. Be aware of context.
- One incident does not constitute a major character flaw.

THE MANNER

- Before giving feedback, consider whether a question might serve you better.
- Focus on a behaviour not an attitude, be honest but not brutal.
- Focus on the future not the past as feedback is designed to cause improvement.
- If the message isn't accepted be prepared to back off.
- Integrate criticism with the offer of a positive alternative.
- Feedback must take place within an existing relationship.

Feedback should be:

Actionable	Advice should be practical, realistic and something that can be used.
Blame free	Tough on issues not on people.
Calm	Generally the manner should be cool not full of emotion.
Dispassionate	Factual and objective.
Enlightening	Don't tell people what they already know.
Future-oriented	Focus on the future, not the past, to produce change.
Generous	Mix positive and negative feedback; keep to negative to a minimum.