

How Strong Church Communities Handle Conflict

Acts 15:1-6

“Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: ‘Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.’² This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So, Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question.³ The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the believers very glad.⁴ When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.⁵ Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, ‘The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses.’⁶ The apostles and elders met to consider this question.”

Strong church communities are ones that have people who are devoted to the Word of God, have strong fellowship, and pray with and for one another (Acts 2:42).

Strong church communities demonstrate both an ability and willingness to address problems as they arise (Acts 6:1-7).

Strong church communities are built with strong leaders (Acts 11:19-26)

Strong church communities handle conflict when it occurs.

I.

Conflict often arises in churches when dissenting voices rise up and try to influence the people. (vs. 1).

Listening to dissenting voices will not only bring conflict but will eventually lead to division in strong churches.

1 Corinthians 1:10-12 (NLT) says, *“I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. **Let there be no divisions in the church.** Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.¹¹ For some members of Chloe’s household have told me about your quarrels, my dear brothers and sisters.¹² Some of you are saying, ‘I am a follower of Paul.’ Others are saying, ‘I follow Apollos,’ or ‘I follow Peter,’ or ‘I follow only Christ.’”*

Ultimately, listening to dissenting voices can also lead to destruction.

Consider: *Genesis 3:1-5*

II.

In order to protect the church community, dissenting voices and conflict must be confronted.

Acts 15:2a (NIV) says, *“This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them”*.

When members of the church community are unsure of how to address the conflict, it is always wise to take the matter to your leaders.

Acts 15:2b (MSG) says, *“The church decided to resolve the matter by sending Paul, Barnabas, and a few others to put it before the apostles and leaders in Jerusalem.”*

III.

Leaders of strong churches listen intently to the conflict before making any decisions.

Acts 15:6 (NIV) says, *“⁶ The apostles and elders met to consider this question.”*

Leaders of strong churches use the Word of God to determine how best to resolve the conflict.

Acts 15:15 (CEB) says, *“¹⁵ The prophets’ words agree with this; as it is written....”*

Acts 15:19 (CEB) says, *¹⁹ “Therefore, I conclude that we shouldn’t create problems for Gentiles who turn to God.*

As a strong church community, we must work to resolve any current known conflicts in Rhema Christian Center.