

5.6

Guidelines for Holy Conferencing – What God Expects of Us

- *Every person is a child of God. Always speak respectfully. One can disagree without being disagreeable.
- *As you patiently listen and observe the behavior of others, be open to the possibility that God can change the views of any or all parties in the discussion.
- *Listen patiently before formulating responses.
- *Strive to understand the experience out of which others have arrived at their views.
- *Be careful in how you express personal offense at differing opinions. Otherwise dialogue may be inhibited.
- *Accurately reflect the views of others when speaking. This is especially important when you disagree with that position.
- *Avoid using inflammatory words, derogatory names, or an excited and angry voice.
- *Avoid making generalizations about individuals and groups. Make your point with specific evidence and examples.
- *Make use of facilitators and mediators.
- *Remember that people are defined, ultimately, by their relationship with God--not by the flaws we discover, or think we discover, in their views and actions.

We believe Christians can discuss important issues without the acrimonious debate and parliamentary maneuvering that can divide a group into contending factions. We see too many examples of that in secular society. We believe the Holy Spirit leads in all things, especially as we make decisions. We want to avoid making decisions in a fashion that leaves some feeling like winners and others like losers.

We can change the world through honest conversation on matters about which we are passionate.