

## **Rule of Christ**

### *A Biblical Process for Dealing with Concerns*

#### ***Step One: Look at Yourself (Matthew 18: 8-9)***

Jesus tells us to take time to examine our role in the conflict. Ask yourself these questions:

- Can I let it go? (If the answer is yes, there is no need to confront the other person.) If not...
- What may the other person perceive that I have contributed to this problem?
- What does God see?

Journal on these questions to gain insight for the next steps. At this point, you may see things in your own behavior that needs changing. Resolve to do that. Think through what it is you hope to communicate with the person with whom you are in conflict, and what you would like to see as an outcome.

#### ***Step Two: One on One (Matthew 18: 15)***

The purpose of the second step is to resolve the conflict....not to get mad or to get even. Remember to:

- Speak for yourself by starting your sentences with “I”
- Work hard to understand the other person’s point of view
- Work together to create solutions

*If not resolved by a one-on-one conversation....*

#### ***Step Three: Get Some Objective Help (Matthew 18:16)***

Others can help the two parties see possibilities. You can invite someone to come with you as you meet with the other person to help mediate or facilitate the process. Or you can involve the SPRC to assist in you resolving this concern. To do that:

- Make sure you have done steps 1 and 2 first.
- Write a one page summary of your concern and give it to the SPRC.
- The SPRC upon reviewing the concern will work with you in resolving the issue.

*If not resolved by involving the SPRC...*

#### ***Step Four: Take It to the Church (Matthew 18: 17a)***

Use the resources of the Church. This might be the time to bring in the Conflict Transformation Team or to be in contact with the District Superintendent.

*If not resolved by outside help from the wider church...*

#### ***Step Five: Shake the Dust (Matthew 18: 17b)***

There are some issues that cannot be resolved. The church should remember its mission. Let go of the anger and disappointment at the unresolved issues and move on with your ministry.

#### ***Step Six: God is There (Matthew 18:20)***

Remember God’s powerful promise to be with us in the midst of our problems.

## HOW TO MAKE A MEETING SUCCESSFUL

1. Plan ahead
2. Go to God in prayer
3. Practice what you will say when you invite the person to meet with you.
4. Pick a meeting place that is neutral and conducive to a good discussion.
5. At the beginning of the meeting, set the rules you want to follow. Allow the other person to express their ideas for rules too.
6. Keep yourself calm. Take deep breaths. Speak slowly in a calm tone of voice.
7. Start your sentences with "I prefer" or "My purpose is".
8. Don't interrupt. Listen and then ask questions for clarification.
9. Let the other person talk first. Try to learn something new that you did not know gong into the conversation.
10. Stifle your anger. Resolve to hear the person out.
11. Fight distractions.
12. Put yourself in the other person's shoes, at least for the moment. Open your mind to others' perceptions of reality, not just your own.
13. Withhold judgment until you have gotten all the facts and understand all perspectives. Questions are a great way to seek understanding.
14. Establish eye contact.
15. Remember that five minutes of silence is better than a half hour of confusion and accusations.
16. When you hear a complaint, think "They are giving me INFORMATION."
17. Stop your own negative behavior.
18. Restate what the other person has said.
19. Look for special qualities in the person.
20. Agree when you can.
21. Be hard on issues and soft on people.
22. Remember that all are a part of the body of Christ.

You're blessed when you care. At the moment of being 'care-full', you find yourselves cared for.  
Matt. 5 *The Message*

Do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be of **anxious** mind. For all the nations of the world seek these things; and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, seek God's kingdom, and these things shall be yours as well.  
Luke 12: 29-31

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# Respectful Communication Guidelines

**R=** take RESPONSIBILITY for what you say  
and feel without blaming others

**E=** use EMPATHETIC listening

**S=** be SENSITIVE to differences in  
communication styles

**P=** PONDER what you hear and feel before you  
speak

**E=** EXAMINE your own assumptions and  
perceptions

**C=** keep CONFIDENTIALITY

**T=** TRUST ambiguity because we are *not* here  
to debate who is right or wrong.

(from *The Bush was Blazing but Not Consumed* by Eric H. F. Law)

I agree to uphold these guidelines for the time we have together.

Signed:

Date:

# DISCERNMENT JOURNAL

*For personal use, not to be shared with anyone*

*Matthew 18 provides a process Christians can use to resolve conflicts. The first step in this process (verses 8-9) asks you to examine yourself. This journal will help you do that. The second step in the process (verse 15) is to go directly to the person, "when the two of you are alone" and work it out if you can*

Begin in prayer. Ask God for direction and then complete this journal.

Briefly identify the issue: (Use only one sentence. This will help you focus)

Your position on the issue:

Your perception of the other person's/group's position on the issue:

Put yourself in the other person's/group's shoes. What might they say that you have contributed to the conflict?

Describe the need you want to have addressed. There is a need for:

What are some possible Scripture images for this situation:

Is there a history behind your concern? Is this history impacting your reactions?

What steps can you take to remain calm, confident and connected to the other person?

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Concern Summary  
(to be shared with SPRC and the parties involved)

Your name:

Date:

Name the person or group with whom you have a concern:

Briefly describe the issue: (use only one or two sentences. This will help you focus.)

Briefly describe the steps you have taken to resolve and communicate this concern with the party(ies) involved:

What have the two of you agreed to?

What remains to be resolved?

State your desired outcome as a need. (It is very important to be concise in this statement. That will provide clarity for the committee.)

I need....