



A Teacher's Relationship with the Administrator
By Mark Taylor, College/University Representative

During my career in education, I have served as a teacher and an administrator. Our society tends to hold the idea that there should be an adverse relationship toward your boss, or in the case of education, your principal. I often share with future teachers that the administration should not be your enemy. We should be supportive of one another and working for each other's success. Your success is dependent on the administrator. And remember that the principal's success is dependent upon your success. They have invested in you, and they want you to excel.

Be mindful of a principal's responsibilities and roles.

- Principals are the official leaders in the school.
- Principals are policy makers.
- Principals are crisis managers.
- Principals are facilitators.
- Principals are reward dispensers.
- Principals are judges.
- Principals function as buffers.
- Principals are sacrificial lambs.

(Ryan, Cooper, & Bolick, 2016, p.425)

Ryan and Cooper, in their text *Those Who Can, Teach*, noted: "Today's school principal has a most difficult job, and doing the job well requires the strength of a field general, a philosopher, a psychiatrist, and a saint" (Ryan, Cooper, & Bolick, 2016, p.425). Too often we are quick to be critical and do not try to understand the challenges of administration.

Dr. Roy Lowrie, in his book *To Those Who Teach in Christian Schools*, said:

“Occasionally teachers misunderstand Christian school administration and feel that everyone should have an equal say in the operation of the school. Good administrators value the opinions of teachers and do not act like lords over God’s heritage, but the principal is the chief administrative officer of the school and bears the final responsibility for the school’s daily and yearly operations.” (Lowrie, Jr., 1988, p.74)

Ways to Support the Principal

Here are six ways you can be supportive and have a positive relationship with school principals:

1. Seek to understand their challenging roles and responsibilities.
2. Pray for them daily.
3. Look for ways to encourage the principal.
4. Do not complain about your administrator and cause dissension among the staff.
5. Do not pout if the principal does not follow your advice.
6. Be teachable and accept the principal’s counsel and assistance.

Encouragement from the Bible

The Word of God communicates how we are to respond to our school leaders. Here are scriptures to keep in mind.

Colossians 3:23 (NIV)—“Whatever you do, work at it with all of your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.”

Hebrews 10:24-25 (NIV)—“ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another-- and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Ephesians 4:2-3 (NIV)—“Be completely humble and gentle: be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”

Romans 13:1 (ESV)—“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.”

1 Peter 5:5 (ESV)—“Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

1 Timothy 2:1-4 (ESV)—“ . . . I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

Hebrews 13:17 (NIV)—“Have confidence in our leaders and submit to their authority because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.”

Proverbs 13:20 (NIV)—“Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm.”

I conclude with some more of Dr. Lowrie's observations:

“When the teachers and administrators are functioning well by understanding their roles and by applying Christian body-life principles in their daily relationships, the administration of the school is wondrous, a beautiful thing, an evidence of God's leadership and control of the school. Each teacher is fulfilled, each administrator is fulfilled, and the ministry moves forward because the Holy Spirit has freedom. If the Spirit is grieved, these things will not be true, and the ministry is hindered. Take care that you are never the cause of hindrance in the school where you are serving God.”

Dr. Mark Taylor is from Ferguson, Missouri. He is a professor of education and serves as the department chair of the Social and Behavioral Sciences/Teacher Education at St. Louis Community College in St. Louis, Missouri. You may contact Mark at mltaylor@stlcc.edu.

References

Lowrie, Jr., Roy (1988) *To Those Who Teach in Christian Schools*. Association of Christian Schools International
Ryan, Cooper, & Bolick (2016). *Those Who Can, Teach* (14th ed.). Cengage Learning