

2.0 ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Use of Alcohol in the Local Congregation

So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith. Galatians 6:10 (NASB)

Paul speaks often of our life together in the community of God, using the Greek word “oikos” which is translated “household” or “family”. As members of the same household or family, we are called to care for and to “do good” to one another. The consumption of alcohol is an issue which must be viewed in light of this call. Our missional and Christian witness should be held in view as well as we determine the use of alcohol and its role in our fellowship life.

The following guidelines intend to assist local congregations as they seek the Holy Spirit in carrying out intentional, pastorally sensitive, and missional policies regarding either the moderate use or abstinence of alcohol in the congregation.

1. Communication in Congregations Regarding Use of Alcohol

- + As members of the same family, the view of leadership regarding alcohol use must be communicated to all members. *(See Discipleship Training below)*
- + Congregations may choose to adopt either a position of abstinence or a policy of alcohol use in moderation. Regardless, the view toward familial care and concern and safeguarding Christian witness will be emphasized in congregational guidelines.
- + When congregation-publicized events arise where alcohol will be offered, the event will be publicized as offering alcohol (e.g., “wine and beer will be served”) so congregation members can make informed decisions regarding participation. Alternative beverages will be provided when alcohol is available. (Galatians 6:2)

2. Leadership Issues

- + With love as motivation, congregation leaders, both clergy and laity, will carry the responsibility for the care of congregation members in environments where alcohol is being served. (Hebrews 10:24)
- + This role is to steward the environment in a godly fashion, insuring an attitude of concern for the welfare of all. The consumption of alcohol will be appropriate and without harm.
- + In each congregation, the clergy and laity will promote an environment of open discussion on the topic of appropriate use of alcohol with a view toward both individual and congregational responsibility.

3. Discipleship Training

- + As a part of discipleship training, the issue of alcohol will be addressed as both a ‘gift’ as well as a ‘temptation’ promoting a proper Biblical understanding.

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(Genesis 27:27-28; Psalm 104:14-15; Isaiah 25:6-9; John 2:1-11; I Timothy 5:23; Proverbs 20:1; Ephesians 5:18; I Peter 4:3).

- + Congregational leaders must train on responsible stewardship of relationships – issues such as what is our responsibility to one another in our own personal alcohol use; what is our responsibility to those who struggle with addiction.
- + Congregational leaders must create a practical approach of grace to help those who struggle with alcohol misuse or addiction.

