

Maintaining Peace

In God's Family

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The Big-Picture Truth: When God's people establish and maintain peace, the church family functions well and stays together.

The Truth: Believers are called to live together in peace.

And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace . . . Colossians 3:15 (New Living Translation)

Peace = shalom

Four Components of "Shalom"

- Wholeness/completeness/prosperity (Psalms 122:6-9; Isaiah 26:3,12)
- Just treatment of all persons
(Isaiah 32:15-17; Isaiah 59:8; Zechariah 8:16,18)
- Right relationships that flow out of a righteous life
(Psalms 34:14; 85:8; Isaiah 9:7)
- Divine blessing. (Numbers 6:24-26)

"The Hebrew prophets call *shalom* . . . the webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in justice, fulfillment, and delight . . . In English we call it peace, but it means far more than just peace of mind or ceasefire between enemies. In the Bible *shalom* means universal flourishing, wholeness, and delight—a rich state of affairs in which natural needs are satisfied and natural gifts fruitfully employed, a state of affairs that inspires joyful wonder as the creator and savior opens doors and speaks welcome to the creatures in whom he delights. *Shalom*, in other words, is the way things are supposed to be."

Cornelius Plantinga Not the Way It's Supposed to Be

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit . . .¹⁹So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding. Romans 14:17,19 (English Standard Version)

Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. Ephesians 4:3 (NLT)

". . . You must have the qualities of salt among yourselves and live in peace with each other." Mark 9:50 (NLT)

The Choices: Relationship choices that help establish and maintain peace.

Choice #1: Peace-full Conversations and/or Confrontations

Questions to Ask in Preparation for Dialogue

- “Am I in dialogue with the person I’m having trouble with?”

Dialogue = the free flow of thoughts and feelings between two or more people.

- “Is my heart right?”
- “What is the result I’m looking for?”
 - What do I really want for myself?
 - What do I really want for the person I’m talking to?
 - What do I really want for the relationship?
 - How would I behave if I really wanted those results?

Communication Skills that Facilitate Dialogue

The tongue of the wise makes knowledge appealing . . . Proverbs 15:2 (NLT)

- **Skill #1:** Validate and affirm the person with whom you are in dialogue with
- **Skill #2:** Learn to make “I” statements instead of “you” statements
- **Skill #3:** Avoid blame by describing a person’s behavior and telling how you feel about it. Ex: “When you do ‘A,’ I feel ‘B.’”
- **Skill #4:** Ask directly for what you want or need

Choice #2: Peace-full Disagreements

Unity of spirit without conformity of conclusion.

Two resources for effective, peace-full conversations: How to Have That Difficult Conversation You’ve Been Avoiding, by Henry Cloud and John Townsend and Crucial Conversations by Kerry Patterson and Joseph Grenny