

THE CONFERENCE TABLE

DEFINITION: Structured use of the 4 Rules of Biblical Communication (Eph. 4:25-32)

- Be Honest (v. 25)
- Keep Current (vv. 26,27)
- Attack the Problem, Not the Person (vv. 29,30)
- Act, Don't React (vv. 31,32)

I. RATIONALE

- A. We have formed sinful habits
 - In times of stress, we will use them automatically
- B. We require structure to change
 1. Form new habits
 2. Communicate biblically
- C. The Conference Table provides that structure

II. GOALS

- A. Learn to communicate biblically
- B. Solve problems
 - First problem to solve is communication

III. ARRANGEMENTS

- A. Time
 1. Must be agreeable to both
 2. When there is least likelihood of interruption
 3. Best when not at your worst physically
- B. Place
 - Preferably not someplace used frequently

IV. RULES AND PROCEDURES

- A. Participants
 1. Whoever is involved in the conflict
 2. Husband-wife, parent-child, etc.
- B. Signal
 1. If a rule of communication is broken, raise your hand (or something nonverbal and nonthreatening)
 2. Then it becomes the other person's responsibility:
 - a. To identify it

- b. Ask forgiveness
 - c. Change (ask for help)
 - d. Resume communicating biblically
3. Each is to serve as a helpful coach, not as a condemning judge
 - a. Goal is NOT to see how many times you can catch each other
 - b. You are teammates to help each other learn of failure
 - c. Remember Mt. 7:3-5!

V. LEADERSHIP

1. Husband is responsible to call the conference -- at prearranged times
2. Either may request it at other times or in "emergency"

VI. WIFE KEEPS WRITTEN RECORD (BRIEF STATEMENTS AND OUTLINES):

1. Day and time
2. Topics discussed
3. Solutions reached
4. Steps to be taken to change
5. Topics not solved

VII. TOPICS

1. Begin by reading Eph. 4:25-32 and note the 4 Rules of Communication
2. Each prays briefly asking God to help you communicate biblically and solve problems
3. Alternate turns in bringing up matters to be discussed (Always focus on self first)
4. Deal with problems only at the conference table
5. Problems are to be discussed with a viewpoint towards obtaining a solution (Must be specific)
6. Keep goals (Paragraph II.) in mind

VI. LENGTH

1. Each session:
 - a. At least 15 min., no more than 30 min.
 - b. If no solution, put off until next time
 - c. If unable to agree, agree to disagree for now
2. Eventually, will begin to use principles automatically at other times