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Discuss Problems

This is generally an area that most people don't want to discuss, not only in church, but in their personal lives as well. Why is that? Often people do not want to upset others or be seen as someone who rocks the boat, gets involved with conflict and/or is ostracized by the people who love and respect them. However, if we look at the life of our perfect role model, our Lord Jesus Christ, we should feel very differently about this.

Did Jesus upset others? Absolutely! Look at the impact He had on the religious leaders of His day. He made them so angry that they conspired with their Roman enemies to have Him killed. Did Jesus rock the boat? Definitely! He gave us so many ways to look at things than had ever been expressed before. He's the One who said whoever is to be greatest must be the servant of all. He's the One who welcomed the weakest people of His time into fellowship with Him such as women,

Share Information Willingly With the Congregation

children, foreigners, the sick and the poor.

Did Jesus get involved in conflicts? Surely! He shared that the person without sin should cast the first stone when the woman was caught in adultery in John 8: 1-12. Did Jesus look to have the approval of the leaders of His day? Absolutely not! He always spoke up for what was right regardless of the opposition. His goal was to do His Father's will, not to be a people pleaser. Are you a people pleaser or a God pleaser?

The Lord dealt with problems and challenges in His time while walking on the earth; we have to do the same. Avoiding a problem does not make it go away. Often, pastors and church members do not deal with problems effectively. Sometimes this can be due to the fact that people may not be aware of the problems. This can happen when pastors and other church leaders do not want people to know about church issues. Examples are when a church faces financial trouble, when membership is regularly declining, when the effectiveness of current ministries is reduced and when there is no influx of new ministries to meet changing needs.

When problems like the ones mentioned above exist then it is not the time to say "Everything will be alright if we just pray." This is not the only response God is looking for; He expects us to get to work on these problems. Effective ministries will communicate problems to the membership rather than withhold information. If you are a pastor and your church is facing challenges, let your membership know what the challenges are. The answers to your problems may be sitting in the pews. On the flip side is when the members recognize problems, but won't share what they are. If you are one of these people, help your pastor and church out by telling the leaders/pastor about your concerns. You may help your church to be better able to glorify Christ.

Share the Vision

Many organizations have a mission statement as well as a vision statement. Unfortunately, if people do not know what the mission or vision is they are less likely to achieve goals or to be able to guide others in the direction the organization needs to go. Just as secular organizations need to have a vision statement, churches need to have one as well.

Keeping Your Church Alive

Can you clearly state the vision statement of your church? If you don't know the vision of your church, do you know if a vision statement exists? How can a vision benefit your church?

The Bible shares with us the fact that God will pour out His Spirit, which will enable people to see visions (Joel 2: 28). I believe that God still shares visions with some people today to help spread the message of Jesus Christ. The Lord has a plan for each of our lives and He may have given the pastor a vision for your church. If this is the case, the members need to know this. Talk to the pastor about the vision the Lord has placed on their heart. Without sharing this with the congregation how can anyone expect to know what it is? Communicating the vision helps people to know if the vision is one they can support and how they can get better involved in the ministry. When the vision is clearly defined, more people can make a difference and know where they can best fit in.

Ministry Needs: A Small Sample, Part 1

Every church has ministries that need to have workers participate. Some ministries have too many people involved while others are crying out for people to help them thrive and succeed in their mission. This is something I experienced firsthand at my former church home which struggled to do outreach effectively, to expand Christian education so that it was relevant, and to retain new members after they joined. Are you aware of the ministry needs of your church? If not, then you need to find out what the ministry needs are. The members and the pastor should work together to meet the needs to be met and align them with the church's vision.

If you are the pastor share the needs. If you are a member and the pastor does not recognize needs that you feel are clear make your concerns known to the pastor. Here are some common ministry needs and the type of individuals who can do these jobs:

- Sunday School Teachers (consistent, prayerful, students of the Word, creative and thoughtful)
- Trustees (honest, reliable, able to make financial decisions, understand financial reports)