

Working with Your Pastor

In Brief:

Have you ever struggled to have a good relationship with your pastor? Do you sometimes feel like you've tried everything but you and he don't see things eye to eye?

Consider the fact that this may be as simple as not understanding each other's intentions compounded by not communicating in ways that are mutually clear and beneficial.

Knights of Columbus councils are to be in service to the pastor and thereby the parish. While you may know this, has this been expressed (consistently) to your pastor?

Much like yourself, the pastor is extremely busy and in most cases he is being pulled in countless directions. He doesn't need more work, he needs more help. Who better than the Knights of Columbus to be in direct service to him?

In order for him to believe this, he must first trust and be able to depend on you and your council. While your words are important, a solid relationship with your pastor will be developed and sustained by your **actions** as a council. The response to your pastor's request for assistance must be an enthusiastic **"yes."**

Take Action:

Request to meet with your pastor and explain to him that your council's primary purpose is to be in service to him and the parish.

This needs to be expressed (and more importantly shown) repeatedly & consistently. If not, everything else you try to accomplish at the parish will be a struggle.

Help him to understand what your council can offer to the parish!

If a pastor doesn't want to engage with your council, it's often because he doesn't understand what you can offer or he has had bad experiences in the past. Most pastors will have preconceived ideas of the Knights (good and bad).

Explain and show your pastor the new Faith in Action program model. Find opportunities to sit down with him and discuss Faith in Action.

He may be pleasantly surprised that many (if not all) of the programs will directly serve the parish.



Food for Thought...



Every pastor is thinking about two things every time you present a new idea to him:

- What will this cost?
 - How much work will this create?
- Any proposed idea by your council must relieve the pastor of these worries. Otherwise, the proposal may very well fall on deaf ears.

Ask the pastor if someone from the council may be part of his Parish Leadership Team. He will appreciate this and it will only elevate the importance of your council in his eyes.

A pastor will often try new initiatives that he hopes are good for the parish.

- Be willing to try new things and assist the pastor in his vision.
- Be willing to participate in other parish ministries if the pastor asks you.

A pastor needs leaders that he can trust. Show him he can trust you.

The worst thing a council can be in a parish is all-consuming for the pastor.

- Do not be a drain on his time, energy and resources.



“We do well in spite of the pastor”.

- Every effort must be made to ensure that the relationship between your council and the pastor isn't an, “us against him mentality.”

Pastors are human beings too.

- We all appreciate knowing that there are people that support us.
 - The greatest gift you can give your pastor is for him to know that you support him professionally and personally.
 - Let him know that you pray for him.
 - Invite him out for a social gathering in which he doesn't have to feel like “he's on”.
 - Help him to understand that he can depend on you.

Schedules, room assignments and priorities can change on a dime in any parish.

- Be the organization within the parish that “goes with the flow” and doesn't complain when plans change. The pastor will genuinely appreciate your flexibility.



Six Steps to Success

When Communicating With Your Pastor



*The following steps will **only** be successful if your council believes and emulates that it is in service to the parish.*

#1 Request to meet with your pastor for one purpose: to ask how your council may better serve the parish. Have nothing else on your agenda. He will appreciate the gesture and that you did not ask him for anything.

#2 When you meet with a pastor to discuss a new idea or project, make sure that the following two points are very clear:

- The idea/project will cost the parish no money.
- The idea/project will not create more work for the pastor. You will handle it.

Pastors have ideas suggested to them all the time. You will more readily have their attention if they see that you are offering to help them, especially by making their ministry easier.

#3 Prior to creating the calendar for you council or jurisdiction, ask the pastor if you may see the parish's calendar for the (Fraternal) year.

Stress that you want to make sure your council is aware of and ready to assist with important events for the parish throughout the year.

#4 Understand the *Faith in Action* programs well. Prior to meeting with the pastor, do your homework and be ready to discuss the programs and initiatives (both in your council and in the parish) that are important to him.

Begin by proposing *Faith in Action* programs that directly contribute to the initiatives/programs central to the ministries of the parish.

#5 Ask the pastor if you may be part of his leadership team.

Be clear that your intention is to be better engaged with the priorities of the parish so that your council may in turn serve him better.

#6 At all costs, be the group in the parish that he can depend on the most.

- If the pastor asks for your help, do everything possible to assist, even if it's something "we don't normally do."
- If the pastor implements a new initiative and he does not ask for your assistance, reach out to him and offer to help in any way you can.



Great questions to ask your pastor

- Father, how can we help you?
- What's the biggest need in the parish?
- Do you have any new initiatives planned that we can help with?
- Our Faith in Action program model has several programs that can benefit the parish. Rather than duplicating our efforts, may we show you the programs and see how we can better serve the parish?



Comments from a pastor that show your council is an integral part of his parish

- “I love our Knights council, I can always depend on them.”
- “These are truly men of faith. If a man in my parish wants to become a better dad or husband, I always say: ‘Join the Knights of Columbus.’”
- “I never have to worry about our Knights council. They are always flexible and work around the schedule of the parish.”
- “There is no other group more involved in my parish than the Knights of Columbus.”

