

Setting Boundaries in Love

Presbyterian Women Churchwide Gathering

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Workshop Leader: Cindy Kohlmann

Overview

- Open with Prayer**
- Introductions**
- Scriptural Foundation**
- Book of Order Guidance**
- Setting and Maintaining Loving Boundaries**
- Wrap Up/Closing**



**NO HAMMOCKING
IN THE GAZEBO.**

Prayer

Introductions



- Speaker
- Subject

Scriptural Foundations

- Boundaries in the Bible: examples**
- Purpose for those boundaries**
- Consequences when boundaries are violated/ignored**

Scripture: Examples

- Garden of Eden: do not eat the fruit from one tree
- Covenant with Abram: walk before me and be blameless
- Ten Commandments and Levitical law
- Isaiah: learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow. (Isaiah 1:17)
- Guidance on how to address harm or wrongdoing (Matthew 18:15-17)
- Jesus taking time to rest/pray

Scripture: Purpose

- To maintain the goodness of creation
- To order how we live within community
- To protect those who are most vulnerable
- To be an example and witness to God's grace
- To manifest the beloved community here on earth
- To care for personal needs so that we are able to respect boundaries

Scripture: Consequences

Often terrible consequences in Biblical stories

Driven out of the Garden

Death and conquest

Broken relationships and broken covenants

Removal from the community

Divine judgment

Book of Order Guidance

- Boundaries in the Book of Order: examples**
- Purpose for those boundaries**
- Consequences when boundaries are violated/ignored**

Book of Order: Examples

- F-1.0302b** The holiness of the Church comes from Christ who sets it apart to bear witness to his love...
- F-3.0102** ...every Christian Church... is entitled to declare the terms of admission into its communion...
- G-1.0302** A congregation shall welcome all persons who trust in God's grace in Jesus Christ and desire to become part of the fellowship and ministry of his Church.
- G-1.0303** Membership... is also a commitment to participate in Christ's mission. A faithful member bears witness to God's love and grace and promises to be involved responsibly in the ministry of Christ's Church.
- D-1.0301** The purpose of church discipline is to honor God by making clear the significance of membership in the body of Christ...

Book of Order: Purpose

- F-1.0304** The great ends of the Church are... the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God...
- G-3.0101** The particular responsibility of the councils of the church is to nurture, guide, and govern those who witness as part of the PC(USA)...
- G-3.0103** The councils of the church shall give full expression to the rich diversity of the church's membership and shall provide for full participation and access to representation in decision-making and employment practices...
- G-3.0201c** ...warning and bearing witness against error in doctrine and immorality in practice within the congregation and community...

Book of Order: Consequences

- G-3.0106 All councils shall adopt and implement the following policies...**
- D-2.0101 Church discipline in the PC(USA) is accomplished through judicial processes of accountability.**
- D-2.0301 Disciplinary process is the process by which active members of congregations and ministers of the Word and Sacrament are held accountable to the church and to each other, and may be censured for an offense for the purpose of restoring the wholeness of the body of Christ.**

Setting and Maintaining Loving Boundaries

- Examples
- Purpose
- Consequences

Loving Boundaries: Examples

Sexual Misconduct Prevention Policy

Harassment Prevention Policy

Child and Youth Protection Policy

Antiracism Policy

Required training for members every thirty-six months

Guidelines for handling finances including counting the offering

Loving Boundaries: Purpose

- To protect those who are vulnerable both within the congregation and within the larger community
- To create as safe a space as possible where people can expect to be free from bullying, harassment, or other forms of harmful behavior
- To protect those in leadership, including ruling elders, deacons, teachers, treasurers, any one with a level of authority in the church
- To have the church more clearly reflect the kingdom of God, the body of Christ, in word and deed

Loving Boundaries: Consequences

- Creating clear consequences for harmful behavior**
- Using the provisions of Church Discipline as a guide and resource when harmful behavior continues or is egregious**
- Being clear that welcoming everyone does not mean tolerating harmful words or actions/inactions**
- Equipping the leadership to respond to instances of harm with prayerful, firm, loving confrontation**

Wrap Up

- Boundaries are focused on protecting the vulnerable in order to create a whole and healthy body of Christ**
- When wondering if a boundary should be challenged, identify who it is seeking to protect, those already in power or those outside of that power**
- We have a mandate to set faithful boundaries, respect them, and uphold the consequences for breaking them in all levels of the church**



Closing Prayer