

Students in School Administration

Dear Friends,

As you read this it will be mid-December and most of you will be preparing for Christmas. But as I am preparing and writing this for you, I am still hearing the stories from my friends in the USA about how each of their Thanksgiving holidays turned out. They have been sharing their joy about a Thanksgiving filled with family, friends and food. One of my close friends was invited to two places in the same day, with barely 30 minutes to spare to arrive at the second party!

It reminded me of a similar challenge during my very first visit to the USA. I had so many invitations I had to turn down quite a few. Some, for my sake, actually gave me a treat the next day after Thanksgiving because they wanted their 'new African friend' to know how Thanksgiving is celebrated in America. It was so (emotionally) difficult for me to decline some of the invitations. It made me feel awful because in Ghana you never refuse such hospitality. It could mean an insult to the person's dignity and respect. I have such great memories of my visits to the USA and I keep wishing (every November) that I could be there with all of you.

This month's article is a continuation of the life of the people in Akrampa and today it's about the students. This is not the first time I am writing about students. They are of course the biggest focus of our mission in Akrampa.

In all Ghanaian schools there are some specially chosen students who may be considered as part of the school administration. They are kind of a bridge between the staff of the school and the rest of the students. They are therefore a significant group in the school, particularly when it comes to interacting with the students, communication, enforcement of school rules and the maintenance of the school and its programs. Such students are generally referred to as '**Prefects**'.

Prefect - noun - meaning: administrator

We have different categories of Prefect Students, but the main ones which are common in most of the schools are:

-Boys Prefect

-Girls Prefect

-Class Prefect

-Office Boy/Girl

Also, there can be: Section Leader, and sometimes, the Post Office Boy/Girl. Some schools have other titles for other positions.

'Prefect students' are usually appointed for the following merits:

- Students who excel academically
- Punctuality to school
- Regularity to school (attendance)
- Being very respectful and disciplined
- Having good morals and good interpersonal relationships
- Personal hygiene and cleanliness, especially neatness in attire

The reason they are appointed for such merits is simply to have 'student prefects' who can be an **example** and thus be a **mentor** for peers and those younger than him or her. In other situations, they look for a boy or girl from a stable and disciplined home, and whose parents participate in the Parent and Teachers Association (PTA) activities in the school. These student officers are a part of the School Administration. They serve as the strategic link between staff, parents and pupils.

Each student officer has specific roles he/she plays, because they are defined, so there is minimum of conflict. In the higher schools (secondary and colleges) they form a council of their own to deliberate school policies concerning students and ensure compliance and obedience. In the higher schools they are known as 'Student Council' or 'Student Representative Council'.

In their situation the 'School Prefect' is the chairperson and head of the Prefects. In a coeducational school there is the 'Boys' and 'Girls' Prefect, and almost invariably the male is usually known as the 'senior prefect', though once in a while the 'senior prefect' could be a female.

In a male only institution the 'senior prefect' is a boy, while it's a girl in the female institution. The 'School Prefect' is always in the last year of the school, thus for the 3-year school, the prefect is in the third year. Such a Prefect is chosen at the close of his/her second year, so that when the school resumes from vacation into a new academic year, he/she becomes the School Prefect in his/her final year.

In the next article, I shall be writing about the current School Prefect of Akrampa school.

Merry CHRISTmas to each of you and your families!

Blessings, Pastor Ben