

Practical Scenarios for Discussion

A Different Conversation

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Dave

A popular adolescent in your church, who is clearly nervous about speaking to you, tells you he is “pretty sure” he’s gay. He asks you to promise not to tell anyone, including his parents, believing he will lose his friends, family and church if they find out. A survey shows two-thirds of adults in your church think gay people mainly need to be told to repent of their “lifestyle”, but a third also think they pose a danger to children. On the other hand, a section of the youth group don’t see why “just being who you are” could be a problem.

(1) What do you say to Dave? (2) What factors might affect how you proceed? (3) How much agreement do you expect from the congregation and the leadership? (4) Is Dave’s situation different for a girl?

Kim & Jen

Two young women in your local community were legally married in Canada last year and are raising two children. They are a schoolteacher and a journalist by profession. They grew up in Christian families, have been thinking a lot about God lately, and have begun attending your church on account of a relative in your congregation.

(1) What series of events would need to occur for Kim & Jen’s family to become members of your church? (2) Does your feeling or judgement change if they are a male couple, have no children, or have no Christian background? (3) If your answer involves something you see as a concession, would the same concession apply to Nick or Dave? (4) At a BBQ at Kim & Jen’s house, you are introduced to a dozen of their professional colleagues, who make several incorrect assumptions about your view of Christian scripture and LGBT issues. What is your thirty second summary?

Nick

A leader in your church is same sex attracted. He has been through many years of counselling, depression and loneliness, has persevered in ministry, at which he excels, and has remained celibate. However, he has experienced no change whatsoever, and sees no hope of changing. What he wants more than anything is love, a life partner and a family, but is not sexually or romantically attracted to women.

(1) What options are available? (2) Are they the same options Dave has, though he has not been through the same experience? (3) Is it different if he is employed in ministry? (4) Would you recommend that he marries a woman in the church who likes him a lot, but who he believes he could only see as a friend? (5) “Nick” is faultless: would weakness or failings change how you respond?

Vicki & Todd

A couple in their late twenties ask to enrol in your church’s *Preparing for Marriage* course. They have been members of the church for six months, are very much in love, and you see them both as genuine in their faith. Vicki tells you that she was designated male at birth, but never saw herself as male or was comfortable with being male. She has lived as a woman all her adult life, and no-one in your congregation, except Todd, has been aware of any difference. She began hormone replacement therapy four years ago, and intends to have surgery in the United States next year, then change her legal gender to female and marry Todd.

(1) Does this affect their involvement in the course? (or the church?) (2) Does your feeling or judgement change if one of them is intersex, having been born with both male and female characteristics?