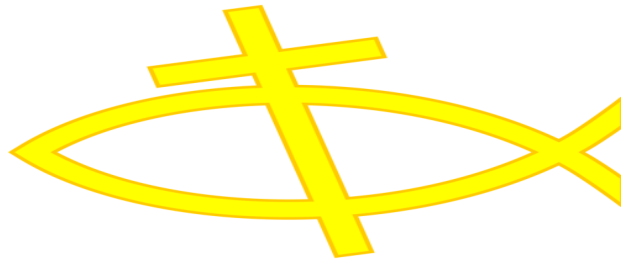


IS SOMEONE IN YOUR CHURCH “GAY”?

The ABC's of How to Respond



A. *First, let's set the record straight.*

No one is born a homosexual. However, no one “chooses” to experience same-sex attractions, either. No scientific evidence has established a genetic cause for homosexuality or found a “gay gene.” There is no DNA or medical test to determine if a person is homosexual. People experience same-sex attractions for many individual reasons. For some, it is because of past emotional, developmental, or psychological experiences which affected them; for others it can be the result of early labelling or sexual abuse.

B. *Ex-gays are mentioned in the Bible* by the apostle Paul when he wrote to former homosexuals in the Corinthian church -- “and such were some of you” (1 Cor. 6:9-11). Yes, the ex-gay community has roots all the way back to the times of the Apostles. As with every other condition that oppresses the spirit and our relationship with God, change in sexual behavior and thought patterns is possible.

C. *Don't judge by personal appearances.* God's not finished with the homosexual in your pew. As their inner souls transform, so will their habits and outer identity. Treat individuals with same-sex attractions just like you would anyone else in your church. They are more than their sexuality. Strugglers expect to find acceptance only in the gay community; so finding respect in church is immensely healing to their souls.

D. *Sexual sin is all around us,* both homosexual and heterosexual. Adultery, pornography addiction, fornication, lust, sodomy – these are all sexual sins. That's why we come to worship with others at church: so Christ can change us into a new creation. Remember what Jesus said to the adulteress: Go and sin no more (John 8:11). The church should be a safe place for all to come to Christ and become a new creation.

E. *Never give up on a struggler because he falls.* Instead, go and rescue the fallen sheep and bring him or her back home to your church and Christ's loving arms. Holiness is a journey and we all stumble along the way. No one gets kicked out of all Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) for falling off the wagon. Instead, they regroup and get up. Otherwise, AA would have failed in its first year. The church should be a model of God's forgiveness because every time we fall we don't have to stay down.

F. *Pray that God will guide* and protect your new friend. Ask God to shield your friend from evil and temptation.

G. *Homosexual strugglers in your church* critically need mentors of the same-sex who can demonstrate friendship in a non-sexual manner. Healthy relationships with friends in church are essential because strugglers need healthy role models. This is absolutely essential and can be the greatest thing your church can do to help someone overcome their unwanted same-sex attractions.

H. *Many strugglers are intimidated* by pastors and other authority figures. So please be sensitive. Let them know that God can change anyone who wants to become a new creation in Christ. Never disclose any information a struggler tells you. Strugglers should have a confidant they can go to. They must be able to trust a pastor or friend.

I. *Don't be persuaded by anyone* in your church, homosexual or heterosexual, who insists that you change God's laws to conform with popular gay-affirming culture. Homosexual behavior is sinful, no matter how loving, nice or sincere the sinner is -- even if that person is your son or daughter (Matthew 10:37). We cannot change God's word; we can only change ourselves. "Bridging the gap" by being overcompassionate and watering down God's word to please others can jeopardize their physical health and eternal destiny (Luke 17:2). Remember, what may seem compassionate may not be.

J. *Men and women who leave homosexuality* are often rejected and condemned by homosexuals, and bullied incessantly by gay activists. So strugglers must have tremendous courage to leave the familiar and comfortable for Christ. They need the support of new friends and the faith community.

K. *Many same-sex strugglers experience* a great neediness which can result in emotionally dependent relationships with others. They are the walking wounded with invisible scars. Counselors should set appropriate boundaries when meeting with strugglers.

L. *Show support for the ex-gay members* of your church community who strive to live godly lives. Some people erroneously believe that the failure to completely eradicate all same-sex attractions means that change is not possible. Of course, that notion is neither biblical nor applied consistently to other sinful impulses. With God's grace, change is always possible.



Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays & Gays (PFOX)
A non-profit organization supporting families and the ex-gay community
(804) 453-4737 • www.pfox.org • pfox@pfox.org