

# LIFT

## Ministry Group November Resource

### Four Types of Church Conflict

Churches are meant to be places of worship, fellowship, and ministry. However, conflicts can arise and it's essential to understand the various types of conflicts that can happen in churches.

In this article, Israel Galindo, Associate Dean for Lifelong Learning at Columbia Theological Seminary, identifies four types of conflict that can occur in churches.

#### 1. Doctrinal Conflicts

Doctrinal conflicts occur when there is a disagreement over the interpretation of scripture or the church's belief system. These conflicts can arise from different theological perspectives or cultural backgrounds. Doctrinal disputes can be challenging to resolve because they often involve deeply held beliefs and values.

#### 2. Leadership Conflicts

Leadership conflicts arise when there is a disagreement or dispute among church leaders or between leaders and members. These conflicts can stem from differences in leadership styles, personalities, or visions for the church. Leadership conflicts can be especially damaging to a church because they can create division and undermine the trust and unity of the congregation.

**Discuss:** Have you experienced conflict that centered around your leadership style or vision for the church? How did you navigate the disagreement?

### Shop Talk: Navigating Church Conflict



#### 10 Simple Steps towards Resolving the Conflict in Your Church

These steps can be utilized to mediate conflict in the church.

(Excerpts from Pastor Christie Blaikie, Oasis Church, Grow a Healthy Church Blog)

1. Recognize the issues around the conflict.
2. Spend some time prayerfully **answering these questions:**
  - What am I doing to escalate this situation?
  - What do I want for the relationship?
  - What do I want for myself?
  - What systems and processes are adding to the situation?
  - What communication breakdowns have added to the conflict?
3. **Select an appropriate time** to talk with the person. Allow 30 mins more than what you think you need. There's nothing worse than having to quickly wrap up a sensitive meeting because of another appointment.
4. Share your concerns, but **stick to the facts** and speak the truth in love. Avoid assumptions. Never question motives. Ensure you specifically define the issues.

### 3. Personal Conflicts

Personal conflicts occur when there is a disagreement or issue between two or more individuals within the church. These conflicts can arise from misunderstandings, personality clashes, or hurt feelings. Personal conflicts can be resolved through communication and conflict resolution strategies, but if left unchecked, they can escalate and cause division within the church.

**Discuss:** How have hurt feelings between families led to conflict in your church? How did you navigate the differences?

### 4. Resource Conflicts

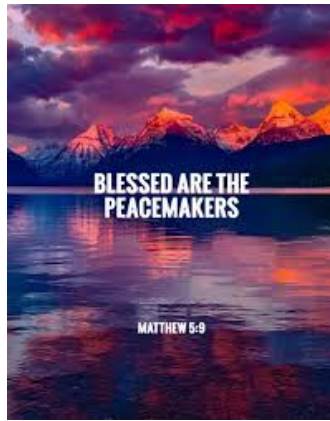
Resource conflicts occur when there is a disagreement over allocating or using church resources, such as finances or facilities. These conflicts can arise from different priorities or goals for the church.

**Resource conflicts can be resolved through open communication, transparency, and a shared understanding of the church's mission and values.**

**Discuss:** Have you ever had to navigate tensions in your church regarding how the church's finances were stewarded?

Conflicts can arise in churches, but understanding the different challenges can help prevent and resolve them. By promoting open communication, transparency, and conflict resolution strategies, churches can navigate conflicts and maintain unity and growth within the congregation.

<https://www.ctsnet.edu/four-types-of-conflicts-in-churches/>



“Growing churches handle conflict directly, biblically, humbly, and healthily.”

-Carey Nieuwhof-

**5. Focus on peacemaking** by identifying your own contribution to the problem. Own it.

**Discuss:** Are you more of a peacekeeper or a peacemaker? Is there a difference?

**6. Listen carefully** to the concerns of the other person. Choose to believe the best about others involved.

**Discuss:** How good of a listener are you? Do you formulate responses while others are speaking?

**7. Talk through several possible solutions**, with ears to solve problems, not add to them.

**Discuss:** When discussing solutions, are you more prone to guide people towards compromise, concession or collaboration? Take some time to discuss the differences.

**8. Agree on a mutually acceptable solution.**

**Discuss:** How important is it to you that those involved feel as though the solution reflects and addresses their concerns?

**9. Agree on how you will measure the implementation of the solution.**

**Discuss:** What are some healthy matrixes you have used to gauge effectiveness and ensure participation?

**10. Phone the person the next day** and express your love for them and your desire to resolve all conflict.

**Discuss:** What is your follow-up protocol?

[https://growahealthychurch.com/conflict/?gad\\_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwg-24BhB\\_EiwA1ZOx8unFB7zVXoSRTflUkVgoCc7en1PiWD7FOh5CzCJVXXK\\_yCoZ-8uHehoCaOkQAvD\\_BwE](https://growahealthychurch.com/conflict/?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwg-24BhB_EiwA1ZOx8unFB7zVXoSRTflUkVgoCc7en1PiWD7FOh5CzCJVXXK_yCoZ-8uHehoCaOkQAvD_BwE)