

Managing Differences in the Local Church

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A seminar to help churches think through and develop a policy and procedures for handling differences in a biblical and creative way.

Introduction

- This seminar is designed to help churches understand positive ways of handling differences.
- We will use a number of exercises to looking at what the bible and other studies have to say about how we are to relate to each other.
- We will have a chance to contribute to a church policy and procedure manual on handling differences in the fellowship

Conflict

"Essentially the circumstances – both emotional and substantive – which can be brought about by the presence of differences between parties who are, for whatever reason, in forced contact with one another." Halverstadt

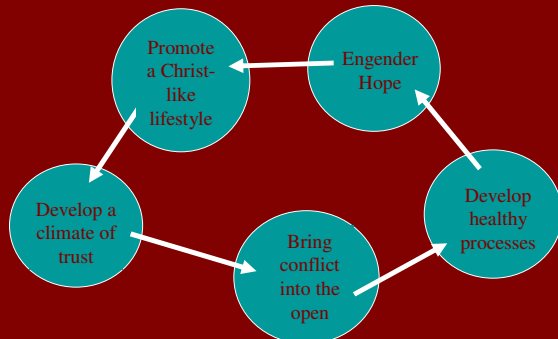
Conflict Management

Aim is to "help everyone feel more confident that it is appropriate to share differences with others, and that once the differences are in the open we can search for ways to come to agreements that are going to have the greatest advantage possible for most people." - Leas

Acts 6: 1-7

Turn to page 2 of your workbooks and spend ten (10) minutes answering the questions on the passage from Acts 6.

Aims of Managing Differences Policy.



What things are Not allowed in any Conflict in Our Church?

- Building coalitions
- Mind reading (attributing evil motives)
- Guilt inducing
- Rejection; discrediting another
- Refusal to be involved in it's resolution
- Name calling

Unhealthy Reactions to Conflict

- Strike Back
 - shouting match
 - fight fire with fire
 - get even
 - punish

Unhealthy Reactions to Conflict

- Give in
 - agree then go back on your word
 - agree then hate (self or other)

Unhealthy Reactions to Conflict

- Break Off
 - resign
 - avoid
 - leave

esp when a hasty response

Unhealthy Reactions to Conflict

- Block Resolution
 - advise
 - judge
 - silent treatment
 - explosion
 - tears

Six Rules for a Fair Fight

1. Agree that it's OK to differ
2. Will work at agreement
3. Play Fair
4. Work out best forum to deal with issue
5. No Inappropriate behaviour

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Six Rules for a Fair Fight

1. Agree that it's OK to differ
2. Will work at agreement
3. Play Fair
4. Work out best forum to deal with issue
5. No Inappropriate behaviour
6. Up front with accusations and names

Triangle-ing



Triangle-ing



Individually Work on Matthew 18

- Turn to page 9 in your workbooks
- Fill out the answers to the questions in the same way as you did with the Acts 6 worksheet.
- You have ten minutes to do this.

Levels of Conflict

Based on the work of Geoff Cramb and Speed Leas

Level 1 "A Problem to Solve"

Characteristics	Indicators
<u>Issue</u>	Real disagreement(not simply minor. Confliction goals, values and needs
<u>Orientation</u>	Short-lived anger, quickly controlled. Parties uncomfortable in the presence of other(s)
<u>Information</u>	Open sharing of Information
<u>Language</u>	Clear and specific.
<u>Objective</u>	Solving the problem
<u>Outcome</u>	Win / Win

Level 2 "A Disagreement"

Characteristics	Indicators
<u>Issue</u>	Real disagreement. Mixture of issues and personalities. Problem cannot be defined
<u>Emotion</u>	Distrust begins, Caution in association, less mixing with 'the other side
<u>Orientation</u>	Begin personalizing problem, shrewdness and calculation begins.
<u>Information</u>	Selective holding back on information occurs on both sides
<u>Language</u>	Vagueness, generalization. Hostile humor, highly emotional content
<u>Objective</u>	Face saving, move towards consensus
<u>Outcome</u>	Collaborative, negotiated agreement

Level 3 "A Contest"

Characteristics	Indicators
<u>Issue</u>	Begin the dynamics of win/lose. Focus on persons representing the "enemy". Important "my" party wins.
<u>Emotion</u>	Not able to operate in the presence of the "enemy" However admire worthy opponent. Not willing / able to share emotions/feelings constructively.
<u>Orientation</u>	Personal attacks increase. Formation of "clumps" Threats of members leaving. Need 3 rd party.
<u>Information</u>	Distortion is major problem. Information only shared within factions. Each party assumes they know the real intent of the other.
<u>Language</u>	Over generalizations. "you always" "we never" Attribute diabolical motives to others. Out of context statements.
<u>Objective</u>	Shifts from self protection to winning. Objectives are more complex and diffuse, cluster of issues. If parties emphasize their solution, then it is probably a Category 3 conflict.
<u>Outcome</u>	Decision making mediation., compromising voting. Possible that some will leave the church.

Level 4 "Fight/Flight"

Characteristics	Indicators
<u>Issue</u>	Shifts from winning to getting rid of the person(s). No longer believes the others can or wants to change.. Hurt, weaken, punish or humiliate the other..
<u>Emotion</u>	Cold self righteousness. Will not speak to the other side. Each believes the other side is presenting a hypocritical position.
<u>Orientation</u>	Factions clearly emerge. Strong leaders emerge. Followers willing to conform to leaders. Last place of constructive intervention by third party consultant.
<u>Information</u>	Limited only to the cause being advocated. Will not accept/listen to contrary information.
<u>Language</u>	Talk now of principles not issues. Language solidifies into ideology. Parties engage in rejection rituals "hoots and cheers"
<u>Objective</u>	No longer winning. Now eliminate other(s). From the environment. Hurt the other person/group. Parties attempt to expel one another..
<u>Outcome</u>	High probability of split within the church with significant numbers of persons leaving church.

Level 5 "Intractable"

Characteristics	Indicators
<u>Issue</u>	No longer clear understanding of issues. Personalities have become the issue. Conflict now un-manageable. Parties perceive themselves as part of an eternal cause, fighting for righteousness.
<u>Emotion</u>	Relentless obsession in accomplishing the objective(s) at all costs. Vindictive. No objectivity or control of emotion.
<u>Orientation</u>	Sees person(s) as harmful to society, not just offended group or persons..
<u>Information</u>	Information skewed to accomplish the objectives.
<u>Language</u>	Focuses on words that imply the destruction or elimination of others.
<u>Objective</u>	To destroy the offending party or persons. For example: to see that the sacked pastor doesn't get a job elsewhere. Since the ends are all important, any means justify them..
<u>Outcome</u>	Highly destructive. Use of compulsion to maintain peace. May be necessary to remove members from church. Possible formation of administrative/ overseeing or judicial group.

Level 0 "After Forced Pastoral Termination"

Characteristics	Indicators
<u>Issue</u>	Pastor forced to terminate. Can be in a variety of circumstances. Mismatch marriage turmoil, misconduct, death.
<u>Emotion</u>	Depression.
<u>Orientation</u>	Anyone challenging the system is resisted. No change is allowed.
<u>Information</u>	Oscillation occurs between the depressed stare and level 4.
<u>Language</u>	Something akin to level 4.
<u>Objective</u>	Grief responses at base. Usually lasts 6-24 months. Average is 16-24 months.
<u>Outcome</u>	An interim minister who knows what he is doing may be able to speed the process somewhat. After a period like this that is not worked through well, congregations tend to call authoritarian pastor.

Points on Processes from Acts 15

- Turn to page 16 in your workbooks.
- Each table group work on one of the references. Table 1. Work on #2, Table 2 Work on #3 etc.
- Note that the following few pages contain references that might be helpful.
- You can complete it at home.

WHAT NEXT ?

- Need for a group to draft a policy and procedure manual for the church.
- More notes in workbook
- The draft should then be presented to the church for acceptance.
- The policy and procedures manual should then be used to help the church manage differences in a Godly, Biblical way.