

The Biblical Model for Conflict Resolution

The scriptures give very clear direction on how resolution is supposed to happen.

Matthew 18:15-17.

“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”

Level 1

It says **YOU** Don't wait for the other person.

This is **in Person**.

- > don't send an email.
- > don't make a phone call.
- > value the relationship enough to go in person.

GO > do it soon.
> no excuses.
> you have the ability – start moving in that direction and God will provide the strength.

This is **In Private**.

Our tendency is going to be to want to go to 5 other people. The desire to build a support group around relational rift is so high.

Human nature wants to engage other people onto our side, build a power base.

Go – in private.

Matthew 18 Level 1 YOU GO IN PRIVATE RECONCILE (work it out)

Then it says: **Seek to Reconcile**

It doesn't say go & > spew anger,
> let your temper flare
> and say destructive things
to get it off your chest

The spirit / attitude and approach you come in – should be one that will lead to reconciliation.

Level 2

Then – if this can't get it done (for whatever reason): **find a Mature Mediator**

Not just anyone > someone unbiased
> and capable to handle this.

It says - seek to **reconcile** again through the mediator

It still does NOT say > “run out and tell 5 people in the church.”
> argue.

Matthew 18 Level 2 MATURE MEDIATOR
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Question: If you have a problem with someone
– ***why would you tell others?***
> it does not help the resolution process.

Level 3

Then – if this does not work it says **“tell it to the church”**

& we interpret that as the leadership of the church.
(elders, leadership team).

Involve the representative leaders of the church to try and bring one more attempt of reconciliation to this problem.

Notes: Coming to the church is the third step.
Don't jump over levels.
There are graduated levels of mediation.

Matthew 18 Level 3 TELL THE CHURCH
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Level 4

Matthew 18 Level 4 DISFELLOWSHIP
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If that does not work - **make it known** to the whole church that's someone has an irreconcilable spirit that must be exposed (maybe both persons or many people involved).

Then - **disfellowship** needs to take place.

In the event that someone (s) is disfellowshipped from the church even this has the final intent that those disfellowshipped experience the darkness and loneliness experienced outside the body of Christ that they come to their sense and come back and get reconciled to both God and each other.

Unity is so valuable and important to the church that this step must be taken.

Note: Too often what happens these days is if there is any discipline brought by church those involved simply pick up and go down the street to another church that is really unfortunate. It removes a great opportunity for growth.

This seems extreme but this is how important unity is to the church! The Bible says if we don't have love, authenticity, harmony and unity we might as well go home and lock the doors.

The ultimate goal of each level is to bring us to this intersection where we find our identity – reconciled to God, reconciled to each other.

“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.” Galatians 6:1

Jesus: “Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one.” John 17:11