CTA Presents: Focus on Leadership

Conflict in the Church

**Introduction:** There are conflicts in every church, but most pastors are not trained in conflict resolution. You may be surprised—conflict can be very healthy for a church!

**Summary:**

In order to keep conflict healthy, churches need to get to the root issues of conflict, to see what’s really going on underneath the surface.

Causes of conflict:

* Fighting over control
* Power struggles
* Differing personalities
* Communication failures

Leaders: don’t insert yourself into the middle of a conflict. You may get tangled up in the negativity yourself!

Conflict resolution process:

* Start with honesty. “Nice is the enemy of truth and love.”
* Get honest feedback from everyone involved.
* Get documentation related to the conflict.
* Focus on biblical conflict-resolution principles.
* Conduct mediation with the individuals involved.
* Make a plan to move forward. There is still work to be done!
* Build a peacemaking team within the church.

How to avoid getting to an extreme point of conflict:

* In many churches, people are saying only 80 percent of what needs to be said. The last 20 percent of dialogue is the “hard conversation.” Churches need to have these hard conversations in healthy ways.

**Thought Starters:**

* Why does conflict often turn toward the negative in your church? Are there commonalities that arise in most conflicts?
* How can you teach biblical conflict resolution to your leaders and lay people?

**Resources:**

* *The* *Peacemaker: Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict* by Ken Sande
* John Richardson’s [Level Path Ministries](https://levelpathministries.com/)