

Riverview Baptist Church Conflict Resolution Covenant

As a member of Riverview Baptist Church, in accordance with the commands of Scripture to seek and preserve unity in the body of Christ (*Ephesians 4:3*), by the grace of God and to the best of my ability, I commit myself to the following:

I. Willingness to reconcile

I will not take sides in a dispute between others, but instead encourage them to forgive and be reconciled (*Colossians 3:13*).

When I become aware that I have offended someone, I will take the initiative at the earliest opportunity, taking responsibility for my actions, and seek reconciliation with them (*Matthew 5:23 - 24*).

I will receive admonition and correction with humility (*Romans 12:10; 15:14; Eph. 5:21*).

I will be slow to take offense and be always ready to forgive and be reconciled (*Matthew 18:21 - 22; Eph. 4:32; James. 1:19 - 20*).

If I am offended by someone, I will not tell others about the offense, but will go to that person in a spirit of humility, tell them about the offense, and seek to be reconciled to them (*Ephesians 4:26*).

II. Willingness to deal fairly with differences of opinion

In church matters where there are differences of opinion, but sinful actions are not involved, I commit myself to the process of decision-making as defined by our church constitution and the responsibilities and authority granted to various boards and committees, following the "Ground Rules for Processing Differences" adopted by our church (attached).

I will be willing to share my opinion through the appropriate channels, and will abide by the decisions reached through the means of Riverview's church government in accordance with the mission of the church and with the principles of Scripture (*1 Corinthians 16:16; Hebrews 13:17*).

In matters where personal preferences differ, but truth is not compromised and sin is not involved, I will practice toleration (*Romans 14:1 - 19*).

III. Willingness to confront and deal with sin

If I become aware of any offense I have committed through sin, I will immediately go to those I have offended and ask for forgiveness, accepting personal responsibility for my actions, reactions, and decisions, and providing restitution and reparation where necessary (*Matthew 5:23 - 24*).

If someone has sinned against me, or I have reason to believe that someone has through sin brought the potential of disgrace on the body of Christ, I will go to that person and speak to them about their offense in private (*Matthew 18:15*). I will go to that person in a spirit of humility, having first examined myself and repented of any sin in my life. I will go with the intent of restoring them in a spirit of gentleness (*Galatians 6:1*).

I will expand the circle of those who know about the offense only in accordance with the

commands of Jesus in Matthew 18:16 - 17, (and in the case of criminal offenses, in accordance with statutory requirements), first bringing one or two others with me, and only if that fails, telling it to the church.

If it becomes necessary to "tell it to the church" I will do so by submitting the issue to the Deacon Board.

IV. Unwillingness to listen to evil reports

I will refuse to listen to an evil report about someone, instead directing the bearer of such a report to go to the person who has offended them in order to tell them their fault, with the goal of bringing about restoration and reconciliation (*Romans 16:17; Proverbs 6:16 - 19*).

Ground Rules for Processing Differences

1. We agree that our goal is reconciliation and problem-solving, not assignment of blame or intimidation.
2. Our goal of reconciliation includes the restoration of healthy relationships and effective communication.
3. When necessary, we may call on an arbitrator, agreeable to all parties in the conflict, to moderate our interaction and hold us accountable to our "Conflict Resolution Covenant" and "Ground Rules for Processing Differences."
4. We will utilize Scripture and prayer as tools of reconciliation, not as weapons against those with whom we may disagree.
5. We will be honest in owning our individual concerns and desires, recognizing that self-interest is part of the human experience.
6. We will speak only for ourselves and not claim to represent others whether they are present or not.
7. We will be free to share our feelings, but will not assign the responsibility for those feelings to others.
8. We will focus on actions/behaviors of others which may have been problematic, but will not make judgments about the motives behind those actions/behaviors.
9. We will avoid generalizing, and attempt to describe events, actions, and statements as specifically as possible.
10. We will not withhold information which will contribute to a full understanding of the situation.
11. We will not regard communication as effective until we can describe, to their satisfaction, the thoughts and feelings of those with who we are in conflict.
12. Our focus will be on the present and future, rather than on the past, which cannot be changed, but which can be forgiven.
13. We will identify and build upon those areas in which we agree.

14. We will be willing to change our own thoughts, attitudes, and actions, in light of the truth that we expect such change from others.

15. Inasmuch as "Processing Differences" is not about sinful actions, the parties involved shall determine whether or not the process and its outcome will be confidential or "on the record."

(Rev 1.2013)