

Responsible Employer – Employee Relationships

Everybody but Sam had signed up for a new company pension plan that called for a small employee contribution. The company was paying the rest.

Unfortunately, 100 percent employee participation was needed; otherwise the plan was off.

Sam's boss and his fellow workers pleaded and cajoled, but to no avail. Sam said the plan would never pay off.

Finally the company president called Sam into his office. "Sam," he said, "here's a copy of the new pension plan and here's a pen. I want you to sign the papers. I'm sorry, but if you don't sign, you're fired. As of right now."

Sam signed the papers immediately.

"Now," said the president, "would you mind telling me why you couldn't have signed earlier?"

"Well, sir," replied Sam, "nobody explained it to me quite so clearly before."

Ephesians 6: 5 – 9

Colossians 3: 22 – 4: 1

1 Timothy 6: 1 – 2

Titus 2: 9 – 10

1 Peter 2: 18

I am using the verses for master – servant/slave relationships as the attitudes that are taught would be the same as employer – employee relationships. This doesn't mean that an employee is a servant or slave of his employer. However in one sense he is a servant of the employer in the sense that he serves the employer or the company for which he works.

1) A Reflection of our Relationship with God

- Before we concern ourselves with the details of being a responsible employer or employee we ought to put everything into the perspective of our relationship with God. Without this perspective we will merely view our employment relationship from a secular humanistic perspective rather than taking hold of the fact that whatever we are doing we are involved in something bigger than ourselves.
- We ought to understand that work is not something that came because of the fall of humanity into sin. Work came before the fall and is part of God's plan for mankind.
 - Genesis 2: 15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.
- We have been redeemed for God's glory. This doesn't mean that we are saved merely to go to church and sing songs of praise and worship on Sundays – even though that is part of it.
- We are to bring glory to God in the way we conduct ourselves in our character and relationships in every aspect of our lives including the workplace (or college or school) whether we are the employer or employee (or teacher/lecturer or student)
 - 1Corinth 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God
 - Col 3: 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.
 - Col 3: 23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men
- We are ultimately serving God not man
 - Col 3: 24 It is the Lord Christ you are serving
- Knowing that we are ultimately serving God and not man will affect the way we relate to our employees if we are an employer and vice versa.
 - Our forefathers succeeded because their goal was not material wealth alone but glory to God. Their mundane work was as sacred as the frontier parson's. They believed whatever they did was God ordained.

TOM HAGGAI

2) The Responsible Employer

- Responsibility starts with the employer. An employer cannot demand responsible behaviour by his employee if he does not demonstrate responsibility in the way he deals with the employee.
 - Too often employers demand accountability from their employees yet neglect to be responsible for them.

- Col 4: 1 “Provide what is right and fair”
 - The employer ought to provide the right working conditions as well as a fair salary
 - Right working conditions would include:
 - Reasonable working hours
 - Healthy and safe working environment
 - Enough breaks during the day.
 - A fair salary would be a salary that is liveable on under the present economic conditions according to the time worked
 - Some people are paying their employees a salary that was fair 5 years ago but it isn't a fair salary anymore
 - Isaiah 58: 3 "Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers."
 - MAL 3:5 "So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, but do not fear me," says the LORD Almighty.
 - James 5: 4 Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you.
- Do not threaten your employees (Ephesians 6: 9)
 - When someone lives under threat he feels oppressed. Thus when an employer threatens his employees it is equivalent to him oppressing them.
 - Modern companies have long realised this and have sought to build up and encourage their employees to work better rather than to threaten them to do so. In so doing their dignity is upheld and work results are far more positive than those who work under threat.
 - Correction does much, but encouragement does more. Encouragement after censure is as the sun after a shower.

JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE (1749–1832)
- Discipline the employee who needs to be disciplined
 - Col. 3: 25 “Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.”
 - The Christian employer who overlooks wrongs of a Christian employee because he is a Christian is not being responsible.
 - Have discipline with grace and grace with discipline.
- Treat your employees with the fear of the Lord knowing that as they are accountable to you, you are accountable to God.

3) The Responsible Employee

- Obey and submit to your employer with respect as you would obey Christ
 - This isn't just for good employers but even those who are harsh and inconsiderate (1 Peter 2: 18)
 - Work hard at all times even when they aren't watching. Remember that God sees that attitudes of our hearts
 - The saying “When the cat's away the mice play”. Many people take advantage of the absence of their employer or boss and do what they want. This isn't right in the sight of the Lord.
 - Sometimes believers try take more advantage of their employers who are believers as they play it on their conscience. This isn't right and puts the believing employer into a moral predicament.
 - 1 Timothy 6: 2 Those who have believing masters are not to show less respect for them because they are brothers. Instead, they are to serve them even better, because those who benefit from their service are believers, and dear to them.
- Titus 2:9-10 Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.
 - Be subject to your employer
 - Try to please them
 - Don't talk back to them
 - Don't steal from them
 - Show that you can be fully trusted
 - Make the teaching of God our Saviour attractive in every way