

How to Restore a Friendship

Sermon Outline (Matthew 18:15-20 and Romans 13:8-14)

- I. Individuals and churches can be weakened/destroyed by gossip.
 - A. Everyone has gossiped or been a victim of gossip and has felt injured in a relationship.
 - B. What happens when persons A & B disagree?
 - 1. Can create a rift in their community.
 - 2. One may feel back-stabbed or ostracized.
 - C. As Christians we should follow Matthew 18:15-20.
 - 1. Person A seeks to restore the relationship w/B.
 - 2. Only 3 persons will know: Persons A, B & God.
 - 3. If more know, they'll take sides; disharmony occurs
 - 4. But, issue of Person B sinning against Person A, A may need to 1 or 2 others w/him to resolve conflict
 - 5. In the UMC we have SPRC to help resolve conflict
 - D. With an A/B scenario, must resolve not to gossip
- II. Speaking truth in love can stop erosion/build folks up in love.
 - A. What happened when my home church split in 2001?
 - 1. Lots of hurt feelings/scuttle butt resulted.
 - 2. Pastor/staff sought to keep them focused on mission.
 - 3. One page of newsletter about positive things heard.
 - 4. Instead of dwelling on past; positive future focus.
 - B. In Rom. 13: church should build one another up in love.
 - 1. Our continuing debt to love one another.
 - 2. Offer love, forgiveness & reconciliation to others.
 - 3. Put aside the "deeds of darkness" like dissension.
 - 4. Need Holy Spirit's help to love difficult people.
 - C. Among any group, bound to be hurt feelings at times.
 - 1. Some have a broad definition of gossip.
 - 2. Be careful how much info is shared for prayer.
 - D. When someone has a difficult medical diagnosis.
 - 1. Pastor Judy has openly shared about cancer issues
 - 2. Many don't want to share details of their issues.
 - E. So, we can restore a friendship by:
 - 1. Sharing about others in love/concern; not gossip.
 - 2. If needed-seeking forgiveness & reconciliation.