

St. Paul's Vestry – Session #1 Materials

A workshop in 4 sessions

September 29, October 7, October 14, October 21

The Rev. Heather Barta
989-413-3229, revbarta@gmail.com

RESPECTful Communication Guidelines

Eric Law

<https://www.kscopeinstitute.org>

R = take RESPONSIBILITY for what you say and feel without blaming others

E = use EMPATHETIC listening

S = be SENSITIVE to differences in communication styles

P = PONDER on what you hear and feel before you speak

E = EXAMINE your own assumptions and perceptions

C = keep CONFIDENTIALITY

T = TRUST ambiguity because we are NOT here to debate who is right or wrong

1 Peter 3:8-9

NIV

⁸ Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. ⁹ Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

NRSV

⁸ Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. ⁹ Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing.

The Message

Summing up: Be agreeable, be sympathetic, be loving, be compassionate, be humble. That goes for all of you, no exceptions. No retaliation. No sharp-tongued sarcasm. Instead, bless—that's your job, to bless. You'll be a blessing and also get a blessing.

Mutual Invitation

Mutual invitation is process that allows the sharing of information by all parties present. The process gives each participant the opportunity to share or not, and provides a way to invite the next person to share. It is an excellent tool to use during Bible Studies, small groups, or meetings. It is especially helpful during meetings with groups in conflict or unequal power distribution.

The process:

The "first" person (determined during Bible Study as the person who reads the lesson) shares the information.

That person then invites the next person ("second")

This second person has 3 options:

- share
- pass
- pass for now

After the second person has shared (their comments or their desire to pass/for now), that person invites a "third." NOTE: regardless of the choice, the person speaking always invites the next person. If the second person has chosen to pass, s/he still invites the next speaker, the first person does not take back the role of "invitor."

And it goes around until every person has had an opportunity to share.

If any person had chosen "pass for now" then that person will need to be invited before the process is completed.

This process can then be repeated, or general conversation can occur. The group/moderator can choose the most appropriate action.

Notes:

- a person invited is the only person speaking. If there is someone who would like to comment, s/he needs to save comments until his/her turn, or until the next round.
- The word "invited" is the most appropriate word for the calling on the next person.

Notes by Heather Barta, August 22, 2009.

*Paraphrasing the process used by Kaleidoscope Institute: <http://www.ladiocese.org/ki>
Any errors on this page are the error of Heather and not of Eric Law or those who publish his books.*

Family Systems Theory: The Congregation as a System Handout 1

Draw a “picture” of your church system.

- Include ministry groups like vestry, altar guild, choir, and staff.
- Be sure to include yourself in the picture.
- Show how the ministry groups relate to each other:
 - What are the connections?
 - Are they in close communication or distant?
 - Are they conflicted?
 - Do their ministries overlap and how?
 - Who is their liaison? Contact person? Communicator?
- Does the former clergy person appear in the picture? Where?
- What groups might be unique to your particular church system?
- Have you included the church staff and its connections to groups?
- Are there groups on the outside of the church system that influence the function of your congregation?
- What is your relationship to these groups?