

# Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love

**"Making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph.4:3), as both individual members and the body of Christ, we pledge that we shall:**

## In Thought

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| Accept conflict  | 1. Acknowledge together that conflict is a normal part of our life in the church. <i>Romans 14:1-8, 10-12, 17-19; 15:1-7</i>   |
| Affirm hope      | 2. Affirm that as God walks with us in conflict, we can work through to growth. <i>Ephesians 4:15-16</i>   |
| Commit to prayer | 3. Admit our needs and commit ourselves to pray for a mutually satisfactory solution (no prayers for my success or the other to change but to find a joint way). <i>James 5:16</i> |

## In Action

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| Go to the other...           | 4. Go directly to those with whom we disagree; avoid behind-the-back criticism.* <i>Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15-20</i>  |
| ...in the spirit of humility | 5. Go in gentleness, patience and humility. Place the problem between us at neither doorstep and own our part in the conflict instead of pointing out the others'. <i>Galatians 6:1-5</i>  |
| Be quick to listen           | 6. Listen carefully, summarize and check out what is heard before responding. Seek as much to understand as to be understood. <i>James 1:19; Proverbs 18:13</i>  |
| Be slow to judge             | 7. Suspend judgments, avoid labeling, end name calling, discard threats and act in a nondefensive, nonreactive way. <i>Romans 2:1-4; Galatians 5:22-26</i>   |
| Be willing to negotiate      | 8. Work through the disagreements constructively. <i>Acts 15; Philippians 2:1-11</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify issues, interests, and needs of both (rather than take positions).</li> <li>• Generate a variety of options for meeting both parties' needs (rather than defending one's own way).</li> <li>• Evaluate options by how they meet the needs and satisfy the interests of all sides (not one side's values).</li> <li>• Collaborate in working out a joint solution (so both sides gain, both grow and win).</li> <li>• Cooperate with the emerging agreement (accept the possible, not demand your ideal).</li> <li>• Reward each other for each step forward, toward agreement (celebrate mutuality).</li> </ul> |

## In Life

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| Be steadfast in love  | 9. Be firm in our commitment to seek a mutual solution; be stubborn in holding to our common foundation in Christ; be steadfast in love. <i>Colossians 3:12-15</i>  |
| Be open to mediation  | 10. Be open to accept skilled help. If we cannot reach agreement among ourselves, we will use those with gifts and training in mediation in the larger church. <i>Philippians 4:1-3</i>   |
| Trust the community   | 11. We will trust the community and if we cannot reach agreement or experience reconciliation, we will turn the decision over to others in the congregation or from the broader church. <i>Acts 15</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In one-to-one or small group disputes, this may mean allowing others to arbitrate.</li> <li>• In congregational, conference district or denominational disputes, this may mean allowing others to arbitrate or implementing constitutional decision-making processes, insuring that they are done in the spirit of these guidelines, and abiding by whatever decision is made.</li> </ul> |
| Be the body of Christ | 12. Believe in and rely on the solidarity of the Body of Christ and its commitment to peace and justice, rather than resort to the courts of law. <i>1 Corinthians 6:1-6</i>  |