

HOW DO I TALK TO MY FAMILY ABOUT...

March 15, 2022

TWO RELATIONSHIP REALITIES

1. People are at DIFFERENT places on most issues.

Some People...

- SUPPORT the decision
- UNCOMFORTABLE with the decision
- OPPOSE the decision

Four key reasons people are uncomfortable or oppose certain change...

- THEOLOGY: "I'm not sure the Bible allows it."
- PREFERENCE: "Not how I was raised / I prefer (blank)."
- FEAR: "What change is next?" or "Lose CofC identity?"
- RELATIONSHIPS: "What will (Blank) think?"

2. Change is an EMOTIONAL journey.

Remember:

- All change involves loss – even good change.
- Expect fear, sadness, confusion, and anger.
- Processing emotions is a non-linear journey. You may repeat certain steps a few times.
- It's okay to not feel okay immediately. Give yourself (and others) the gift of time.
- Time doesn't heal all wounds. Time used wisely with God's power can heal all wounds.

Question: So, how do we have GREAT tough conversations with loved ones?

5 PRE-TALK PREP TIPS

1. ATTITUDE : *Decide how I will behave.*

Questions:

- “How does God want me to behave in this conversation regardless of the outcome?”
- “Why do I want to have this conversation...really?” (Ephesians 4:29)
- “What outcome do I want? Expect?” (Full agreement, agree to disagree, etc.)
- “How may this conversation help the other person grow more like Christ?”
- Sarcasm, snark, and personal attacks are not productive or Christ-like.

2. AUDIENCE : *Decide who I want in the conversation.*

Questions:

- “How may he or she likely respond based on their personality and temperament?”
- “Is he or she an internal or external processor?” (Internal need time before responding)

3. ATMOSPHERE : *Decide the best setting for a successful conversation.*

Questions:

- “When is the best time for the other person to talk?”
- “Where is the best place for the other person to talk?”

4. ANSWERS : *Decide how I will respond to his/her questions.*

Questions:

- “What questions, concerns, or objections will he/she likely ask?”
- “What answers can I offer that will be helpful?”
- “Are there questions that I cannot answer or need someone else to answer?”

5. ANTICIPATE EMOTIONS : *Decide how I will respond to his/her emotions.*

Notes:

- Neuroscientists tell us that stressful situations, conversations, and past experiences can trigger the fight or flight response in our brain’s amygdala. Examples of fight or flight include dry mouth, sweat, passive-aggressive behavior, or raised voices.
- It takes time to switch to the rational, logical frontal lobes.
- As we grow older and more mature, it takes less time to switch from an emotional fight or flight response to a rational response, but it still takes time.
- We can give grace more easily when we anticipate an emotional response.

4 TALK TIPS (adapted from Clay Scroggins)

1. AFFIRM what is true and affirm your intentions.

Questions: What can I affirm? (Our common values or their God-given dignity, etc.)

2. ASK curious questions.

Questions: "Can you tell me more?" "What do you think makes you feel that way?"

3. ACKNOWLEDGE what you've heard.

Examples: "What I heard you say..." or "Do I understand that you feel..."

4. ADVICE share your advice at the end of the conversation.

Begin: "May I offer another perspective?" "May I try to address your concerns?"

The American Church:

- The Church is in decline. Only 7%-9% of Americans are evangelical Christians.
- Churches of Christ have been in decline since 1981 – losing 2,400 members a month.
- 20-somethings are leaving the church faster than any other group, because they believe the Church is irrelevant or its practices are inconsistent with Scripture.

Sunday Worship:

- We believe the Bible allows and blesses acapella and instrumental praise.
- A growing percentage of our members desire instrumental praise on Sundays.
- Many of our graduating children have to choose between the Churches of Christ and worshiping in a way that touches their souls.
- Our members who invite unchurched friends say acapella-only is an unnecessary barrier.
- We don't believe instrumental worship fixes every problem. But we believe there is enough room in the church for both styles of praise on Sundays. We believe both/and it will bless the rest of our church body, invite our children to put down roots long-term, and remove one unnecessary obstacle for our unchurched friends..

End: "It sounds like we need time to digest what we've talked about. Let's get back together _____ to see where we are. Can we close by praying together?"

What happens when we flip the order...

4. ADVICE "Here's what I think." "You should have..." "You made me..."

3. ACKNOWLEDGE I were wrong - "I spoke too soon." Or "I shouldn't have said that."

2. ASK for forgiveness - "Please forgive me."

1. AFFIRM that you still enjoy your job, marriage, etc.