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Missouri Christian Convention Seminar:
Encouraging Shalom while managing Church conflict

How does conflict show up in the middle of shalom?

Do you have shalom (peace) in your worship service?

- o Liturgical services were interactive
    - ▪ The Minister would say, "the Lord Be with you," the congregation say and also with you."
    - ▪ May the Peace of the Lord always be with you… "and with you"
        - • Turn and pass the peace
        - • "May the peace of Christ be with you" - shaking hands

The greeting time in your worship service can be real or very hypocritical!

Examples of church conflict
- • worship wars
    - • What we sing, when, with whom
    - • Who passes communion and how
    - • Where is the communion table, how many cups…
- • Who can do what
- • Community activity
- • Minister frustrations
- • Leadership transition
- • Congregation decline
- • Unforeseen circumstances in and outside the church
- • How to address sin?

How does Scripture address Conflict in the Body of Christ?

Scripture examples of conflict:
- • James 3:13-18
    "What is the source of quarrels and conflict among you?" (James 4:1)
        "Bitter jealousy and selfish ambition" (James 3:14, 16)
- • Philippians 4:1-3 is conflict between individuals
- • Philippians 1:12 - 20 conflict between preachers
- • 1st Corinthians 1 conflict between groups
- • Acts 15 conflict between staff (Paul and Barnabas)

- **How do we encourage Shalom while managing conflict within the church?**

Scripture teachings on shalom

- Philippians 2 - love, encourage others
  - o The example of Jesus
- Ephesians 4 - A Vision for Church Unity
  - o The metaphor of the body

Shalom-thinking

- Understands that People are not all in the Same Place
- Understands that our goal is maturity in following Jesus Christ
- Understands that there are forces seeking to destroy Christ's Body
- Understands that every saint is important to the body of Christ, just as every part of the body is important to the whole; not just that every part works together, but
  that every part was *created to work together* in the body

How do I practice shalom while in the middle of conflict?

Experiencing Shalom is always a choice:

1. Choosing Love
   a. God and others - Great Commandment
      -Jesus commanded us to love one another… it is how we are called to
   b. Learning to love the other image bearers - the "Christ in you" and the "Christ in them"
      - even if it is the Christ potential

2. Choosing to Listen

   a. To the Word and The Spirit
      1) Who does God say you are and who you belong to?
      2) What about everyone else?
      3) How do we live as conduits of God's love and grace to one another?
      4) What unique expressions of God's creativity and character does this person/group display?

   b. With the Holy Spirit to your life
      1) Why is this bothering you so much? Are the underlying hurts, needs, emotions? Are they being placed in the right space?
      2) "What is the state of your soul?"

    c. To the voices sharing disagreement
          1) Share stories/Appreciative inquiry
          2) What is here that I can learn from?
          3) What is here that We can work together on?

    d. How might their perspective provide a creative act of worship that I do not yet see?

3. Choosing repentance

    a. What is the attitude, behavior, or words that need to change
    b. What change can you make to enhance unity for God's purposes in the church?

4.   Choosing to work toward Reconciliation

What if we need help?

Acts 15 provides an example of the church in Antioch having a substantial problem within the membership regarding how to deal with new Gentile believers. Yes, it was so hot that they reached out to the church in Jerusalem for help, and specifically the apostles and the elders.

When your conflict is escalating toward more and more negativity, you need an outside source to listen, observe and recommend pathways toward unity, *Ministry Transition Solutions* is equipping today's church through seasons of change.

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