

Building and Nurturing a Community of Faith

**COVENANT BEHAVIOR FOR “COMMITTED CONVERSATION”/DIALOGUE**  
(Listening and Speaking in Prayer)

**GUIDELINES:**

**When Speaking:**

1. **Speak only for yourself (your personal experience and expectations):**  
“My experience is...” “I feel...” not, “You made me feel...” “I want...”  
“I need...” etc.).
2. **Stick to the “issue”;**  
State your position/belief/hopes and your reasons, without assigning “motive” to those with whom you disagree. Say, in particular what you do believe or want, rather than what you do not believe or want
3. **Before you start to speak:**  
Be as clear as possible about what you want to say and how you want to say it.
4. **Be Concise. Expect to complete what you have to say within 2 minutes or less each time you speak:** Help each other be accountable for honoring this time commitment so that there is equal opportunity for all to speak. Do not expect to speak again until all who want to be heard have spoken once.

**When Listening:**

1. **Listen carefully** (with care for the one speaking):  
Seek only to be clear about what is being said. Set aside the temptation to imagine a response at the same time you are trying to listen, so that you can give your full attention to hearing what the other is trying to communicate.
2. **Ask questions for clarity only:**  
Check your understanding by “reflecting” (saying back to the speaker) what you understood the speaker to say. Ask or “check” only after the speaker is finished speaking. Allow 1 minute for seeking clarity before moving on to the next speaker.

**Regarding the whole Conversation:**

For the sake of those gathered in this meeting or workshop and the larger community represented, it is neither helpful nor appropriate to name an individual participant and quote, directly or indirectly, outside this meeting, anything said by that individual. Individual concerns, observations, or assertions can be heard quite differently when spoken outside the context in which they were originally shared.