

WHEN CONFLICTS ARISE WHAT IS THE BIBLICAL RESPONSE

WHAT DO WE/HOW DO WE/DEAL WITH CONFLICT IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

Where ever there are people, there's different personalities To be sure there is likely to be some friction Be that the beauty of the Body of Christ We need each other in order to fully function A Church that allows its people to be able to voice their opinion without feeling they are a threat is a healthy Church Because it incorporates everyone meaning everyone has a voice

! Corinthians 12:14 'For the Body is not one part but many' v27 'Now we are Christ's body, & individually members of it' READ the verses in-between 14-27 Each of us brings a different dimension to the whole Body We need each other But unfortunately this is not always the case

Acts 15:1-15 Doesn't this sound like a Church meeting? To me the key to solving this was that the Holy Spirit gave utterance v8 You see you can't deal with spiritual matters in the natural But so often it's our opinion, our preconceived idea, or misunderstanding & not God's view point

LET'S LOOK AT SOME BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES THAT WERE APPLIED HERE

1 BECAUSE THEY WERE COMMITTED TO ONE ANOTHER, THEY MOVED TOWARD ONE ANOTHER & NOT AWAY FROM EACH OTHER

Our human tendency is to move away & cut ourselves off because we hurt In doing so, we protect ourselves so we think My Mum was an expert at this, she even did it to me This is not dealing with the issues its bury it For it to pop up again & again Afterall whose hurting YOU, so you carry resentment, unforgiveness, jealousy etc which cripples you not necessary the other person

Because they were committed to work through their differences, they went to the person/s concerned Not away from them To deal with issues we must approach the one involved to clarify if what you heard is correct So often, we have preconceived or mis-interrupted beliefs Some years ago a person came to me as they had heard that id said something about them Once I clarified the situation it was resolved

We have an enemy who wants to neutralize the Body of Christ Through division & disunity A divided people, have put down their defense's & focused on the person rather than uniting against our enemy Simply put its distraction so that His people aren't a mobilized army of believers Fighting each other Ephesians 6:12 'Our struggle is not against flesh & blood' other humans it's against our enemy

Don't listen to 'bad reports' Israel's problem There may be some truth but our focus should always be on Jesus Get the facts, look at it from others perspectives instead of our prejudices We have to realize the person is more important than my ways, attitudes or thinking It's called humility

We all should be able to express our feelings, views without the fear of reprisal In a place where there is openness & honesty Allowing for the freedom to be wrong because we are always right We blow it!

NEVER speak out in the heat of the moment, let the embers cool & settle Then talk THE
LEADERSHIP THAT PRAYS TOGETHER, STAYS TOGETHER

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2 RECOGNITION & SUBMISSION TO GODLY AUTHORITY

There must be someone in authority, one who all respect, honor & whose wise in the dealings of people. If you have issues with leadership the right thing to do is approach leadership not speak out behind their backs. In a case we were faced with in going to leadership, it didn't change anything but it's our duty to do it anyway. Reason is that God doesn't hold us accountable if we have shared what we feel we ought to.

Leadership need to be accountable to their congregation. They should always communicate to the Body what is going on, where the finances are going, focus of the Church, Church events etc. Secrecy is a form of control & should never be found in the Church of Jesus Christ. Anything hidden leads to deception & is a tool of the enemy. Having been a Pastor some things cannot be shared however is not what we are talking about here.

When secrets become a form of control ie tell some of congregation & not others. Just as gossip is neither acceptable from any Pastor especially when it involves personal information that causes one to see fellow Christians in a false light. Leadership is a privilege & not a right.

We must recognize authority that it comes from relationship, trust & respect. It's got to be earned, as it's not a title. Abused authority only produces rebellion & rejection.

3 RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS WITH EACH OTHER

The test of true love is when the relationship turns sour, when the chips are down. True friendship is a support, someone to rely on, to stand with you in those rough times, especially if there's an issue between friends.

We must resolve differences promptly, not blaming the other person, not blaming the other person. Use 'I' rather than 'you', we must take the responsibility for it & deal with it. As soon as you're able. Leaving it does one of two things:

- 1 The longer you leave it, the harder it is to deal with it 2
What happens emotionally when you don't deal with it, allowing thoughts in your mind to fester.

Bring everything into the light where the devil has no rights. No one likes conflict but to leave it will destroy you & your relationship with the other person/s.

This is a true scenario of the Church we attended a couple of attendees sold their business to a fellow Christian. Without going into all the detail over a period of time the shop wasn't doing so well financially. The new owner blamed the original owners accusing them,, that they had sold her a lemon. The Pastor got involved, with what he called the more vulnerable one (the new owner). Without gaining all the facts he took sides leaving the original owners in the cold. Yet saying to everyone he'd talked to both sides. This was not true. Seven months down the track, the Pastor has never approached this couple. They have since left town, but it's taken it's toll on them emotionally. (When we spoke to the Pastor about the issue we were told incorrect information which they had believed without checking).

What should of happened?

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The Word exhorts us to honor one another, to tell fellow believers what you respect about them
To build up & speak praises not to falter but rather their qualities & potential
Romans 12:10 'Be devoted to one another in love Honor one another above yourselves'
CHURCH SHOULD BE THE MOST POSITIVE PLACE ON EARTH

4 SINGLENESS OF VISION

When we lose our vision, we lose our perspective on things so we must come back to God to get our perspective right It is vitally important that we are all going in the same direction or we'll spilt People I've found want, follow & gather together around a vision But without a vision there is insecurity, hopelessness & no direction Amos 3:3

Ownership is when the Body latches onto the Churches vision & they say 'it's ours' bringing the sense of belonging & importance in being a part of it The best way to motivate your Church

Proverbs 29:18 'Where there is no vision, the people wander aimlessly' If you can't come to mutual agreement, wait & pray Hab 2:3 Faith involves specific reachable targets

5 SUBMISSION OF HEART

Each person needs to have a submissive heart, that will support any decision the group makes, so long as it is not unethical or immoral After submitting our own convictions re the matter, we should trust God to guide & lead the leaders to make right decisions If there's no agreement leave it & pray

It's more important to find out Gods will for the situation is, than to go ahead in disunity Unity comes when we have the same desire, direction that is birthed by the Holy Spirit

6 WE CANT MAKE GOOD DECISIONS UNLESS THERES GOOD COMMUNICATION

We need to hear the heart of other people, to hear what they are really saying? Not what we think they are saying? This requires listening & clarifying that what you heard is the correction interruption It can take time to understand people, so allow time

Communication is vital Allowing everyone to have their say not just the extraverts, but hearing the quiet ones as well An environment must be created where everyone feels the opinion is worthy Where there is no judging, negative reactions or challenges but rather hearing their point of view

Clarity is required to corporately move as one towards a united people with one heart & mind

UNITY IS WHEN WE CAN DISAGREE & STILL HAVE UNITY

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BIBLICAL PROCEEDURE WHEN CONFRONTING SOMEONE

1 CHECK YOUR ATTITUDE Are you reacting out of hurt, bitterness, disappointment? Don't allow resentment to affect your spirit Gods motive & ours should be to restore those that have fallen Forgiveness is necessary Matthew 18:21,22 'Love covers a multitude of sins' 1 Peter 4:8

2 PRAY FOR THE PERSON/S Are you willing to intercede on behalf of the person? Through prayer God can prepare & change one's heart Pray that God to open their spiritual eyes to see their sin ray out of love, showing mercy as God has towards us towards the person

3 MAKE SURE ALL YOUR FACTS ARE CORRECT? Are you presuming because you heard some gossip? The Bible warns us not to judge lest we be judged Until we have heard their side of the issue Proverbs 18:13,17 good sound wise advice

4 PRAY FOR YOURSELF BEFORE CONFRONTING THE PERSON Have you gone through the above before confronting the person? Pray for wisdom in how you handle your words, that they are not condemning but sensitive to the person & how to approach the issue

Matthew 18:15-17 outlines the Biblical process to follow (only proceed to 2/3 if no result)

1 Go to the person concerned privately (15)

2 Go back with another brother/sister (16)

Take it before the Church for it to be dealt with (17)

3

Strive for peace with ALL men Hebrews 12:14

EPHESIANS 4:2,15 THIS IS OUR ATTITUDE Philippians 2:1-9

A HUMILITY means you are willing to do anything necessary to make matters right with others when they have sinned or hurt us

B MEEKNESS means we will not insist on doing things our way or pushing ourselves forward

C PATIENCE means we wait for the loving others even when they are wrong

D FORBEARANCE means we help others especially when they are weak

E SPEAK THE TRUTH we are to be direct, forthright & honest

F IN LOVE we are not to speak in anger, bitterness or an unkind manner but in Gods timing, waiting for him to prepare our hearts & the ones whom we are to speak We should also be selective in what we say