

# Seeking to be faithful together

## Guidelines for Presbyterians during times of disagreement

*Give them a hearing...  
listen before we answer*

**John 7:51 &  
Proverbs 18:13**

Treat each other respectfully so as to build trust, believing that we all desire to be faithful to Jesus Christ

- We will keep our conversations and communications open for candid and forthright exchange
- Learn about various positions on the topic of disagreement
- State what we think we heard and ask for clarification before responding, in an effort to be sure we understand each other

*Speak the truth  
in love*

**Ephesians 4:15**

Share our concerns directly with individuals or groups with whom we have disagreements in the spirit of love and respect in keeping with Jesus' teachings.

Focus on ideas and suggestions instead of questioning people's motives, intelligence or integrity

- We will not engage in name calling or labeling of others prior to, during or following the discussion

Share our personal experiences about the subject of disagreement so that others may more fully understand our concerns

*Maintain the unity  
of the spirit in the  
bond of peace*

**Ephesians 4:3**

Indicate where we agree with those of other viewpoints as well as where we disagree.

Seek to stay community with each other though the discussion may be vigorous and full of tension:

- We will be ready to forgive and be forgiven

Follow these additional guidelines when we meet in decision-making bodies:

- urge persons of various points of view to speak and promise to listen to these positions seriously;
- seek conclusions informed by our points of agreement;
- be sensitive to the feelings, concerns of those who do not agree with the majority and respect their rights of conscience;
- abide by the decision of the majority, and if we disagree with it and wish to change it, work for that change in ways which are consistent with the guidelines.

Include our disagreement in our prayers, not praying for triumph of our viewpoints, but seeking God's grace to listen attentively, to speak clearly, and to remain open to the vision God holds for all of us.