



Deacons Should Steer Church Members Away from Conflict

written by Communications Department,
LifeWay Church Resources

Leadership and Life
Development

Florida Baptist
Convention

1230 Hendricks Ave
Jacksonville, FL
32207

800.226.8584,
Extension 3070
rsaint@flbaptist.org

Rick Wheeler,
Director

Roy Lee Saint,
Associate Director

Lewis Miller,
Associate Director

A Cooperative Program
Ministry of the Florida
Baptist Convention



Deacons should serve as agents for settling conflict in the church, not jump in the middle of it. You have to help the church regain its sense of direction and purpose. And you can't be a part of the conflict if you are mediating it. Deacons and all church members should realize that God is bigger than any single conflict. The work of God will go on with or without our help. Still, a church in harmony is more effective in evangelizing a lost world.

Today's leaders could get some pointers from what those in the early church did to resolve conflict. First, they listened to their people. In any conflict situation, the key is to listen.

The early leaders also took people and their needs seriously. Something might not be a crisis to you, but it is to some people.

Third, they built flexibility into the system. Sometimes we are too rigid in our approaches or thoughts. In a world of change, we have to make changes. Conflict can sometimes alert us that we need to make that change. There can be something positive to conflict. At least someone is concerned about something so much they become agitated about it.

There are three types of conflict: intrapersonal, interpersonal and substantive.

Intrapersonal conflict begins within an individual and might include feelings of frustration, confusion, unrest or guilt. Some symptoms of intrapersonal conflict include:

- The same person causes conflict over and over.
- This person is encountering problems in his or her life.
- The person is going through development stages or passages in life.
- The person is experiencing stress.
- The person is physically or emotionally unstable.

Interpersonal conflict is between two or more people and can grow out of intrapersonal conflict. It's not based on issues as much as it is on what one person or group thinks and feels about another. Sometimes it includes conflict that has been taken care of in the past.

Deacons Should Steer Church Members Away from Conflict

written by Communications Department,
LifeWay Church Resources

Symptoms of interpersonal conflict include:

- **Withdrawal.** Those involved avoid each other.
- **Rationalization.** Those involved try to explain each other by theories and thereby explain their dislike or inability to be in accord.
- **Denial.** Those involved refuse to acknowledge conflict exists.
- **Fight behavior.** Differences erupt into personal attacks, name calling, and such. When it gets to fight behavior, it's gotten to full blown trouble.

Please contact the **Leadership and Life Development Department**
for further information. ~ 800.226.8584 extension 3018 ~
rsaint@flbaptist.org ~ www.flbaptist.org



*A Cooperative Program Ministry
of the Florida Baptist Convention*