

Brave Church / Hard Topics Covenant

We will do our best to engage each other with kindness, respect, and compassion, following these rules as we engage in discussions on hard topics in this class. The first five rules come from p. 20-23 (Kindle version) of [Brave Church: Tackling Tough Topics Together](#) by Elizabeth Hagan. The sixth rule comes from the facilitators as we try to give everyone an opportunity to be heard.

“RULE 1: We will accept conflict and commit to the way of kindness.... by exploring the roots of our disagreement and staying in conversation, we can strengthen our community of faith.”

“RULE 2: We will take responsibility for how our own words are received. ... words can cause harm, and we take responsibility for how our words are received. ...Brave churches humbly acknowledge mistakes and pledge to keep learning.”

“RULE 3: We will ask permission before we challenge someone’s views on a subject. ...To honor the boundaries of our group members, we ask permission before we challenge one another. ...Asking hard questions, of course, doesn’t always lead to easy answers or simple solutions. Brave churches thrive in the tension.” How would this work? We can ask the person if they’re open to feedback; for instance, “Do you mind if I engage with you on that?” If they are, then ask your questions. If not, then we can return to the issue at a later time.

“RULE 4: We will show respect for one another and graciously receive feedback if someone feels disrespected. ... show respect to every member of the congregation.”

“RULE 5: We will use ‘I’ instead of ‘you’ statements. We will not accuse or attack. ... While we may disagree about these tough topics, we do not make personal attacks. ...We ask earnest questions to make sure we hear and understand one another.”

RULE 6: Give everyone who wants to speak an opportunity to do so. Give everyone who wants to speak the opportunity to speak before commenting a second time. How would this work? We’ll use the “Raise Hand” function in Zoom and the facilitator will call on you. If you can’t wait to speak, share your thoughts in the chat.