

# PRINCIPLES OF PEACEMAKING

A Biblical Roadmap to Reconciliation



## Our Desire

We desire to grow in healthy communication out of reverence for Christ, handling conflict with integrity and humility. With God's help we seek to be fair-minded and kind-hearted toward one another in all things.

### IT STARTS WITH US

- **We acknowledge diversity:** God has created us as unique individuals. We will rarely agree on every subject and this is normal and healthy. Disagreement, or even conflict, is not the same as discord.
- **We recognize warning signs:** While not all conflict is driven by sin, conflict can become unhealthy when it leads to significant discontent, resentment and bitterness.
- **We submit to God:** When we experience relational unease we submit ourselves to the Lord in prayer. In prayer God's Spirit exposes our inmost thoughts and motives and reveals His wisdom to us. We acknowledge that conviction of sin is the Holy Spirit's role; He is the One who guides us into all truth.
- **We pursue reconciliation:** Whether dealing with simple misunderstandings or more substantial heart issues that produce discord, we work toward reconciliation in obedience to God's call for unity within the body.

### IT IS ROOTED IN THE BIBLE

We remind ourselves of the following truths in God's Word, our authoritative guide for faith and practice:

- If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Romans 12:18 (NIV)
- A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. Proverbs 15:1 (NIV)
- So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God. Matthew 5:23 (NLT)
- Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of His body, the church. Ephesians 4:15 (NLT)
- How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! Psalm 133:1 (NIV)

## IT TAKES THE FOLLOWING SHAPE

We pursue the biblical model of reconciliation through discernment in the context of authentic community:

- We model our approach to reconciliation on Matthew 18:15-20.
- We choose to be respectfully honest with what we think and how we feel.
- We approach the one we are experiencing conflict with, in person, never via e-mail or third parties.
- We use some helpful communication skills:
  - Being clear but brief
  - Stating emotions instead of acting them out
  - Staying calm
  - Using “I” statements (e.g. “I feel...” or “I think...” instead of “You always...” or “You never...”)
- If we are still unable to be reconciled, we turn to the elders of Jericho Ridge, acknowledging their spiritual authority to serve the body in the pursuit of health and unity.

## IT INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING CHOICES

- We avoid gossip and rallying uninvolved third parties to our point of view.
- We take ownership of our words and actions, and choose not to quote anonymous third parties, remembering there are no “some people” at Jericho Ridge.
- When others in our community approach us to discuss their conflict with another party, we lovingly encourage them to revisit these steps, and with discretion refuse to spread the issue to yet further uninvolved parties, instead turning our energies toward prayer.
- We choose to trust in the capable work of the Holy Spirit in us, and in others.

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“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

JOHN 13:35 (NIV)

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