



OUR HANDLING OF DISAGREEMENT

First Evangelical Free Church (FEFC) of Chicago, Illinois

When I see someone engaged in questionable activity, ask:

- Is this an area that is non-negotiable according to the witness of Scripture, or
- Is this an area of freedom where there are differing views beyond the parameters addressed in our church's doctrine and policy?

If a non-negotiable

1. Check your own heart first; ask, "Am I obedient or tempted in this area, and what is my motive in going to the person?" (Romans 2:1-3, Galatians 6:1-4) If your motive is God's glory, then...
2. Humbly seek to teach the person what God's standards are. Come alongside as a brother or sister and not a self-appointed policeman.
3. Avoid judgment and recognize one's own sin based on Matthew 7:1-5, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye"
4. Be gentle even while firm, keeping your own sin in mind and remembering that it is ultimately up to the Holy Spirit to convict us of sin. (John 16:8, Galatians 6)
5. Do it privately. Pride keeps people from hearing, especially around others. Love builds up another, and inducing shame or humiliation does not help accomplish this. (1 Corinthians 8:1)
6. Assume the best about the other person. We naturally assume the worst; love believes the best.
Assume that if they had the information to be persuaded, they would change their opinion. Don't judge their motives, even if they are sinning. (1 Corinthians 13)
7. If they refuse to listen, follow the rest of the biblical protocol by bringing it to the attention of others who are trustworthy according to Matthew 18:15-17, "If your

brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector."

If an area of "freedom"

1. Allow for difference while seeking to "agree." Display a spirit of unity and a desire to be of the same mind despite difference based on the following biblical principles, emphasis added:
 - a. "Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation." (Romans 12:16)
 - b. "Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus." (Romans 15:5)
 - c. "Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1 Cor. 1:10)
 - d. "Make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose." (Philip. 2:2)
 - e. Note: This takes work and is not a mere "agreement" where we just drop all our convictions and standards. It is a commitment to another person who is different from us that we work through out of respect for God, for one another, and for the life he has called us to.
2. Act lovingly - "My intent is that your thinking and action and that my thinking and action would be in conformity to Christ." Keep in mind the attitude areas under the "law" area above.