

HOW DO I HANDLE CONFLICT?

Conflict is a normal and natural aspect of relationships between sinful people. When you live life as a family, there will be conflict. The absence of conflict or a constant state of conflict is not healthy either. We live in a world that is more and more bent toward avoiding conflict at the expense of deep, meaningful relationships.

Begin this process with a heart of humility (Philippians 2:3-4). You are both sinners with a reconciling Savior. We can be encouraged that God's plan for His church is for unity through the resolution of conflict. Be willing to own your part of the conflict. There is a good chance both of you have a part in causing the conflict. One of the roles of the Holy Spirit in the church is that of unity and reconciliation through what Jesus has accomplished (Ephesians 4:1-6).

Practical Steps to Handle Conflict

1. Meet in person with the involved parties and discuss the specific issue (attack the issue and not the person). Text message is not good enough.
2. Avoiding statements like "you always" or "I never".
3. Starting the conversation with the hope that you want to reconcile.
4. Instead of saying "You do this.." or "I know you think this" try saying, "Help me understand", "This is how I feel" or "When you said this I felt like".

The goal of your time discussing the issue is to listen and understand. Each person feels passionate about how they see the conflict, so remember that it is vital to listen to understand first. Most conversations concerning conflict should be done outside of the group. There are times when we have group conflict, and in that case, we need to talk about it together to all be on the same page so we understand and move forward.

When you meet, both parties should work toward a mutually satisfying solution. This can be difficult, especially for the offended party. If you can't do this between the two parties, you will need to get a third party involved (Matthew 18).

Forgive

Forgive others as Christ has forgiven you.

"Forgiveness is both an event and a process," Ken Sande says.