

Faithful Disagreement

Faithful disagreement is defined as actions and/or responses by a person or group of people holding a different viewpoint regarding a particular policy, belief, principle, or other position as established by Community of Christ. This disagreement with the established Community of Christ position or direction is constructive, responsible, faithful, and bounded by loyalty and commitment to the overarching identity, message, mission, and beliefs of Community of Christ. Those who faithfully disagree are welcome to share their constructive voice regarding the established position with which they do not agree, with the intent of improving the overall faithful response of the church to God's intended direction and without being categorized by others as unfaithful.

9 Principles of Faithful Disagreement

1. Community of Christ is characterized by Enduring Principles that allow for faithful disagreement as expressed through the principles of Blessings of Community, Worth of All Persons, Responsible Choices, and Unity in Diversity. The commitment, in general, to the overall identity, message, mission, and beliefs of Community of Christ may serve to keep a person in the faith community even when that person strongly disagrees with a particular position. One's love for the faith community is stronger than any particular disagreement.
2. Holding a differing viewpoint from the Community of Christ position on a particular matter does not diminish in any way a person's participation as a faithful, committed, and responsible member of the church, nor does it impact a person's ability to hold a priesthood office. As an example, Communion is not to be withheld from a person because she or he has expressed a differing viewpoint to the Community of Christ position on a particular matter.
3. A person with a differing viewpoint on a particular position is to be respected by the body and allowed to voice her or his viewpoint as a personal opinion during discussions, meetings, training opportunities, and other conversations where it is appropriate to share personal opinions. At no time is any personal sharing of opinions to be disrespectful, dehumanizing, or harmful to the body.
4. A person is not to be ostracized by a congregation or mission center because they hold a differing viewpoint on a particular Community of Christ position.
5. A person with a differing viewpoint is not to use public ministry opportunities, as a member or as a priesthood member, to speak out publicly against the identity, message, mission, or beliefs of Community of Christ or to publicly criticize the Community of Christ stance on the particular position with which the person does not agree. Public ministry must focus on proclaiming the good news in a way that is aligned with Community of Christ identity, message, mission, and beliefs.
6. Agreeing with all positions, both official and unofficial, taken by Community of Christ is not to be used as a test of faith for priesthood, members, or friends.

7. In seeking to create authentic signal communities, we listen respectfully to one another's viewpoints and attempt to view situations from each other's perspective while trusting in each person's commitment to Christ and motivation to see the mission of Community of Christ flourish. We seek to celebrate our unity while also learning from our diversity.

8. As a community that embraces Continuing Revelation, we strive to always remain open to the leadings of the Holy Spirit. We understand that sometimes both individually and collectively we respond wisely to these leadings and sometimes we are misguided. Through our vulnerability to the Holy Spirit, we trust that God will continue to guide us in shaping or even changing positions held by Community of Christ.

9. A person holding a differing viewpoint is allowed to continue to seek change to the position with which they do not agree through the various legislative and consent building processes used by Community of Christ.

For background information, see Doctrine & Covenants 131:4a-b and the 1988 Standing High Council Statement on Ethical Dissent