



Far More Than Bed and Bath

The emphasis for this column will be to encourage administrators who supervise residence hall deans. Perhaps you've asked yourself, "What can I do to encourage and inspire deans to greatness, in terms of service and leadership?" If you desire your students to be led more than controlled, inspired as well as instructed, and engaged to cooperate rather than coerced to comply, you are off to a good start.

How about your deans? Do they understand this style of leadership? Do they know how to be redemptive in their discipline and in their general expectations? Are they kind, even when frustrated?

Keeping in mind the old maxim, "If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always gotten," could it be that some things need to be changed? If this strikes a responsive chord, I invite you to consider these ideas as you supervise residence hall deans:

Encourage your deans to seek a personal relationship with Christ and to pray and share with others as they pursue their own spiritual journey. Ask them to share with you how that journey is progressing. Refer to their work as a ministry. Encourage them to keep a prayer journal or diary where they can record daily their insights, feelings, and challenges.

Encourage them to love and support their own families and to make their needs a priority. Ask about their spouse and children. Respond in a timely manner to specific requests that relate to deans' families. Be honest and open about what you can and can't do about housing and scheduling.

Expect your deans to be mature adults in their interaction with stu-

dents, while encouraging them to form appropriate and caring relationships with them. Encourage them to have fun with the students and staff and to avoid taking themselves too seriously.

Encourage your deans to develop and articulate a clear vision of what they want their program to be like. Ask them to review their mission statement and specific goals and objectives for their residence-hall program. Reviewing this with your deans provides helpful structure and accountability.

Encourage your deans to develop a strong faith and the confidence that goals and objectives can be reached through their commitment and responsibility and God's empowerment. Pray with them about these challenges.

Review your expectations of what it means to be "on duty" and "off duty," a balanced work ethic, and the sacrifices they may be asked to make. Reading Hebrews 13:15 and 16 together can be powerful.

Encourage your deans' professional growth through in-service training and professional reading. Ask them to share with you what they have been learning. Encourage them to be educational leaders on your campus and in their profession, as they develop expertise in their field.

Provide financial assistance and encouragement to attend the Adventist Student Personnel Association (ASPA) annual conference and/or a deans' workshop (held alternating summers at Andrews University and La Sierra University).

Espouse the philosophy that every problem presents both a challenge and an opportunity. Show your deans how to keep a balanced view of problems and personal needs. Encourage them to find creative ways to prevent crises.

Dialogue with them about the importance of being committed to take

the long view of their ministry. Sowing good seed is their primary responsibility. The Holy Spirit will take care of the harvest.

Seek to build a team of residence-hall deans who share a common vision and a sense of calling. Deal assertively with anything that might undermine team unity and purpose.

As you supervise your deans and their programs, pray for insight, patience, courage, and faith that your efforts to hold them accountable will be successful.

Excellence in service is what our students and their parents deserve. My final challenge is for you to use the discussion questions below for personal reflection and as a stimulus for specific supervision strategies.

Questions for Discussion

1. What pre-service/in-service training opportunities are available for your residence-hall deans? Are they adequate?
2. What assessment strategies can you use to keep your deans focused and committed, yet balanced?
3. Do your faculty and staff understand and support the residence-hall ministry on your campus, or are they more concerned about control issues and policy enforcement? How can you ensure that people understand the wholistic ministry of the residence halls and the deans?
4. How can your residence-hall deans be encouraged and empowered to become "educational leaders" on your campus and in their profession?

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