

# Guidelines for Godly Conflict



The Bible expects that Christians will have conflict—early churches did—and therefore, it continually calls us to forgive, love, and work for peace (Eph. 4:31-32; 1 Cor. 1:10). Therefore, we call upon every member of Village Church to commit to the following, with God's help:

## **HANDLING CONFLICT DIRECTLY**

- Accept that conflict is a reality any time people come together, including in the church. Therefore, I will not run from it, over-spiritualize it, or deny it; I will face it directly.
- If I sense tension with someone, I will go to that person and ask, "Is everything okay between us?" If I am hurt by or angry with someone, rather than talk to others about that, I will go to the person who hurt me, doing my best to follow the guidelines in Matthew 18:15-17.
- When I hear someone speak an unkind word against anyone, I will not merely listen and empathize with how badly the speaker has been treated. Instead, I will ask the person to go directly to whomever he or she is criticizing or complaining about—even if that makes me seem uncaring.
- I will preserve the unity of our Communion by going, before the service or during the Passing of the Peace, and ask forgiveness for the way I have hurt someone.
- To confront someone or ask for change, I will do that face to face or by phone, not in an email.

## **HANDLING INFORMATION WELL**

- Since every situation has two sides, I commit to not accept or believe any negative report, no matter who gave it, until I have gone to the other person and asked to hear his or her perspective.
- When I need to pass on information or criticism, I will not do it anonymously or under the label "Many people feel"; instead, I will name who gave that information or who felt that way.

## **FOLLOWING LEADERS**

- I will honor the church's leaders and submit to their authority, as the Bible commands (Hebrews 13:17), knowing that this alone will prevent many conflicts.
- If I am considering leaving the church, I will meet with a staff member to express honestly why I am considering it.
- If I am disciplined by the church's leaders, I will stay and show by my repentance the power of God to restore.

## **GUARDING MY HEART**

- When I am hurt by another person in this church, I will work to forgive the person fully.
- I will work to consider others better than myself, focusing more on how I need to change than on how that other person (who's bothering me) needs to.
- When I am more permissive on a debatable issue, I will not exercise my freedom in a way that offends or distresses someone who's more restrictive on that issue. When I am more restrictive on an issue, I will not condemn someone who's more permissive on that issue as less spiritual.
- I will seek to grow as a Christian in forgiveness and handling conflict, through means such as healing services, counseling, classes on relationships, and seeking pastoral care.
- When I realize I have not abided by these guidelines, I will ask for God's forgiveness. Then I will go to those who were affected and ask their forgiveness, too.