



Marriage and Family Conciliation Services

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

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

Conciliation immediately brings change to the dynamic of conflict and communication in a situation. Because families and marriages 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 in to the dynamic of the conflicts.

Often, the importance of relationship in marriage and family has exponentially impacted the extent of the depth and pain of the conflict. In marriage or 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 relationship can aid them in resolving the current significant conflicts and equipping 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 how to listen for and value the interests of one another, reconcile offenses, build trust, and apply conflict resolution skills that will benefit them in the future.

Marriage and 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 whys and hows 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 couple or family develop during the conciliation process. Spouses and 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.

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

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