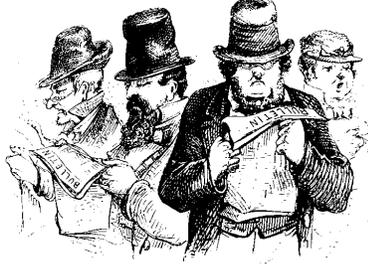


HANDLING DIFFICULT MOMENTS



Most assuredly, you will face difficulties in your koinonia. Being prepared to handle the problem by having a strategy is an important part of leading your koinonia.

Here are some **TIPS** for dealing with your koinonia difficulties or conflict:

Tips for dealing with difficulties or conflicts

1. Set a time for conflict (take time to deal with it, don't hide from the conflict).
2. Try to deal with the issues rather than the personalities.
3. Deal with one issue at a time.
4. There should be no winner and no loser.
5. Opt for full disclosure of all facts rather than allowing, "hidden agendas" (leftover feeling or old arguments not settled) to function.
6. Emphasize what you still hold in common.
7. Attempt to portray a trusting and friendly attitude.
8. Power should be balanced (everyone should have equal right).
9. Involve all principal parties in the conflict at a common meeting.
10. Clarify whether you are dealing with one conflict or multiple conflicts.

Identifying Problem Situation in a Group Discussion

Here are some problem situations it may lack certain background information that would be helpful in determining your actual responses if the cases were real. Nevertheless, we have given a generic answer, giving a definition of the problem and possible solutions.

Problem 1: Losing focus, drifting discussion

During a lively group discussion you notice that the members are beginning to drift away from the topic of focus.

- *Politely intervene and point out the drifting tendency. Call the members back to the topic. Determine if the group wishes to change direction and pursue the new topic and schedule if for the future. It is also possible that the members did not understand the topic.*

Problem 2: Personal opinion projected as group opinions

One member has a tendency to speak for the whole koinonia, saying things like, "We all know that..." "Nobody believes that..."

- *Often a friendly reminder to speak only for oneself is sufficient.*

Problem 3: Failure to recognize a member's contribution

A koinonia member asks a question, but the others move on without giving consideration to the question.

- *Call the group back to the unresolved question. Seek an answer or determine how and when an answer can be pursued (perhaps outside of the group). Affirm the questioner even though the question may not be appropriate.*

Problem 4: Unbalanced participation

The group consists of twelve members, yet only four people take an active part in the discussion.

- *Here are three of many alternatives: Divide the members into smaller groups to discuss the issue, and question them by saying, "Let's hear from someone else who hasn't commented yet." It is often recommended to ask the silent members direct questions. Another is to avoid asking question until the koinonia is well established and a high comfort level exists.*

Problem 5: Hostility toward a person's idea

A koinonia member verbally attacks a suggestion given by another member.

- *Interrupt tactfully. Affirm the right to disagree. Remind both individuals of the participation standards outline in the koinonia covenant (page 22 of this manual). Suggest whatever restitution is necessary to calm feelings.*

Problem 6: Violent disagreement turns into a combative situation

Two koinonia members become engaged in a heated argument.

- *Shoot them both...just kidding. Intervene, follow the four-step strategy for problem solving: Recognize the problem; put people at ease and deal with the problem not personalities; Clarify the exact nature of the problem and pursuing potential solution; Resolve by selecting the best alternative solution and put into action. Remind the group of their covenant in page 22. If necessary deal with the situation another time outside of the koinonia meeting.*

Problem 7: Member dominates group discussion

A certain koinonia member is prone to answer all questions and give comments on all issues.

- *Talk with the person in private. Ask for his assistance in allowing others to participate. In extreme cases, while affirming the value of his participation, ask the person to consciously limit his verbal responses.*

Problem 8: Members' lack group etiquette

Two close friends always sit together and have numerous side discussions.

- *Redirect the two members' attention to the group activity. Ask them to share their insights with the whole group. Set up physical conditions that prevent them from sitting together. Break into subgroup to separate them. Talk with each of them outside of the meeting, if their behavior persists.*

Problem 9: Inappropriate timing and use of humor

One koinonia member (the life of the party) is able to find humor in any situation and loudly shares it with everyone.

- *Talk with the person in private. He may not realize the problem he's creating. You'll probably need to have more than one private discussion.*

Problem 10: Poor attendance

It has been three meetings since a normally active koinonia member has been in attendance.

- *Contact the person on the telephone. Determine the cause for being absent. If the reason is legitimate, express concern, ask if assistance is needed, and state your anticipation of the person's return. If the reason is questionable, remind the member of the group covenant, express a desire for active participation, and highlight the person's importance in the group.*

Problem 11: Disagreement over activity

The koinonia member cannot agree on the details of a proposed outing.

- *Look for a compromise solution. Compromise is legitimate when issues of choice are at stake, but not in matters of doctrine. If a compromise cannot be reached, postpone the decision and look for other alternatives.*

Problem 12: Inappropriate expectations

Regardless of the topic, this koinonia member is able to turn the discussion of his pet interest, his problems.

- *Talk with the person outside the group. Explore the possibility of securing counseling with you or with the pastor. Encourage the other members to support this member outside the koinonia meetings.*

Problem 13: Conflict over personal behavior

The koinonia is angry with a member who is constantly negative in her comments and assessment of people's attitude and contributions.

- *Have the group gently confront the person with her behavior. Care must be exercised to avoid the appearance of attacking the member. Review the applicable items within the group covenant. Some type of interaction with the person outside the koinonia meetings is likely.*

In a Koinonia - "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. But if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him." (James 1:2-5).