

# Coffee Table Questions:

Are there any issues you need to resolve “before coming to the altar” i.e. before the next time you take Communion?

From this talk what are the two things that you’re going to try to improve upon or do more of? Who do you trust to hold you accountable in those areas?

Personal reflection: *“Lord please show me those areas of myself which I’m unaware of, and which you want to change.”*

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# Relationships Matter

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Part of the 'Growing Together'  
Discipleship Stream



# Conflict: Resolving it well.

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# Scope & Context:

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# Introduction:

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# Summary:

- Poor foundations;
- Misunderstandings;
- Unclear boundaries;
- Misaligned objectives / interests;
- Fear;
- Seeking to win.



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# “Doing relationships”:

*“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: be reconciled to God.”*

2Cor5:18-20 NIVUK

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# “Doing relationships”:

- Agents of reconciliation;
  - Bridge builders not a wall builders;
- Restoring relationships;
  - message of restored relationships;
  - become reunited with God;
  - be Christ’s witnesses.

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# Conflict:

*“In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.”*

1Peter1:6-7, NIVUK

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# Conflict:

- It's inevitable;
- Doesn't have to be bad;
- Long term issues - bubbling under the surface;
- Spontaneous outbursts - sudden hostilities - passionate and intense - high stakes emotional issues - "crucial conversations";
- Creative tension - positive energy - steel sharpening steel - positive amplification - two and two equals five.

**Conflict which has the potential to be destructive.**



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# It's important:

*“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”*

Matt5:9 NIVUK

Peacemaking is NOT about Cowardice:

- NOT Avoiding;
- NOT Appeasing;
- NOT Running from from the problem or giving in.



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# It's important:

*“But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.”*

James3:17-18 NIVUK

Planting and harvesting - what we sow we reap.

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# It's important:

1. Blocks my fellowship with God - can't be right with God and wrong with other people - can't be close to God when we're maintaining distance from other people (1John4:20);

*"Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen."*

2. Blocks my prayers - God is love - if we're in conflict then we're not in love (1Peter3:12)

*"For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."*

3. It blocks my happiness.

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# The issue NOT the person:

*“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”*

Ephs6:12 NIVUK

Avoid making it personal:

- imagine the issue on the table in front of you;
- focus on resolving the issue;
- no intimidation through anger or words that are designed to hurt;
- no insults, no labelling.

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# The power of fear:

- Humility, Selflessness and Transparency: all entail an element of suffering;
- Susceptibility to fear:
  - Barrier to building Trust and real Unity;
- Fear of losing the relationship;
- Fear of being embarrassed;
- Fear of feeling inferior.

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# Walk into the danger:

- Resolving the issue NOT winning the argument;
- Be honest about our own weaknesses & limitations;
- Enter their world;
- Honour them & what they're about;
- Tell the truth in love:
  - what do they need to hear;
  - able to hear;
  - what will distract them from hearing;
- Face the unthinkable.

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# It all starts with me:

- Take responsibility;
  - Be prepared to make the first move;

*“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.”*

Matt 5:23-24

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# It all starts with me:

*“For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.” 2Tim1:7*

*“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.” 1John4:18*

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# It all starts with me:

- Assurance in our position;

- Remind ourselves who we are in God;

*“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.” Eph2:19-22,*

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# It all starts with me:

- Our hearts right with God;
  - Work on “Me” first / “Us” second;
  - What are my motives?
  - Do I really want the best for the other person?

*“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?”* Matt7:3 NIVUK

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# It all starts with me:

- Come to God in prayerful reflection;
  - Create the space to reflect & pray;
  - Take time by “drawing in the sand”;

*“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you for ever – the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”* John14:16-18

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# It all starts with me:

- Clear objectives;
  - What do we really want to change - What is the outcome that we're seeking to achieve: is it a righteous desire - focus:
    - **what do I really want for myself?**
    - **what do I really want for the other(s)?**
    - **what do I really want for our relationship?**

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# Entering the danger:

- Plan a peace conference;
- Use all your senses;
- Begin with what's my fault ...

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# Entering the danger:

Begin with what's my fault:

- **Self centredness;**
  - ego, pride, full of myself - makes us easily offended;
  - when we are at peace then external things don't upset us;
  - inflexibility kills relationships;
  - more rewarding to resolve a conflict than to dissolve a relationship.

*“What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?”* James4:1 NIVUK

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# Entering the danger:

Begin with what's my fault:

- **Pride;**
  - blind spots - weaknesses in our life - we don't even know they're there;
  - come to conflict with a humble heart;
  - the desire to win;
  - the desire to see punishment inflicted.

*“Where there is strife, there is pride”* Prov13:10 NIVUK

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# Entering the danger:

Refuse “the fools choice”;

- be clear about what you don’t want;
- don’t buy the lie of: “it’s either this, or that” / one or the other;
- seek to find the “and”:

*“How can I ..... AND ....”*

*“How about if ..... AND .....”*

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# Entering the danger:

Speak the truth tactfully;

- say it offensively and it will be received defensively;
- it's never persuasive when we're abrasive;
- never get your point across by being cross;
- never use truth as a Club to hit people with;
- wrap the truth in love - truth with love is received:

*“The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.”* Prov12:18 NIVUK

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# Spontaneous conflict:

Disagreement about high stakes emotional issues;

- Crucial Moments generate Crucial Conversations:
  - Variance in opinions;
  - stakes are high;
  - emotions are high,
- Results could have a big impact upon the quality of life;
- Often back away out of fear.

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# Spontaneous conflict:

## Crucial Conversations:

- avoid them;
- face them and handle them poorly;
- face them and handle them well.

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# Spontaneous conflict:

## Successful Conversations:

- Create a calm safe & respectful space to share - no wrong input;
- All the relevant information out into the open;
- “Pool of Meaning”;
- “Pool of Shared Meaning” - birthplace of synergy;
- Ownership & buy-in to the final decisions.

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# Spontaneous conflict:

## Poor Conversations:

- Not to share;
- Bury things under the carpet - the elephant in the room;
- “Pool of Shared Meaning” is very shallow;
- Play the martyr and then get resentful - become aggressive, manipulative, make hurtful comments, misuse position or authority - may even become physically abusive.

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# Agreeing well:

Summarise clearly & carefully:

- only include what has actually been agreed;
- tactful, clear & concise with our language - less is more;
- clarity about the “if / then” agreements;
- re-establish boundaries where required;
- finish well - celebrate success - seal it in some way;
- be happy & show it!

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# Principles of living:

- **First Person**: You will be the 1st person I talk to if I have a problem with something concerning you;
- **4 Day Principle**: If I have a problem with something relating to you that I can't resolve in my own heart within 4 days then I will speak to you;
- **Friendship**: I will let you know what is on my heart / mind wherever / whenever I have needs which you may be able to help with;
- **Last Word**: I will assume that everything between us is as it was when we last spoke – otherwise you would have contacted me;
- **Faithfulness**: Our relationship is more important than any disagreement that we might have

With thanks to Brian & Vanessa Richardson  
[www.liberationministries.co.uk](http://www.liberationministries.co.uk)

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# Summary:

1. Build and maintain **solid foundations** - make sure our hearts are right with God;
2. Humility - the **solution starts with me**;
3. Avoid misunderstandings - **clarity and openness** in our communication;
4. **Clear boundaries** - be reasonable and be clear;
5. **Contract well** - don't sweep issues under the carpet;
6. **Confront the fear** - be prepared to walk into the danger;
7. The **relationship is more important than the issue** - seek the win / win;
8. **Agree well.**

**Through prayer and petition we are to be alert at all times:**

*“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.” Eph6:18*  
NIVUK

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