

REDUNDANCIES IN A CHRISTIAN MANNER

Sheila Jones

Having to make roles redundant and say goodbye to members of staff is never easy. How can Christian organisations ensure we honour our brothers and sisters for all they have done, and fulfil the legal requirements for redundancy with grace and mercy? We want people to feel they have been treated fairly, consistently, honourably and with appreciation and we want to behave with integrity and with authenticity.

- Prayer – praying as a senior team about the need for redundancies
- Heeding your values and Christian ethos as you think through what next
- If you don't have any values mapped for your organisation think about working with: Christ-centred, integrity, individual awareness, inclusivity, and interdependence
- Treating people as the uniquely created people they are is key
- Being committed to a fair process and to working within current employment law
- Being the very best you can be in communication to all staff and to those who are immediately affected – give the context (the why), what exactly is going to happen (what), timing (when), how many will be affected
- Stick to the schedule you have carefully mapped out – remember, people will be anxious for their jobs
- Be consistent in your treatment of 'at risk' individuals when meeting them – remember to give the whole context of why this is happening (downturn in funding, loss of a contract etc) and deliver the news with empathy, compassion, and if appropriate offering to pray at the end of the meeting
- Listen deeply to what staff members say as part of the consultancy and be open to how God might be offering new ideas, different ways of doing things through them
- Give your staff members the gift of time – your time in the consultation meetings which is another way of valuing and appreciating each one
- Consider offering more than Statutory Redundancy Pay if you can – acknowledging the value of each person to the organisation
- Be consistent in all your communication with staff – be sensitive too in general all-staff meetings – it won't only be those who are 'at risk' who are suffering
- Consider using an external Christian consultant to give 'career counselling' for those whose roles which will be made redundant and having a fixed budget for this per person
- Think about offering 'listening support' from the same consultant to any 'survivors' who are finding things really difficult as a result of the redundancies

Sometimes Christian organisations use 'redundancy' as a way of getting rid of staff members when in fact it is more of a performance management issue. Make sure you are using redundancy in the right way and as a last resort.

Some of those whose posts have been made redundant will perhaps be unable to process their pain and fear alone, encourage them to find the support they need at their church or through positive Christian friends. Often, redundancy can trigger a number of emotions deep within and the support of external help can be invaluable at this time.

The apostle Paul reminds us:

".....whatever you do, do for the glory of God" 1 Cor:10:32

and

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as if to the Lord....." Col:3:23

As Christians we have a responsibility to be 'as Christ' to one another even amidst the pain and awkwardness of redundancy.