

PEACEMAKER GUIDELINES

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Table of Content

1. Purpose	1
2. Scope	1
3. Principles	2
4. Peacemaker Guidelines	3
4.1 Step 1: Reflect on the conflict	3
4.2 OPTIONAL STEP: Seek wisdom and accountability	3
4.3 Step 2: Initiate an informal one-on-one conversation	4
4.4 Step 3: Initiate a formal one-on-one conversation, bring a witness	4
4.5 Step 4: Formal Church Mediation	5
4.10 Step 5: Formal Church Investigation	6

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Crossroads Christian Church (Crossroads) is committed to fostering an environment where everyone enjoys close fellowship with one another. However, Christians must wrestle with being in an imperfect relationship with one another while they wait for Jesus to come back to restore all of creation into right relationship with God. It is therefore not surprising to see that close fellowship between Christians would sometimes breed interpersonal conflict.
- 1.2 In prayerful dependence on God, Crossroads has a responsibility to foster a culture of repentance, reconciliation, and relational restoration amongst its people wherever possible.
- 1.3 Through God's word, this document¹ equips individuals in Crossroads with godly principles and a Biblical process that they can use to resolve conflict and restore relations in the church.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The principles and steps outlined in this document were drafted to help all Crossroads members in pursuing relational restoration.
- 2.2 Crossroads members are advised to tailor this process to their own specific needs and circumstances. They may wish to consult a pastor or Safe Ministry Supervisor for wisdom on how to do this.
- 2.3 If an individual starts this process, they are advised to follow through with the process in a caring and quick manner so that the situation does not escalate and negatively impact the wider Crossroads family. As a general rule, conflicts should be resolved on the same level as they occur.
- 2.4 This document should be applied to all types of conflict that occur in Crossroads with the exception of:

¹ Parts of this document were adapted from Christ Community Church's peacemaking document. We're grateful for their support and wisdom.

- a. alleged breach of Crossroads' official policies or guidelines² by someone bound to those documents. In such cases, Crossroads' formal investigation mechanisms will apply; and
- b. alleged criminal conduct³. In such cases, relevant law enforcement investigations and proceedings will apply.

3. Principles

- 3.1 Crossroads recommends the principles below as a helpful way Christians should pursue conflict resolution.
- 3.2 **Accept conflict and repent.** Do not ignore the fact that conflict has happened. Acknowledge it. Take time to reflect on how you and the other party contributed to the conflict. Remember that, in conflict, Christians aim to repent, reconcile, and eventually restore the relationship with our sisters and brothers-in-Christ.
- 3.3 **Run to God.** Humbly pray to God for wisdom and help in the conflict. Your goal is not to make amends as quickly as possible, but to glorify God as much as possible through the restoration process. We believe that through the Holy Spirit, God is able to heal deep divisions between His children.
- 3.4 **Give grace.** Christians are called to extend Christ' grace, forgiveness and love to everyone, including those who have wronged us. However we cannot use grace as an excuse to compromise on the truth.
- 3.5 **Do it in Christian community.** Conflict resolution is best done amongst Christian community. Seek out mature Christian sisters and brothers for emotional and spiritual support, advice, accountability, and even mediation while the conflict persists.

² This includes, but is not limited to, Crossroads' Constitution, Staff Code of Conduct, Volunteer Code of Conduct, Safe Ministry Policy, Safe Ministry Guidelines, Domestic & Family Violence Policy, Work Health & Safety Policy, and Work Health & Safety Guidelines.

³ This includes past and present allegations of criminal conduct of any nature. Crossroads staff, volunteers, and congregants shall comply with any mandatory reporting requirements under the law.

4. Peacemaker Guidelines

4.1 Step 1: Reflect on the conflict

- a. Take this time to approach God in prayer and reflect on the conflict. Ask God for calm and wisdom as you reflect on the conflict.
- b. The following questions may be helpful to you:
 - i. What's the nature of your relationship with this person?
 - ii. What is the root of the conflict?
 - iii. How serious was the offence?
 - iv. What harm did you suffer?
 - v. Was the offence intentional or unintentional?
 - vi. Was it a repeated offence?
 - vii. What Biblical principles are relevant to this situation?
 - viii. How did you contribute to the conflict?
- c. Depending on your answers above, you may wish to consider whether it would be more appropriate to overlook the offense.

4.2 OPTIONAL STEP: Seek wisdom and accountability

- a. Oftentimes conflict resolution is best done with the support and advice of mature Christian brothers or sisters. We encourage you to engage a trusted Christian for wisdom, and also to keep you accountable to the truth of the gospel.
- b. This trusted Christian⁴ should be someone who can give you independent, Godly, Biblical, and wise advice, rather than someone who is aligned with your thoughts and feelings.
- c. Seeking wisdom and accountability must never be entangled with gossip or to gain sympathy - both are inappropriate. If you are asked to provide wisdom and accountability to another person, it is important that you ensure that they are willing to

⁴ Helpful suggestions include trusted Christian family members, friends from Growth Group, friends from church, Crossroads staff, or Safe Ministry Supervisors.

seek forgiveness and reconciliation from the person who offended them. Do not encourage gossip or social drama.

4.3 Step 2: Initiate an informal one-on-one conversation

- a. After seeking God's wisdom and reflecting on the conflict, you should reach out to the other person to see if they're able and willing to have an informal and private conversation about the conflict.
- b. Go into the conversation with an open and loving heart. Don't seek to win points over the person or to overpower them. Your goal is to calmly tell them how they offended you, understand their perspective, and be willing to receive (and give) an apology wherever appropriate. The end goal is to agree on a process of forgiveness and/or reconciliation.
- c. Remember that different people process events differently and, depending on the situation, multiple informal private conversations may be needed in order to resolve the conflict.
- d. If you're on the receiving end of this discussion, be quick to listen, slow to speak, and do your best to understand what this person is sharing. Try your best not to be defensive. If you need time to reflect on the conversation, ask for it. If you are able to understand and accept why you've offended them, apologise and seek forgiveness.
- e. If the other person is unwilling to resolve the conflict with you after the initial informal conversation, then proceed to Step 3.

4.4 Step 3: Initiate a formal one-on-one conversation, invite a witness

- a. If the other person is unwilling to resolve the conflict with you, then you are encouraged to ask the person if they are comfortable having a formal conversation with you in the presence of an agreed-upon third-party witness.
- b. This third party witness should be a mature Christian who is trusted by you and the other person. They should also be able to listen impartially to both sides of the conflict, and be un-biased in their opinion. Their goal is to record the conversation down and be able to provide Biblical, clear, wise, and loving advice to both persons during the conversation.

- c. For the sake of accountability, the third party witness is advised to inform one of Crossroads' Safe Ministry Supervisors or pastoral staff:
 - i. that a conflict has occurred between two persons;
 - ii. that they have been asked to act as a third-party witness to the two persons' formal conversation; and
 - iii. the outcome of the conversation and whether reconciliation is a possibility
- d. The third party should keep a confidential written record of the conversation, what occurred during the conversation, and any actions they took before, during, and after the conversation. If the conflict is resolved, no further action is required and the third party should destroy their written evidence after 12 months.
- e. If the conflict is unresolved after the formal conversation, you and the third party witness should proceed to Step 4.

4.5 Step 4: Formal Church Mediation

- 4.6 If the conflict is left unresolved after the formal conversation, you, the other person, and the third-party witness should approach a Safe Ministry Supervisor or pastoral staff together to request for formal pastoral mediation.
- 4.7 After a request has been made, a member of the Crossroads staff team will meet with all three of you, facilitate a discussion, and seek to mediate a mutually acceptable outcome for everyone. The staff member will listen to both sides of the conflict, provide Biblical mediatory advice, and present both parties with an opportunity for forgiveness and reconciliation.
- 4.8 If all parties consent, it may be helpful for the staff member to receive a copy of the third party witness' written records. After the conversation, the staff member will write a confidential report that can be shared amongst the three of you.
- 4.9 If reconciliation is agreed on, then no further action is needed. If reconciliation is not agreed on, then you, the other party, the third-party witness, and the staff member should proceed to Step 5.

4.10 **Step 5: Formal Church Investigation**

4.11 If reconciliation is not possible after following all steps in this document, all parties involved in the conflict may approach the church for formal mediation. This can either be done by talking to one of Crossroads' pastoral staff, or Safe Ministry Representatives, or by completing a Crossroads' [Incidents & Complaints Form](#).

4.12 You may read more on how formal church investigations are carried out in Crossroads' Incident Reporting & Complaints Policy.

4.13 A formal church investigation is the last step of this process, it refers to the formal investigation of the incident by the Crossroads Christian Church Council (or an appointed investigator). This process should not be chosen lightly. A formal church investigation will be taken seriously and information will be handled confidentially wherever reasonably possible.

4.14 An investigation should only be done if the following conditions have been met:

- a. after all steps in this document have been followed;
- b. with the consent of all parties involved in the conflict;
- c. if all parties involved agree to submit to the findings, deliberations, and determinations of the Crossroads Church Council;
- d. after all other possible avenues to achieve reconciliation have been exhausted; and
- e. after seeking God's wisdom and help through prayer.

4.15 It can be emotionally and spiritually discouraging to resort to a formal church investigation in order to reconcile with the other party. Crossroads recommends that both parties involved in the conflict reach out to a trusted Christian brother or sister that can provide emotional and spiritual support as they proceed with the last step.

4.16 After the investigation is complete, the findings will be presented to the Crossroads Christian Church Council. The Council will deliberate the

findings and determine what should be the most appropriate outcome for the conflict.

- 4.17 Should you and the other party disagree with the Council's decisions, you both are free to seek recourse under civil law. However, please be conscious of Peter's encouragement for believers to submit to the decisions of church elders (1 Peter 5:1-7); and of Paul's warnings against taking other Christian believers to court over civil matters (1 Corinthians 6:1-11).