

Prayer Updates

This week's prayer update...

For the most recent prayer requests, please pick up a Prayer Update, available at the Info Desk in the Auditorium Lobby.

We want to provide pastoral support...

Please call 465-3395 when someone is hospitalized, scheduled for surgery, becomes a shut-in, or in special need. Prayer support is available through our pastors and numerous prayer groups – call 689-9400. Please pick up a Prayer Update at the Information Desk or Welcome Center.

ENJOYING



"Reducing Conflict with Others"

Message by René Schlaepfer, July 8 & 9, 2006

A snapshot of conflict in the 1st century church:

*"Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends! I plead with **Euodia** and I plead with **Syntyche** to agree with each other in the Lord. Yes, **and I ask you, loyal yokefellow**, help those women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life." Philipians 4:1-3*

Conflict is everywhere...

- One of the major themes of Proverbs
- One of the major themes of Jesus' ministry
- One of the major themes of Paul's letter to the Philipians
(See Philipians 1:27; 2:3; 2:4; 2:14; 2:21)
- One of the major thieves of Christian joy

Helping to Reduce Conflict

1. Serve _____

"I ask you, loyal yokefellow, to help those women who have contended at my side in the cause. . ."

2. Speak _____

*"...you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown... dear friends! ...**I plead**... with those women who have contended at my side... whose names are in the book of life."*

Notice what Paul does not do:

- He does not dictate a _____
- He does not direct a _____
- He does not display _____

Notice what Paul does:

- He does express _____
- He does emphasize _____
- He does exhibit _____

3. Seek _____

"...stand firm in the Lord, dear friends... agree with each other in the Lord..."

As Christians, our common ground: _____

Question: _____

Daily Meditations

Brief daily devotions based on today's message

This week's memory verse: "Therefore, my dear brothers, you whom I love and long for, that is how you stand firm in the Lord." Philippians 4:1

Monday

Read Proverbs 15:1, 29:11, 30:33 & Ecclesiastes 7:9. When God inspired the Bible writers, he knew one of our most basic needs as human beings would be to learn how to handle conflict. Many of these verses contain a simple truth: The best way to manage conflict is not to start conflict.

What principles speak to you from these verses? If you had to choose one of these verses to challenge you this week, which would it be?

Ask the Lord today to help you think before you speak – to help you reduce conflict by not starting unnecessary conflict. Thank Him for His strength which enables you to do this.

Tuesday

Read Ephesians 4:26 & James 4:1-3. The churches and communities to whom James is writing apparently struggled with fights and quarrels. According to these verses, what is at the root of conflict? How are we to handle our desires? How is this different from how you usually deal with them?

Recall a conflict with another person. What "battling desires" were at the root? What happened? How did that conflict get resolved? If it hasn't been resolved who could you follow Scripture and begin to resolve that today?

Today ask the Lord to help you resolve any conflict you have with others and thank Him that He is the great Peacemaker who made peace with us through the cross!

Wednesday

Read Philippians 4:1-3. How is it possible for people who have once served together for the Lord to live in extended conflict? Think about your relationships – where are you holding a grudge? Try an experiment: Put your name and the other person's name in place of "Euodia and Syntyche" and read Paul's admonition out loud to yourself.

If God had the Apostle Paul appear before you and ask you by name to set aside your grudge for the sake of the Gospel would you? What would be the hardest part of that choice?

Ask the Lord to show you any conflict that may exist between you and another. Ask for His strength to make it right today. Pray that God will soften your heart towards that person and soften their heart towards you. Pray that you will remember the amazing grace that God has shown you and extend that to those around you.

Thursday

Reread Galatians 6:1-2 & Philippians 4:1-3. Notice Paul's response to these women: What is his manner – does he command, threaten or push? What words does he use to describe them? Is he gentle or is he harshly authoritarian?

Do you agree or disagree (and why) with the following statement: "Sometimes we go to extremes when we see conflict around us: Either we ignore it or we are too harsh in dealing with it."

How did Paul avoid either extreme? Why is pulling rank ultimately self-defeating?

Ask the Lord to use your words to bring peace. Pray that you will be gentle in dealing with others and that you will rely on God and not yourself for wisdom and grace.

Friday

Reread Galatians 5:22-26 & Philippians 4:1-3. Look back over your notes from Sunday. Which of the steps for resolving conflict is most difficult for you? Why? Which style of conflict resolution do you typically use? How has that helped or hurt your relationships?

List the fruits of the Spirit from Galatians 5. How can you use the fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians to help your relationships?

What did you learn that could help your relationships? How will you apply that in the weeks ahead?

Ask God to help you resolve conflict His way: with gentleness and a focus on Christ. Pray that the fruits of Spirit would be evident in your life.

Saturday: Review

Take the time to go over any devotions you may have missed and be sure you know this week's verse. Thank you for your prayers for the church. Please pray that God will use our guest worship leaders and guest speakers to minister and grow our church. Thanks!