



Theology Pub May 15, 2018

"Civil War in the Church"

Discussion questions and Moderator: Robert Mumford

## Civil War in the Church

1) Quote from article:

*A civil war in the church is offensive to the gospel and a rejection of the ministry of Jesus Christ. Yet what do we see in many places? We see Christians who hate each other, who belittle and abuse one another, and who refuse to see any good thing in the person with whom they disagree.*

2) Do you agree? Disagree? Why? Why do you think someone would make this statement?

3) The article goes on to say:

*.....on issues of race and ethnicity, immigration, feminism and gender, guns and education there is a massive divergence of opinion in the USA.*

4) Let's take a poll. Question: Across the country do Christians react to each other as if they are on different sides of a war or members of just their own group (i.e. tribe)?

5) If you agree, are all these issues only related to politics?

6) If this is a war between factions of Christianity, how do we gauge who is winning?

7) The article goes on to list the signs of civil war in the general church:

- *Issues are presented as being of existential and/or eternal significance*
- *Inability to accommodate the needs of others*
- *Paralysis when resolving pressing problems*
- *Failure of empathy and imagination*
- *Impugning each other's motives*
- *Stop listening to alternative points of view*
- *Despising and dehumanizing who they imagine each other to be.*

8) Now let's share real life situations

9) So now let's talk about what you would do if someone in your church came up to you and said they were in favor of a coal dock in Longview, the border wall with Mexico, pro-life, or some other issue with which you **strongly** disagree.

How would you respond?

What would you be thinking and feeling?

What would you think about the person making that statement?

Would you be thinking that this isn't something we should talk about at church?

10) How can we change?

11) Other ideas to help "difficult" conversations be less divisive and more engaging?

<http://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/8919/civil-war-in-the-church?spMailingID=1426141&spUserID=NDg4NDEyNDMzS0&spJobID=520346666&spReportId=NTlwMzQ2NjY2S0>