



# CBF Peer Learning Groups

## Setting healthy boundaries

Boundaries are the mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, and organizational distinctions that help individuals define and manage appropriate roles and responsibilities.

- *Emotional boundaries* help individuals cope with their feelings and disengage from the harmful, manipulative emotions of others.
- *Spiritual boundaries* help individuals distinguish God's will from their own and instill renewed awe for the Creator.
- *Mental boundaries* provide individuals with the freedom to have their own thoughts and opinions.
- *Physical boundaries* help individuals determine who may touch them and under what circumstances.
- *Professional boundaries* define effective and appropriate interaction between professionals and the public they serve.

Boundaries impact relationships and functioning in work and volunteer roles. Setting healthy boundaries requires us to claim responsibility for our feelings, attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, choices, values, and thoughts.

Establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries can be particularly difficult for Christians due to confusion about when it is biblically appropriate to set limits. In the face of the call to "deny oneself," these questions can become a source of struggle for people of faith. Congregational leaders in particular often struggle with the question of whether it is possible to set limits and still be a "good" clergy person.

### *Questions for discussion:*

- What makes it hard for you to set boundaries?
- When have you set a boundary you felt good about, and what were the results?
- Have you observed boundary issues in your life and ministry? If so, what domains of your life are being impacted (family, work, self-care, etc.)?
- What type of congregational culture results when leaders model lives without boundaries?
- Where is God in a boundary-less life?
- In what ways might pastors help reveal God's power by establishing and maintaining clear personal, family, and congregational boundaries?

Consider how you might apply the following steps for setting better boundaries:

- Identify areas in which you have difficulty establishing boundaries.
- Overcome over-responsibility for the feelings of others.
- Practice nos and yeses.
- Focus on the potential benefits of more well-established boundaries.
- Commit to developing action steps that will help prevent dilemmas from occurring and/or outline how you will respond differently to unforeseeable occurrences.