



Family Conflict Assistance

Overview

Conciliation services in a family (and marriage) context are designed to help family members to biblically address the uniqueness of family conflict. While very desirous of reconciliation, those in highly conflicted or 'stuck' families often find their attempts at lasting and peaceful resolution ineffective.

Discouraged that they cannot live peacefully with someone they love so much, family members are often tempted to give up, continue attacking, go away, just endure the conflict, or be estranged. Applying the hope of the Gospel and principles of biblical conflict resolution, Conciliation provides hope and practical help to families.

Conciliation immediately brings change to the dynamic of conflict and communication in a situation. Because families can be very private relationships, these immediate changes may be even more redemptively impactful. The presence of conciliators changes the way people talk about their conflict as well as brings the hope, skills, and faith of the conciliators into the dynamic of the conflicts.

Often, the importance of relationship in the family has exponentially impacted the extent of the depth and pain of the conflict. In family conciliation, the parties are assisted to see clearly and beyond the entangling dynamics and perspectives that have developed. Conciliators help the parties to see how that importance of the relationship can aid them in resolving the current significant conflicts and equip the parties to resolve future conflicts as well.

While resolving both relational and substantive issues within the conciliation, the individuals also learn how to resolve their conflicts biblically on their own. They learn to listen for and value the interests of one another, how to reconcile offenses, and build trust and conflict resolution skills that will benefit them in the future.

Family conciliation is solution oriented, primarily dealing directly with very

specific conflicts, but it also includes understanding the history, priorities, and values of the parties and their relationships. Conciliation with couples or families does provide some insight to the why's and how's of relational dynamics, heart issues, attitudes, behaviors, and interests held by parties. It is not, however, deep counseling or psychotherapy and any issues discovered or encountered will not be treated during the conciliation.

Those insights are reflected in the summary and plan that the family develops during the conciliation process. Family members are assisted in developing a summary and plan that reflects their own unique stories and challenges. The plan usually includes changes in communication, personal growth for those involved, setting clear expectations, and steps to accomplish mutually agreed upon goals, among other things. That plan could include counseling or therapy for issues that may come to light during the conciliation process.

Other family members are encouraged to enter into family mediation with an assumption that they will need to change and need to work to see one another's perspective. For conciliation to work best, there must be honest and open conversation from all parties involved, with a willingness to be vulnerable where you have been misunderstood and hurt.

Redeeming our family conflicts can be the most complicated and difficult of all relationships. However, the family is the first place we are called to live in unity and reflect that we are His children.

Description of Intensive Process

Family relationships are unique in many ways. So also, is the type of assistance necessary to adequately match the needs of those with significant family issues. A Family-Intensive is designed to address these unique needs.

We use two Christian Conciliators in Family Intensives. We always use a male and a female. Family Intensives always involve both spouses of couples, and as many of the nuclear and immediate family members willing to participate. It is a voluntary process. We do, however, encourage the involvement of all adult family members for the most effective results. Teenagers and younger children can be included, but under careful consideration and guidance.

We believe in biblical counseling and conciliation. Conciliation is a process of providing biblical counsel regarding specific conflict issues, not licensed or professional counseling. The immediate goal of biblical counseling is to help people gain insight into their situation and life, in light of God's Word and His purposes. In order to address root problems, we help family members identify and attend to their heart issues in a safe and supportive environment.

Redemptive counsel may include both words of compassion and loving confrontation in an atmosphere of trust, encouragement, and respect. The ultimate goal of biblical counseling is to help others grow in faith, knowledge, and love for Jesus Christ as He increasingly transforms them into His likeness.

Because we believe the Bible is the Word of God concerning faith and life, the principles used in biblical counseling are based on Scripture. We are committed to reflect the character and grace of Jesus Christ in all we do. Foundational is our belief that God has created all mankind in His image and for His glory. We find information gained through medical sources, social science research, and psychology often helpful in identifying problems and appropriate interventions. However, all interventions must meet the criteria of biblical faithfulness.

We are committed to do everything possible to guard any information family members entrust to us. It is important to recognize, however, that we are unable to guarantee confidentiality, even when we maintain the strictest confidence, due to the nature of third-party involvement. There are times when we are legally required and/or biblically obligated to share information with others. Such exceptions to confidentiality include, but are not limited to, situations where:

- We are informed of alleged or suspected child or elder abuse or neglect committed by or experienced by the client or by a specifically identified individual;
- The client is a perceived threat to themselves or others;
- The conciliator is subpoenaed and ordered by a judge to testify or release client information;
- A parent or legal guardian of an individual under the age of 18 requests information about the child; and/or
- We discern the need to discuss a party's situation with their denominational and/or churches' governing elders/pastors for the

purposes of providing assistance.

In these situations, we make our best effort to help our clients act according to what we understand to be in their best interests. Where possible, we attempt to discuss the situation with our clients and obtain informed consent to release information before any action is taken. We may also confidentially consult with appropriate professional colleagues to seek greater wisdom in order to provide our clients with the best possible counsel.

If we suspect that there may be a medical component to a client's problem, we may request an evaluation by their personal physician or a specialist. In some situations, counseling may be contingent upon this medical evaluation. Because a person's physical body and spirit are intricately connected, it is unwise to neglect one or the other in the process of counseling.

Guidelines for the conciliation include:

- If participants are not benefiting from the intensive, or if they have failed to establish a strong working relationship, the conciliators will provide them with one or more referrals that may better serve their needs.
- Any participant is free to leave the intensive at any time. We only request that the person leaving share this decision with the conciliators and allow the conciliators to understand the reason for leaving.
- Participants acknowledge that they are not receiving licensed professional counseling from the conciliators, even though one or more may have a counseling background or experience.

The Intensive work includes four essential steps or phases describe below.

1. **Initial interviews with each participating family member.** Couples are asked to speak with the conciliators as a couple and as individuals. The initial interviews are focused on allowing the participant(s) to understand the process and ask questions, provide the conciliators with information to assist the conciliators to understand each person's story and experience, and provide the conciliators with the individual's concerns and issues for discussion with the family and their perspective regarding the same. The interviews are usually conducted by video

conference, and require approximately 2 hours per interview. The information from these interviews help the conciliators frame the specific needs for preparation (#2 below), as well as suggest the format of the recommended assisted conversations involving family members.

2. **Preparation coaching and assignment of preparation work.** Each family member will be requested to read *The Peacemaker* and other selected resources, selected scripture, and to consider questions from the readings as they apply to the specific issues within the family. This preparation work is usually assigned after the initial interviews and conducted over a 3 - 4 week period immediately prior to the scheduled intensive (#3 below). During this preparation, the conciliators will conduct 2 - 3 video conferences with each participant to review their preparation and provide coaching as they prepare to meet together.
3. **3 - 5 day intensive with 2 conciliators.** The actual length is determined after initial intake to accommodate the need of the family members and the issues raised. The intensive is designed to allow the family members to focus on their relationships and to discuss the same with a depth and completeness that is not possible in shorter meetings over an extended period of time. The conciliators work with the family to identify both a location and time where the intensive can occur over the consecutive days with minimal distraction or interruption from family or work responsibilities.
4. **Preparation of and carrying out a restoration plan over the months and years following the intensive.** During the intensive, we will help the family identify specific steps that can be taken post-intensive to rebuild the trust and relationships between family members, based on the reconciliation which occurs during the intensive from repentance, confession, and forgiveness between individuals.

This plan often includes identifying third parties such as counselors and spiritual advisors who can assist the family members in a more traditional counseling model, helping them address areas they have identified as requiring on-going assistance. The plan can also include planned meetings with the conciliators, over the subsequent 12 - 18 months for follow up and assistance as the steps are followed.

Fees & Expenses

Fees and expenses are estimated and provided to the participants upon advising your desire to proceed. Payment of the estimated fees and expenses provided by CRG are required to be paid in advance, upon acceptance of the proposal, to be held as a retainer for fees and expenses actually incurred. If costs or fees exceed the estimate, parties are advised and ask to pay any additional amounts upon request at the end of the intensive. Any unused retainer funds are refunded to the parties. Parties often share these fees and expenses. We will assist you in reaching an agreement for the sharing of the fees and expenses.

All payments for fees or retainers are to be made by check payable to "CRG" and mailed to Crossroads Resolution Group; 2030 Holman Street; Portland, OR 97211.

Guidelines and Cancellation Policy

Please carefully read the [Handbook for Christian Conciliation](#).

All aspects of the intensive are governed by and conducted in accordance with the *Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation* which you can find on page 18 of the *Handbook for Christian Conciliation* referenced above. These Rules are incorporated herein by reference as if set forth in their entirety.

Cancellation

If you cancel a scheduled visit at least six weeks prior to the visit you will be reimbursed for the full amount minus the \$1,000 fee for Case Administration and document preparation.

Any cancellation less than six weeks prior to a visit will result in Crossroads and its conciliators, incurring costs and time, which cannot be otherwise reimbursed. Therefore, if the scheduled visit is cancelled between four and six weeks prior to the scheduled visit you will be responsible for the \$1,000 Case Administration fee plus \$400 per day for the number of days of the visit. The balance of the Retainer fee will be held by Crossroads for a re-scheduled visit, to be determined by you. If the visit is not rescheduled

within 8 weeks, the balance of the retainer will be returned to you. If you elect to not reschedule, the remainder of the retainer will be returned upon request.

If the scheduled visit is cancelled less than four weeks prior to the visit you will be responsible for the \$1,000 Case Administration fee, all non-refundable, out-of-pocket expenses incurred by Crossroads, the full amount of fees to be paid to the Lead Conciliator, and 50% of the fees to be paid to all other team members. The balance of the Retainer fee will be held by Crossroads for a re-scheduled visit, to be determined by you. If the visit is not rescheduled within 8 weeks, the balance of the retainer will be returned to you. If you elect to not reschedule, the remainder of the retainer will be returned upon request.

Upon rescheduling a visit, a new proposal and estimate of cost will be agreed to by you and Crossroads Resolution Group.