

MILL CITY CHURCH'S COMMITMENT TO PEACEMAKING AND RECONCILIATION

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God (Matt. 5:9).

Our church is committed to building a “culture of peace” that reflects God’s peace and the power of the gospel of Christ in our lives. As we stand in the light of the cross, we realize that bitterness, forgiveness and broken relationships are not appropriate for the people whom God has reconciled through the sacrifice of his only Son (John 13:34-35; Eph. 4:29-32; Col. 3:12-14).

Therefore, out of love for Christ and in reliance on the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we are committed to resolving our differences according to the following principles of peacemaking and reconciliation:

Personal Peacemaking

- Whenever we are faced with conflict, our primary goal will be to glorify God with our thoughts, words and actions (1 Cor. 10:31).
- We will try to get the “logs” out of our own eyes before focusing on what others may have done wrong. This means we first examine ourselves and determine if we are guilty of the same offense or are contributors of the other’s offense (Matt. 7:3-5).
- We will seek to overlook minor offenses (Prov. 19:11).
- We will refrain from all gossip, backbiting and slander (Eph. 4:29). If we have a problem with others, we will talk to them, not about them.
- We will make “charitable judgments” toward one another by believing the best about each other until we have facts that prove otherwise (1 Cor. 13:7; see www.Peacemaker.net/charitable_judgments).
- If an offense is too serious to overlook, or if we think someone may have something against us, we will go promptly to seek reconciliation (Matt. 5:23-24; 18:15).
- When we offer a word of correction to others, we will do so graciously and gently, with the goal of serving and restoring them, rather than belittling them (Prov. 12:18; Eph. 4:29; Gal. 6:1).
- When someone tries to correct us, we will ask God to help us resist prideful defensiveness and to welcome correction with humility (Ps. 141:5; Prov. 15:32).
- As we seek to resolve differences with others, we will look out for their concerns and interests as well as our own (Phil. 2:3-4).
- When others repent, we will ask God to give us grace to forgive them as freely and fully as God has forgiven us so that we might glorify God’s reconciling grace (Eph. 4:32).

Assisted Peacemaking

- When two of us cannot resolve a conflict privately, whether it’s personal or has church, business, or even legal implications, we will seek assistance from our

church leaders or wise people they appoint, and we will listen humbly to their counsel and correction (Matt. 18:16; 1 Cor. 6:1-8). If our conflict is with a church leader, we will look to other leaders for assistance.

- If we have a conflict with a person who attends another church, we will make a good faith effort to cooperate with our church leaders as they offer to work with the leaders of the other church to resolve the matter.
- If a person coming to our church has an unresolved conflict with someone in his former church, we will assist him in seeking to be reconciled to the other person before joining our church (Matt. 5:23-24; Rom. 12:18).
- If we have a dispute with or within our church and cannot resolve it internally through the steps given above, we will obey God's command not to go into the civil court (1 Cor. 6:1-8). Instead, we will submit the matter to mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration.

Above all, we pray that our ministry of peacemaking will bring praise to our Lord Jesus Christ and lead others to know his infinite love and peace.¹

¹ These principles are adapted from *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*, by Ken Sande (Baker Books, 3rd Ed. 2004).