

Emmanuel Church Wimbledon

Guidance for those engaging in 1:1 activity

Biblical context

Discipleship has always been a fundamental part of the Christian life. Jesus told his disciples to:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28: 19-20).

Jesus himself engaged not only in public ministry to whole groups, but also in 1:1 instruction and conversation on numerous occasions (e.g. Nicodemus in John 3 & the woman at the well in John 4), and he ministered in people's homes (e.g. Luke 4: 38-40, 8:40-56, 10:38-42).

We see the same pattern in the New Testament church (e.g. Acts 18:26) along with a concern for doctrinal purity (e.g. 1 Timothy 1:3, Titus 1:10-15)

Jesus offended the social norms by associating with those that society rejected (e.g. Matthew 8:1-4, 11:19).

The New Testament is clear that discipleship; including the correction of sinful behaviours or attitudes and the correction and challenge of doctrinal error, are fundamental parts of the Christian life.

Current context

The Christian life is just as counter-cultural today as it was in Biblical times, and cultural changes in the broader society have resulted in an ever-widening gap. Added to this, a broadening definition of abuse and increasing awareness of power dynamics and the causes and impact of trauma have resulted in greater concern about, and scrutiny of our practices as churches. Issues such as abuse of power, coercive control and emotional or psychological harm within the faith community are increasingly prominent.

Purpose

This document aims to provide practical guidance, rooted in biblical wisdom, for those engaging in pastoral care, discipleship and other 1:1 activity in the life of the church. This approach brings together the biblical principles and learning from both safeguarding reviews and best practice to provide an approach that:

- Protects those to whom we minister from harm and ensures that their wishes are respected, and their best interests are prioritised
- Provides a framework for 1:1 ministry that protects those in ministry from misunderstandings or inadvertent conduct that could cause or give the appearance of harm
- Contributes to providing appropriate accountability and transparency to both the individuals involved and also the gospel witness of the church

Scope

This policy applies to everyone who is officially involved in 1:1 activity with adults on behalf of ECW. Informal personal arrangements between adults are not covered since they are not ECW activities, however, the principles remain useful and valid in those contexts. The principles and code of conduct for working with children and young people are defined in the safeguarding policy.

Guidelines

Biblical principles

These principles apply to all 1:1 contact

- . As the people of God , we are to love justice and mercy and to live in humility and godliness(Micah 6:8)
- Treat each person with respect and uphold their inherent dignity and worth as those uniquely made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27, Psalm 139: 13-14)
- Ensure that the needs of the other person are foremost in your mind and work towards their best interests (Philippians 2:3-4)
- Respect the views and choices of the other person even if you disagree with them (Matthew 19:16-26, John 6:66)
- Speak the truth in love and with gentleness (1 Peter 3:15)
- Avoid putting yourself in the way of temptation (2 Timothy 2:22, 1 Corinthians 6:18, Galatians 6:1)
- Ensure that our ministry recognises that we will all stand before the judgement seat of the one who sees all things and who brings into the light that which is done in secret (2 Corinthians 5:10, Mark 4:21-25, Matthew 10:28)

Practical guidance

- . Attend safeguarding training on the frequency stipulated in the safeguarding policy
- Make sure that you clearly understand your role, the purpose and aims of the 1:1 contact and that expectations are clear on both sides
- Ensure that there is clear communication if either party feels that the relationship is not working or if anything is happening that they feel uncomfortable with or feel is not right. This should include who to speak to if the matter cannot be resolved between them
- Where possible and appropriate, meet in public space
- Ensure that any support provided should only be given to the extent and scope asked for by person receiving the support
- When delivering challenging or difficult messages, do so in a respectful, compassionate and gentle way that is in line with their best interests (including their emotional and spiritual wellbeing)
- Seek to ensure that the individual's right to question or ignore any advice or suggestions is fully understood
- Work in a transparent and responsible manner that ensures accountability to the church leaders and that is open to discussion , challenge and correction
- Maintain a state of vigilance to identify and report any safeguarding concerns, including concerns about people who may pose a risk to themselves or others
- Refrain from any abuse of your power or position and always seek to act in the best interest of the individual
- Only engage in activity for which you are physically and mentally fit
- Ensure that appropriate professional boundaries are maintained
- Ensure that any physical contact is led and controlled by the person being supported
- Ensure that proportionate physical intervention is only used as a last resort to ensure the safety of an individual or the group
- Do not engage in any sexualised, aggressive, humiliating, demeaning or discriminatory (etc) language or behaviour with them
- Act with fairness and treat each person equitably; avoiding discrimination or favouritism
- Seek to avoid any language or behaviour or adopting any attitude that could lead to misunderstanding or offence
- Remember: if something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't

If you are in any way unsure about the wisdom or appropriateness of a behaviour, or if you have any concerns at all, speak to one of the church leaders (or the Safeguarding Lead if appropriate) for advice and guidance