



# THEOLOGY PUB

## *When is it time to say something?*

*A group of spiritual seekers who love good conversation, good food, good wine, & good beer. Come join us for a casual conversation about significant topics along life's spiritual journey.*

### WELCOME TO THEOLOGY PUB, SOME GROUND RULES:

- Everyone's voice has the right to be heard.
- If your voice is causing others NOT to be heard...take a break and listen.
- There won't be any "wrap up" in the end, no sense of "this is what you should believe."
- We gather here together as seekers, all on our own spiritual journeys.
- Stay updated on the next Theology Pub via First Presbyterian Church's Facebook page: [fb.com/fpcrw](https://fb.com/fpcrw)

### THE DISCUSSION

In a society full of divisions around politics, culture, values and beliefs, when do we keep quiet for the sake of staying together and when is it time to speak up and say what we believe or counter what we hear as harmful speech? How do we know when to speak up or when to stay quiet?

### QUOTES

"We can disagree and still love each other unless your disagreement is rooted in my oppression and denial of my humanity and right to exist." – James Baldwin

"It seems to me that we need to recognize that to develop the best humanity, the best spirit, the best community, there needs to be discipline, practices of exploring. How do you do that? How do we work together? How do we talk together in ways that will open up our best capacities and our best gifts?" – Vincent Harding

"How precious words are and how real speech is in its impact on the way people live and die". – Nelson Mandela

### THE QUESTIONS

**(from OnBeing's Civil Conversations Project)**

- Listening is an everyday art and virtue, but it's an art we have lost and must learn anew. Listening is more than being quiet while others have their say. It is about presence as much as receiving; it is about connection more than observing. Real listening is powered by curiosity. It involves

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vulnerability — a willingness to be surprised, to let go of assumptions and take in ambiguity. It is never in “gotcha” mode. The generous listener wants to understand the humanity behind the words of the other, and patiently summons one’s own best self and one’s own most generous words and questions. **How does our ability to listen and our conversation partner’s ability to listen help us decide whether to say something or not?**

- You can disagree with another person’s opinions; you can disagree with their doctrines; you can’t disagree with their experience. As people walk across the line between speaking for themselves and moving into abstractions and issues, you can gently coax them back with questions like these:
  - Tell me what you mean when you use that word.
  - Put some bones on that idea for me.
  - Can you tell a story to illustrate that?

"When you are really struggling with someone, and it’s someone you’re supposed to hate because of ideology or belief, move in. Get curious. Get closer. Ask questions. Try to connect. Find something. Remind yourself of that spiritual belief of inextricable connection: How am I connected to you in a way that is bigger and more primal than our politics?" – Brene Brown **When we say something, are we seeking to correct or change, seeking connection, or something else?**

- The wisest people we’ve interviewed carry a humility that manifests as tenderness in a creative interplay with power. **How does humility help us decide whether to say something or not?**

## SOME SCRIPTURES TO THINK ABOUT

### Proverbs 31:8-9

<sup>8</sup> Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. <sup>9</sup> Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.

### Ephesians 4:29

<sup>29</sup> Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up,<sup>[b]</sup> as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear.

### Matthew 23:26

<sup>36</sup> I tell you, on the day of judgment you will have to give an account for every careless word you utter; <sup>37</sup> for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

### Colossians 4:5-6

Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>6</sup> Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer everyone.