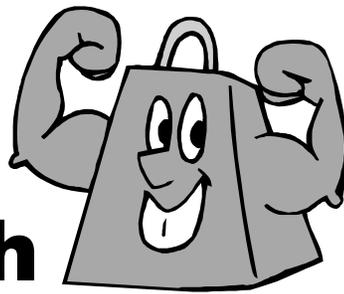


Protecting Your Church



Ephesians 4:3 (KJV) Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Ephesians 4:3 (LB) Try always to be led along together by the Holy Spirit and so be at peace with one another.

1. Focus on what we have in common, not our _____.

Romans 14:19 (NIV) Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

Romans 14:19 (MSG) So let's agree to use all our energy in getting along with each other. Help others with encouraging words;

- God wants unity, not _____.

Romans 14:1 (NIV) Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters.

1 Corinthians 1:10 (NLT) Now, dear brothers and sisters, I appeal to you by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ to stop arguing among yourselves. Let there be real harmony so there won't be divisions in the church. I plead with you to be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.

2. Be _____ in your expectations.

- Longing for the ideal while criticizing the real is evidence of _____.
- Settling for the real without striving for the ideal is evidence of _____.
- Living with this tension is evidence of _____.

Ephesians 4:2 (NLT) Be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love.

3. Choose to encourage rather than _____.

Romans 14:10 (PHI) Why, then, criticize your brother's actions, why try to make him look small? We shall all be judged one day, not by each other's standards or even our own, but by the standard of Christ.

4. Refuse to listen to _____.

- Gossip is passing on information when you are neither part of the _____ nor part of the _____.

Proverbs 17:4 (CEV) Troublemakers listen to troublemakers, and liars listen to liars.

Jude 1:19 (MSG) These are the ones who split churches, thinking only of themselves. There's nothing to them, no sign of the Spirit!

Galatians 5:15 (NCV) If you go on hurting each other and tearing each other apart, be careful, or you will completely destroy each other.

Proverbs 26:20 (LB) Fire goes out for lack of fuel, and tensions disappear when gossip stops.

5. Practice God's method for _____ resolution.

Matthew 18:15-17a (MSG) If a fellow believer hurts you, go and tell him—work it out between the two of you. If he listens, you've made a friend. If he won't listen, take one or two others along so that the presence of witnesses will keep things honest, and try again. If he still won't listen, tell the church.

6. _____ your pastors and leaders.

Hebrews 13:17 (MSG) Be responsive to your pastoral leaders. Listen to their counsel. They are alert to the condition of your lives and work under the strict supervision of God. Contribute to the joy of their leadership, not its drudgery. Why would you want to make things harder for them?

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 (MSG) And now, friends, we ask you to honor those leaders who work so hard for you, who have been given the responsibility of urging and guiding you along in your obedience. Overwhelm them with appreciation and love! Get along among yourselves, each of you doing your part.

1 Corinthians 10:24 (NLT) Don't think only of your own good. Think of other Christians and what is best for them.