

How Should Our Churches Treat Homosexuals?
New York/New Jersey Meetings
February 18 & 20, 2015

Cautionary Note:

Today's topic of discussion is highly controversial and divisive. In fact I expect that we, as a group, will be unable to find an answer we can all agree on in response to today's discussion question. But, that is okay. It is okay because as mature Christians we do not always have to agree on every subject matter. Proof of that can be seen in the fact that denominations exist. Thus, in spite of whatever differences may emerge from today's discussion, let us remember the following three rules:

1. ALWAYS respect your fellow co-laborer, especially when you disagree with his/her point-of-view
2. Understand that any point-of-view espoused today may yet change or evolve over time
3. In areas where agreement cannot be found, let us agree to disagree and leave the rest to God

Discussion Questions:

1. In the handout "Christianity and Homosexuality" the author lists the Bible verses that relate to relationships between same sex couples.
 - a. Are you aware of any verses that have been omitted and included in this list?
 - b. From your understanding of these passages, are sexual relationships between same sex couples a sin and forbidden by God? Does anyone see these verses saying otherwise?
2. I Corinthians 6:10 continues the list began in verse 9 "...nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God." Here, the practice of homosexuality is one of many sins precluding one from inheriting God's kingdom.
 - a. From your understanding of this list, is homosexuality a worse, the same or a lesser sin than the other sins mentioned here? Explain your position.
 - b. If the same:
 - i. How did the practice of homosexuality become such a prominent sin?
 - ii. Do you agree or disagree with its prominence?
 - iii. How did/does the prominence of homosexuality impact Christianity?
3. The handout "Christianity and Homosexuality" also lists the views of various denominations.
 - a. Does the range of views on homosexuality surprise you?
 - b. Did the view of any particular denomination surprise you?
 - c. Which denominational view do you feel the most comfortable with? Which the least?
4. In the article, "Leaving My Lesbian Past" Charlene Hios shares how College Park Baptist Church (CPBC) welcomed her.
 - a. For those who may not have had the chance to read "Leaving My Lesbian Past" who can briefly summarize Charlene's story?
 - b. Do you agree or disagree with how CPBC approached Charlene?
 - c. What were some of the things CPBC did to help Charlene feel welcomed?
 - d. If Charlene were to visit your church today, would her experience match that of CPBC?
 - e. Some congregants at CPBC did not agree with the way Charlene was welcomed and left. If that were your church would you work to bring them back or, allow them to leave?
5. How Christians treat homosexuals in church is only one aspect of our interaction with them. How we treat them in the daily interactions of life is equally important.
 - a. How would you counsel a church member who had a room to rent and was approached by a homosexual about its availability? (Others....Baker, Photographer)
 - b. Do you believe that Christians should be politically active against homosexuality?