

4 Ways to Cultivate Harmony

In an effort to keep peace, do you sometimes ignore conflicts that arise among women in your ministry?

Unity among Christians is important. Serving with a unified body of believers, all sharing the common purpose of glorifying Christ, is exciting. The Bible tells us God blesses ministries where the people are serving together in harmony (Psalms 133).

However, maintaining unity doesn't mean ignoring issues. Overlooking tension among women or allowing strong personalities to dominate may give the appearance of momentary unity, but the results are usually increased conflict in the future. A harmonious environment is cultivated when a leader is willing to lovingly speak the truth while protecting the well-being, dignity, and interests of everyone involved in the ministry.

Addressing conflict is never easy, but here are a few Bible-based tips to keep in mind.

Take a time out. Wait at least 24 hours. While you wait, pray. Ask God to give you wisdom, compassion, and a sincere love for each of the women involved. Be sure to wait until your own emotions are in check. Consider any decisions or actions on your part that might have contributed to the disagreement. (James 1:5, 19; Matthew 7:5)

Seek understanding. Ask open-ended questions. Most people serving in ministry have good intentions. Encourage open discussion so each woman feels heard and valued. Try to identify the source of any hurt feelings, frustrations, or misunderstandings.

Set clear expectations. Encourage everyone to move forward with new boundaries. Promote reconciliation and forgiveness. Clearly communicate your expectations for handling differences of opinion in the future. If roles were misunderstood, clarify them for everyone. (Matthew 5:23-24; Romans 12:18; Ephesians 4:29-32)

Make a plan. Discuss healthy ways to express opinions in order to avoid conflict in the future. Solicit input from each person involved, and discuss how the situation could be handled differently. Be sure to affirm the value of each person to God, you, and the ministry. Highlight any negative impact the conflict had (or could have) on the ministry as a whole.