



Conflict Management in the Church

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I. Personal Peacemaking Skills

1. **Conflict** is a _____ in opinion or purpose that frustrates someone's goals or desires.

2. **What causes conflict?**

- _____ that battle within us.

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want (James 4:1-2).

3. **God provides the perfect way to deal with conflict.** (The Four G's).

- **Glorify God** *How can I please and honor the Lord in this situation?*
- **Get the log out of your eye** *How have I contributed to this conflict and what do I need to do to resolve it?*
- **Go and show your brother his fault** *How can I help others to understand how they have contributed to this conflict?*
- **Go and be reconciled** *How can I demonstrate forgiveness and encourage a reasonable solution to this conflict?*

4. How do we respond to conflict? (The Slippery Slope of Conflict)



5. Conflict provides opportunities (1 Cor. 10:31-11:1).

³¹So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. ³²Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God --³³even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. ¹Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ (1 Cor. 10:31-11:1).

- Opportunity #1: _____ God
- Opportunity #2: _____ other people
- Opportunity #3: _____ to be like Christ

6. Get the log out of your eye -- (Matt. 7:5; Prov. 28:13; Luke 15:11-24; 19:1-9)

You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye (Matt. 7:5).

The Seven A's of Confession

A _____ everyone involved

A _____ if, but, and maybe

A _____ specifically (get to the root of the conflict; James 4:1-3)

A _____

A _____ the consequences

A _____ your behavior (Eph. 4:22-32)

A _____ for forgiveness

7. Go and show your brother his fault

If your brother sins, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you (Matt. 18:15).

- Overlook minor offenses (Prov. 19:11; 12:16; 17:14; 1 Pet. 4:8; Col. 3:13)
- Go and talk in private, confessing and confronting in love (Matt. 7:3-5; 18:15)
- Take one or two others along to facilitate discussion (Matt. 18:16; 1 Cor. 6:1-8)
- Involve the church if necessary (Matt. 18:17-20)
- Personal confrontation should always involve ministering the _____ to give encouragement and hope.

8. Go and be reconciled

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you (Col. 3:12-14).

- I will not _____ about this incident
- I will not _____ this incident up and _____ it against you
- I will not _____ to others about this incident
- I will not allow this incident to _____ between us or hinder our personal relationship

9. Negotiation skills

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests but also to the interests of others (Phil. 2:3-4).

- **P** _____
- **A** _____ relationships
- **U** _____ interests
- **S** _____ for creative solutions
- **E** _____ options objectively and reasonably

II. Reconciliation Skills

1. God intends his church to be the primary peacemaking organization in the world (John 17:20-23; Eph. 3:10)
2. The primary roles of a **reconciler**
 - **Conflict counselor or coach:** to help another person understand and plan how to resolve a conflict personally and privately by using one of the private responses to conflict (overlooking, discussion, or negotiation).
 - **Mediator:** role is to work with both sides to improve communication and understanding so that they can arrive at a mutually agreement (see Matt 18:16).
 - **Arbitrator:** role is to listen to both sides in a dispute and render a binding decision (1 Cor. 6:1-8).
3. Secondary roles: Listener, facilitator, model, referee, teacher, encourager, exhorter, witness, judge.
4. Six basic steps of **mediation**

- **G**reetings and ground rules – Make introductions and agree to work together.
- **O**pening statements – Each party explains what he or she would like to accomplish.
- **S**tory telling – Help parties to clearly communicate all relevant information.
- **P**roblem identification and clarification – Clearly define central issues and interests.
- **E**valuate solutions – Brainstorm options and evaluate them reasonably and objectively.
- **L**ead to agreement – Encourage and document a final agreement.

5. It is essential to build and maintain **“passport.”**

- Can I trust you?
- Do you really care about me?
- Can you actually help me?

6. Strive earnestly to provide **the “3 P’s”** of satisfaction:

- **P**_____ satisfaction (1 Cor. 14:40) A clear and fair process where everyone has a reasonable opportunity to present his or her side of the matter.
- **P**_____ satisfaction (Matt. 7:12, James 2:1-4) Everyone is treated respectfully and equally.
- **P**_____ satisfaction (Prov. 28:5) The final solution to a conflict is just and equitable.

III. Redemptive Church Discipline

God disciplines us for our own good, that we may share in his holiness (Heb. 12:10).

1. The final peacemaking response: what should a church do when ... a member defrauds elderly members ... one deacon sues another deacon ... a woman leaves her family?
2. To restore this ministry to the church, we must recapture a biblical view of church discipline.
 - God views discipline as a blessing and a sign of love, as a demonstration of the reality and power of the gospel (Ps 94:12; Rev. 3:19; Prov. 6:23; Deut. 8:5; Prov. 3:11-12; Heb. 12:5-11).
 - Conversely, God views a failure to discipline as being unloving and hateful (Lev. 19:17; Prov. 13:24; 5:23; 19:18; Ezekiel 34:1-16; Heb. 13:17; Matt. 23:1-39)
 - A primary goal of all discipline is to train Christians to be _____ so that they may share in the holiness of God (Heb. 12:10; see also Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 7:1; Col. 3:1-15; 1 Thess. 4:3-7; 2 Pet. 1:5-11)
 - **Formative** discipline should go on continually to help believers grow in maturity (preaching, Sunday school, study and prayer, fellowship, small groups, etc.)
 - **Corrective** discipline is practiced only when a believer strays from God. It has three purposes:
 - ◆ To _____ fallen Christians to usefulness to God and fellowship with his church (see Matt. 18:12-14; 2 Cor. 2:5-11; 7:8-10; Gal. 6:1-2; James 5:19-20)
 - ◆ To _____ the honor of God (see Rom. 2:24; 1 Cor. 10:31).
 - ◆ To _____ the purity of the church (see Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:6; 1 Tim. 5:19-20).
 - Restorative discipline begins in private but may involve as many people as are necessary to achieve repentance and restoration (Prov. 19:11; Matt. 18:15-20; Gal. 6:1-2; Col. 3:16; James 5:19-20; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Thess. 3:14-15; 2 Tim. 4:2; Heb. 13:17)
3. Sincere believers will generally welcome the restoration of this ministry within their church if it is taught as part of a comprehensive conflict resolution system that seeks to resolve matters as privately and as personally as possible (peacemaking responses on the slippery slope), and places a heavy emphasis on the goal of restoration (Luke 15:1-31; 2 Cor. 2:5-11).
4. Potential legal risks
 - When confronted with discipline, people often flee or threaten to sue the church. The easy thing to do is to drop the matter, but God commands us to seek after them.

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“If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off?” (Matt. 18:12; see also Ezekiel 34:1-16).

- Going after a straying lamb may require making unwelcome contacts and eventually telling your congregation or another church about the problem (Matt. 18:17).
- If you want to have the freedom to obey God and go after straying lambs, get your house in order today:
 - ◆ _____ your congregation the biblical basis for corrective discipline.
 - ◆ _____ your bylaws and/or disciplinary guidelines to clearly document your commitment to seeking to restore fleeing members:

Model Bylaw: Members may be removed from membership at their own request by informing the Board of Elders of their intention to withdraw and the reasons therefore. If a member requests to withdraw because of specific problems or disappointments with the church, the Board of Elders shall attempt to resolve those matters so that the member may remain in the church and enjoy greater fruitfulness and personal spiritual growth. If the Board of Elders is unable to resolve those matters, it shall offer to assist the member in locating a church of like faith and practice that can respond more effectively to his gifts and needs. If it appears to the Board of Elders that a member has requested removal merely to avoid church discipline, that request shall not be given effect until the disciplinary process has been properly concluded (emphasis added).

- ◆ Obtain _____ consent to your disciplinary policies (the answer to Guinn) through thorough membership classes.
 - ◆ _____ regularly on biblical peacemaking and church discipline to keep the concept fresh and relevant.
5. Experience has shown that clear biblical teaching on church discipline will **not** scare sincere believers away from a church. It will actually _____ believers who are serious about following Jesus.
 6. The rest of the story ... a vivid demonstration of the redeeming power of Jesus Christ.

IV. Preparing Your Church for Peacemaking

1. Visit www.HisPeace.org (Risk Management, Equip the Church) for more detailed information, testimonies, and model documents.

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2. Build _____ among leaders. Study the Scriptures to become fully convinced as to what God is calling you to do (Acts 17:11), and then do it!

3. If you conclude that you have failed to be faithful to God's commands in this area, do not try to cover it up. Instead, follow the example of King Josiah when he found the dust-covered Book of the Law in the temple (see 2 Chron. 34:19-21, 29-31).

4. _____ and revise your practices, policies, and official church documents in the light of Scripture (bylaws, guidelines for church discipline, etc.).

5. _____ your congregation through sermons, Sunday school, and small groups to build support and obtain informed consent to be thoroughly biblical in how you resolve conflict and seek to restore those caught in sin.

6. Train _____ through Peacemaker Ministries' *Reconciler Training Program*, so that you have an "in-house" resource when conflict arises.

7. _____ in God's marvelous promise:

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the sons of God (Matt. 5:9).

Bibliography

For more information, see: www.HisPeace.org or the following resources.

- *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict* (Baker Books, 1997)
- *The Young Peacemaker* (Shepherd Press, 1997)
- *Guiding People through Conflict* (Peacemaker Ministries)
- *Managing Conflict in Your Church* (Peacemaker Ministries)
- *Reconciler Training Program* (Peacemaker Ministries)

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