

How to Resolve Conflicts between People

Where there are people, there will be conflicts. This is inevitable. As a leader, the easiest way to impress your followers is to have the ability to handle problems. In the church, more than 90% of the problems are related to conflicts between people, so being able to handle conflicts effectively is very important for a leader.

Based on my experience in dealing with conflict in the church, I have summarized it into the following eight steps. But instead of completing all eight steps at once, you might need to do it in two, three, or four sessions.

1. Resonate with the feelings

People will always get hurt in a conflict. When someone comes to talk to you, you should act as a listener and give the other person a chance to express their feelings. But when you listen, you have to separate feelings from value judgment, otherwise when you disagree with his values, you are also denying his feelings. No matter who is right or wrong, the fact is that "he" is hurt, and we must first accept this injured "him". Being hurt is a feeling, and you need to have the opportunity to air your grievances. Do not rush to teach a lesson. First let the other person feel that you understand his feelings and resonate with him. Resonance can win his heart, which will be very helpful for the subsequent mediation. But resonating with his feelings does not mean agreeing with the way he acts. So feelings and values should be separated.

2. Down-size the issue

When dealing with conflicts, do not overreact and create a tense atmosphere. A tense atmosphere can make small things bigger. Take it easy! Conflicts are actually common, so do not treat them as a sign of disaster. When dealing with a conflict, you may need to seek the opinions of others, but not from people who have nothing to do with the matter. Find someone who can really give you advice, maybe your boss, your mentor, or someone mature who already knows about this. Do not ask too many people for their opinions, otherwise the incident will spread and become more and more complicated.

3. Stay neutral and do not take sides

People are easily influenced by preconceived ideas, but there are always different perspectives on things. The injured are inevitably subjective. In a conflict, neither side is completely right; sometimes it is not even a question of right or wrong, but just a matter of perspectives or cultural differences. Do not just consider the feelings of the "injured person". You also need to consider the other party, but keep a neutral attitude. If either party feels that you are biased, they will no longer trust you, and you will no longer be able to mediate the matter.

4. Guide people to see things from the other party's point of view

Many times, conflicts occur during the communication process. When a person thinks too highly of himself and rejects the other party's point of view, it is just like a blind man probing an elephant. Therefore, it is necessary to arrange a meeting between the two parties, guide them to express their feelings first, and establish communications. Because it is painful to be hurt, people hurt will naturally focus on themselves and find it more difficult to understand others. If everyone expresses their opinions from the beginning, communication will be difficult. If you first let the bad feelings to be vented out, it will be easier to see things from the other person's point of view.

When leading a conversation, try to avoid using the word "you", as this can easily condemn the other person. Also, do not add "I feel" to avoid treating your feelings as an objective fact. When everyone talks about their feelings, they should also give some examples so that the other person can understand, rather than letting it become an abstract feeling.

Guide each other to express their feelings and respond to each other's feelings. One party finishes speaking before the other party speaks. Once both parties' feelings have been vented out, then differences of opinion can be addressed. If the communication is good when it comes to handling feelings, it will be easier to reach a consensus on differences in opinions and expectations.

5. Guide mutual forgiveness

Encourage the more humble party to admit his mistakes to the other party first, which will help to heal the other party's wounded heart. When one party is willing to admit his mistakes first, the other party will soften. When one party is willing to admit his mistakes, you ask the other party whether he is willing to forgive him. When the other person is willing to forgive, then ask him: "Do you think you have done anything wrong?" Encourage him to admit his mistakes to the other person. When everyone has confessed and forgiven each other, ask them to take turns to pray, and then you pray for them.

6. Guide an action plan

When both parties can deal with their feelings, guide them to look forward and decide how to improve their relationship in the future. What is to be avoided? What is there to do?

7. End with a positive attitude

Guide everyone to look at this conflict from a positive perspective and let everyone review what valuable lessons they have learned from it.

8. Pray

Only Jesus is the mediator, and peacemaking is the work of the Holy Spirit. So we must pray at the beginning, middle, and after the process of mediation.

Before:

- a. Ask the Lord to heal and comfort both parties' hurt feelings.
- b. Ask the Lord for wisdom to understand the core of the problem.
- c. Use prayer to break Satan's bondage and spiritual strongholds.
- d. Pray for yourself, asking the Lord to give you more love and calm your emotions.

Middle:

Go to mediation with a prayerful attitude, and keep asking God what to do during the process.

Afterwards:

Thank God, because every conflict is a lesson. And ask God to continue to protect us.