

How to Establish Home Guidelines

By Maria

FD/MM/FM 3526 12/04

Dear Family,

I LOVE you, and pray that this Christmas season has been both rewarding and fruitful as you reach out to share our Husband's love and salvation with the needy world. Peter and I and everyone in WS have also been praying for each of you as you pray, counsel, hear from the Lord, and vote on your post-renewal plans, setting down Home rules and guidelines, as well as personal ones.

2. Establishing rules and setting guidelines as a Home can seem like a laborious job at any time. It's hard work because there are so many factors to consider and a wide range of things to take into account, and we're claiming the keys of direction and guidance for you as you tackle this job now in determining your post-renewal guidelines regarding worldly input. We realize that you're fighting to be winning teams that are united and strong. You don't want to go back to how things were, you're desperate to keep the renewal victories you've won, and you're desirous of moving forward and being strengthened in the year to come. You want to make guidelines that will help you to consolidate your victories and be in line with the strengthening you wish to obtain in the year to come.

3. Our folks here in WS are doing the same. During their times of discussion and hearing from the Lord regarding what post-renewal guidelines and rules to put in place in our WS Homes, one question that repeatedly came up was where to draw the line between personal guidelines and setting down guidelines as a Home. Our folks found themselves unclear on exactly what needs to be decided on as an individual and what needs to be decided on as a Home.

4. In the messages that the Lord and Dad gave in the "Shooting Straight" GNs, it was made clear that each Home needed to pray

about and create rules, guidelines, and safeguards, according to what the Lord showed them was needed in their situation. But one problem that arose was that some people felt the Home should come up with very specific guidelines and then everyone should just ask for general counsel personally, and others felt the exact opposite.

5. Here's an example of a possible scenario you could face in your Home to illustrate this point.

6. You want to set down Home guidelines regarding System input for children. Someone in the Home may suggest establishing exact hours of allowed System input for the children and making it uniform for all the children in your Home. While this could be a possibility, one problem with this is that children have varying needs and each child is different, and if the Home were to vote for putting this rule in place, it could possibly interfere with what the Lord may want to tell the parents when they ask Him for specific personal guidelines for their child.

7. This is one of many possible scenarios that demonstrate the apparent need to know where to draw the line between what needs to be decided on as an individual and what needs to be decided on as a Home.

8. When asking the Lord about this, He confirmed the need to address this topic not only for WS, but for the entire Family, and He instructed us to do so as soon as possible, since you're probably already working on your post-renewal guidelines and will continue to fine-tune them in the weeks to come. The Lord wants to help you avoid pitfalls and help you to "get it right" on establishing your rules and guidelines from the start, and we do too. I know the following counsel from our Husband will help you to do just that. As you read this message, please

keep in mind that while the Lord is addressing your post-renewal decisions regarding worldly input, these same principles apply to any Home guidelines and rules you may need to determine in the future.

9. (Jesus:) It's important that Home members agree upon and follow general Home guidelines. Each Home is different, but each Home still needs a set of rules and guidelines that will keep the spiritual standard of the Home high, and which will empower you to reach your collective Home goals.

10. Most people realize that these Home rules and guidelines are necessary—the big question is how to go about making and then enforcing them. Making and enforcing Home rules is one of the more sensitive aspects of communal living, and I put the onus on every Home member to do their part to work together in love and unity to bring these things about.

11. To start, everyone must have the right attitude toward Home rules and understand what rules are for:

Home rules are:

- To help you keep a high spiritual standard that is in line with the Word.
- To help you reach your Home goals.
- To assist in the smooth running of your Home, which will give you more time to serve Me and enjoy each other's fellowship and fun.
- To help spread out the workload.
- To bring greater unity.
- To make the guidelines clear for everyone so that you can more easily understand the boundaries and stay within them.

Home rules are not:

- A works trip formula in which the more rules you have or the stricter they are, the more of a winning team you automatically become.
- To be in place just for the sake of having a rule, not for a definite, good, or specific reason.

- Something dictated by Home leadership without the approval and consent of the Home.
- To be decided on the sole basis of something you may have heard that another Home or WS has implemented, so as to squelch personal freedom and Home members' ability to pray and hear from Me and make personal decisions.

12. I've already made it clear that rules are necessary, and every Home is going to need to implement some, but now I'd like to present the balance: Your attitude should not be "let's see how many rules we can manage to put in place," but rather "let's see how few rules we can implement while still keeping a high spiritual standard and reaching our Home goals."

13. Rules are not the primary way to become a winning team. They are not the primary way to have a high spiritual standard, and they are not the primary way to reach your goals. In fact, they are a secondary means, a tool to help complement Home members' personal faith and conviction. These secondary means are still very often needed, but it's always far better to first look at ways to rely on personal faith and conviction rather than always defaulting to rules.

14. Take System input, for example. This is something that will pretty much affect every Home. I've asked you to pray about System input individually and also as a Home. I've mentioned this throughout the "Shooting Straight" series. What does this mean? Does it mean you Homes need to create a highly detailed set of rules for System input, with exact hours, perfectly organized System input schedules, and long lists of what content is allowed?

15. Well, some of you may be surprised to hear that this is not what I had in mind. There may be some situations that need more detailed Home rules, especially if your Home has had an extreme problem with System input or if you have a number of JETTs and teens who are not personally accountable. But under normal cir-

cumstances, such a detailed set of Home rules on System input has the potential to override one of the primary post-renewal lessons that I want to get across: That you all learn to seek Me about how to minimize worldly input, that you abide by the personal guidelines I have given you, and that you become personally accountable for keeping your spiritual standard high both individually and as a Home.

16. So instead of your Home coming up with tons of rules that could override individual faith and conviction, when considering Home guidelines and rules regarding worldly input, I want you to think and pray about the aspects that affect your Home as a whole. Here are some examples of questions you could discuss and pray about. Please don't be limited to these, but be sure to ask Me for others that might apply to your specific Home and situation.

- What should your standard be for united Home movie viewing? Should you have a movie night? What movies should be shown? Who will preview and pray about the movies, etc.?
- Are your Home members spending so much time reading System novels that they are not fulfilling their duties or putting enough into witnessing and follow-up?
- Is anyone in the Home staying up late playing computer games, making them too tired for devotions and witnessing?
- Is System music being played in public areas, which has not been prayed about or agreed upon by the Home?
- Is there some sort of check-and-balance or personal accountability system you can implement as a Home that will help individuals to obey the personalized counsel I have given them?
- How can you build better habits of asking Me about worldly input?
- Does your Home have a specific ministry that would be either hindered by certain types of worldly input or would somehow be offensive to your local sheep? If

so, would you decide to avoid any types of worldly input as a Home for the sake of your sample or your sheep or the country you live in, etc.?

- Are there System input issues within the Home that are causing disunity?
- Are you spending too much Home funds on worldly input?
- How can you as a Home encourage more fun and enjoyable activities that are not centered on worldly input?
- Are people in your Home reverting to worldly input as a result of a lack of organization in your Home? (Perhaps some people are working too hard, whereas others have too much time on their hands.)
- Are there System input issues within the Home that are negatively affecting the children?

17. I'm asking you to dwell on what will affect your Home as a whole, rather than making lots of specific rules that may not apply across the board to everyone. This is very important for you to grasp. While rules do help guide you in the right direction, they will never be enough to change hearts and permanently break worldly habits, and can actually encourage you to be lazy about hearing from Me in prophecy regarding your input. The best way to break bad habits is for each of you, individually, to frequently ask Me about your worldly input and to stick to what I tell you to do.

18. Rules can sometimes actually seem the easy way out. It's tempting to feel things would be a lot easier if you simply "go by the book" and enact a number of rules and consequences. In some respects, this could be true, but the catch is, it's only easier in the short term.

19. For example, what if you agree as a Home to lay down a "no worldly input whatsoever" rule? You may think that this would eliminate the need to pray individually about your worldly input; or to organize and attend Home Council meetings about it; you'd be free of having to face issues that come up relating to people's worldly addictions; you might rid yourselves of

disagreements that come up with different views on the worldly input standard, etc.

20. Doing things this way could seem so much easier. But as I outlined in detail in “A Clear Sound of the Trumpet” (“Shooting Straight 8,” GN 1100), there are good reasons not to put a total ban on worldly input. Please remember, just because it’s easier, that doesn’t always mean it’s better, or better for you. What if you decided to go live on a desert island so you didn’t have to worry so much about persecution? You might not have to worry about anyone persecuting you, but you’d also never be able to learn and grow from the many benefits persecution brings.

21. This is why I made it a point not to ban all worldly input for the entire Family. There may be some rare circumstances where you as a Home agree that worldly input just doesn’t fit into your Home because of the nature of your ministries, or because of your location, but unless I have given you a very good and specific reason to ban it completely, then what you’d be doing is overriding the counsel I have given you in the Word. I specifically want Family members to contend with worldly input so that each one learns how to minimize it individually, and each one personally discovers the many benefits of doing so.

22. You need to give yourselves plenty of room for growth. And as you do, in the long run you’ll be much better off, because personal accountability and using your gift of personal prophecy, coupled with godly counsel, will shepherd you.

23. You will need some rules and guidelines, and you’ll especially need to make more specific rules for children and JETTs and teens who are less personally accountable, or adults who are unable or unwilling to seek Me for My counsel and obey it, so ask Me for the balance.

Here are a few examples of times when stricter rules would be necessary:

24. —When people are disregarding My instructions to ask Me everything and minimize ungodly influences.

25. —For those who are simply unable to control their addictions, there may need to be some rules that will help these brethren not to stumble. For example, if someone(s) has difficulty controlling their addiction to the Internet, there may need to be some stricter guidelines regarding access to the Internet for these individuals. These could be put in place by the shepherds if it only involves one or a few people, of course, in agreement with the individuals. But if the problem is more widespread, then the Home Council may want to set firmer guidelines in place for the entire Home regarding Internet use.

26. I want to reiterate that Home rules should always be for a very specific purpose. Home rules should not be instituted based only on the shepherd’s or any one or even a few people’s personal feelings. Ideas and options should be presented to the Home Council for everyone’s input, and then be prayed about and decided upon by the Home’s voting members as outlined in the Charter. The Home should determine together whether it’s necessary to implement the suggested guidelines at all, or modified versions of them, or completely different ones.

27. Anyone who is praying about possible new Home rules or guidelines—either Home Steering Council members or others who would like to present an idea to the rest of the Home—should be sure to hear from Me first before presenting your suggestions. This is because it’s worthwhile to get My consent that your idea merits everyone in the Home taking their time to consider, discuss, and pray further about it. I’m not talking about you receiving from Me a “Yes, this idea is My will” answer. Most likely I would say something like, “Yes, this idea is a worthwhile one to present to the Home, and through further counsel, prayer, discussion, and hearing from Me, I will make My will clear.” I rarely give one person a complete idea. I very often have more details to reveal after you have discussed ideas all together as a Home. So it’s important to put everything on the table, review the Word on the matter, discuss, hear all sides, exchange thoughts and ideas, and

then come back to Me again as often as is necessary until you are ready to vote and reach a good decision. This process is a very important part of communal living and will help keep you unified and moving in the same direction.

28. As you pray and call on the keys of wisdom, insight, leading, and guidance, I will help you to strike a proper balance in setting down both your Home and personal guidelines, so that Home rules will not override individual faith and conviction. You need both. Home guidelines should not rule out the need for every individual to specifically hear from Me about their personal guidelines, but Home guidelines and rules should cover the aspects of worldly input or any other things that affect your Home as a whole. (*End of message.*)

29. (Mama:) Isn't it wonderful to have this clear-cut counsel on the balance between Home and personal guidelines? Home guidelines and rules are important, but they do not rule out the need for each of you to receive specific personal guidelines from the Lord. It's very important to exercise your individual faith in this way, and this will contribute to your own spiritual growth, progress, and well-being. Our Husband wants to personally shepherd you. If you neglect to hear from Him frequently regarding your personal guidelines, you will be denying Him this right.

30. Following is a summary of the main points from the preceding message, but please do take the time to read over and carefully study the full message before finalizing your Home guidelines and rules.

31. Summary of points:

—Home guidelines and rules should always be for a specific purpose; they should not be established based on one person's or even a few people's feelings. It is important that suggested guidelines and rules not be instituted until presented to the entire Home for discussion and voting, and going back to the Lord with further questions and to receive further details, if necessary, and then receiving a final confirmation.

—Everyone must have the right attitude toward Home rules and understand what they are and are not for. (Please see the detailed lists in paragraph 11.)

—While some Home rules are necessary, it's important to strike a balance. The goal should not be to see how many Home rules you can come up with just for the sake of having rules. The goal should be to reach your Home goals and keep your spiritual standard high with as few rules in place as possible.

—Each Home should unitedly think and pray about what things affect your Home as a whole, and establish your guidelines and rules based on that.

—Rules are needed and help point everyone in the right direction; but to change hearts and permanently break worldly habits, each Home member must hear from the Lord personally and frequently about their worldly input and stick to the guidelines He gives.

—The Lord has made a point not to ban all worldly input for the entire Family. He specifically wants to help every Family member learn to minimize worldly input individually and gain from the benefits of doing so.

—Home guidelines do not rule out the need for every individual to specifically hear from the Lord about their personal guidelines, but they should cover aspects of worldly input or any other things that affect the Home as a whole. They should complement each Home member's personal faith and conviction and the guidelines they receive individually from the Lord.

32. We're claiming the keys of wisdom, love, unity, insight, and decision-making, dear Family, as you establish your personal guidelines and rules, as well as those for your Home. "Divine guidance is yours when you call on the keys of the Kingdom!"

Much love, Mama