



Giving Feedback on a talk or Bible study.

Proverbs 27:17 "As steel sharpens steel, so one man sharpens another"

Acts 15:32 "encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory."

The whole point on Ministry Trainees is that they are trained by doing. We want to give them experience of putting into practice the skills they have learned from the Thursday course. However in the pulpit or home group things can suddenly seem very different. We must be able to observe what MTs do and help them do it better.

The New Testament tells us we are to encourage and build each other up. We sometimes imagine this just involves us saying pleasant things. But sometimes it involves us as saying that someone is wrong. But "as steel sharpens steel" the end result is something sharper and stronger.

Be gentle

We have to be truthful, but people can be very delicate about receiving feedback. They are probably a MT to test the water for further ministry. One tough bit of feedback could set them back. Here are some helpful things about giving feedback.

Don't give feedback straight after a talk or Bible study.

I am an emotional wreck after I've taught the Bible! The last thing I need to hear is that nobody understood it. Make an appointment for a few days later.

Be positive

Try to say something that was good in the talk/study. There was bound to be something! We want them to continue doing the things they are already doing well. Someone has suggested that for every negative comment we should try to give two positive comments.

Be selective

If there were lots of things you consider were wrong or could be better focus on the things you consider to be most pressing. As the MT improves you can begin to fine tune. If nobody understands them, they've missed the point of the passage and their structure is all over the place these are things to address before use of illustrations. It can be quite overwhelming to be told everything at once. As they get better and more confident they can cope with more.

I've found the clearer the talk or study was the more I've got to say about what could be better. That's because they've opened the Bible so well to me, I can see myself where they could have given it more bite.

Know the answers

When doing feedback it is worth asking some questions about the passage to see how well they have understood it. However it's worth you having some idea what it's about too! This is why training someone takes time. Sure they may have done a Bible study or a sermon for you, but you've still had to do some prep to give meaningful feedback.

Be clear

Be very specific about what was good, wrong or could be improved. To help with that I've suggested two evaluation sheets, one for sermons and one for Bible studies. Do adapt them to suit your situation better. You may wish to use them for other Bible teachers in your Church, perhaps in young people's work or to get people to evaluate you. I suggest that you don't let people do this anonymously; get people to own their comments. You may wish to get your MT to evaluate you.

There is a longer, but very helpful article on this by Gordon Cheng called "Why did the sermon fail" in the Briefing, you can buy that issue from http://www.matthiasmedia.com.au/briefing/archives/what_is_the_gospel.php

For more on giving feedback on talks see John Chapman's "Setting hearts on fire"

For more on giving feedback on Bible studies see Colin Marshall's "Growth Groups"

Both are available from www.thegoodbook.co.uk

Preaching Evaluation Form

Observer:

Preacher:

Bible passage:

Date:

1. Content

a) Getting it right

Was the passage properly understood and explained?

Did the main point(s) of the passage come out?

Was the passage set in context? (immediate, Biblical/Theological)

b) Structure

Did the sermon have a clear message? What was it (in a sentence)?

Did the sermon have a clear structure? What was it? List the main points?

Could people follow it?

c) Application

Were we told clearly what to do as a result of the meaning of the passage?

What was the application?

Did the application(s) flow naturally from the passage?

Did they reflect the passage's main points?

2. Delivery

a) Pace & Voice

Was the pace good or too fast?

Use of pauses and pitch

Was it delivered loud enough and articulated clearly enough

b) General

How appropriate to the message was the manner/style/body language?

Did the sermon hold your attention?

Did the sermon convey its message clearly and directly?

Were the introduction and illustrations used effectively?

What was the sermon's best feature

General comments:

Possible improvements

Bible study evaluation form

Observer:

Leader:

Bible passage:

Date:

Did the leader properly understand the passage?

What key truths were communicated?

Did the launching question work?

Which questions worked well, why?

Which questions worked less well, why?

Was the leader a teacher or a facilitator?

How well did they involve the rest of the group?
Did they encourage or quash discussion?

Did the group interact with the Bible passage?

Was the leader flexible, allowing discussion to flow, whilst still keeping some order and structure?

How were “wrong” answers dealt with?

Did the summary lead to application and prayer?

Was the application from the Bible passage?