

1. First, pray.

When you experience hurt in the church, remember that the church is not always the best when it comes to imitating Christ. We are sometimes not good at love.

However, when we are hurt by the church, we should always go to the source of love. God himself is great at not hurting us even though people have hurt us. The first thing we should do is go to the One who will never hurt us or abandon us. Spend time with God just resting in his love. Peter says, "*Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you*" (1 Peter 5:7).

2. Confront the offender.

In Matthew 18:15, Jesus says, "*If your brother or sister sins go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over.*" Often, hurt can be resolved by just confronting the person who has hurt you. Sometimes they might not even know that they have hurt you.

Simply confront the person. This is not easy, but it is necessary. We do not like confrontation! A wise man once told me, "The only thing worse than confronting the person is what could happen if we don't deal with the confrontation." We need to address the issue head-on. Jesus knows best, so let's follow his way in doing this.

3. Forgive.

Forgiveness is not easy! In fact, I think it's the hardest thing to do as a Christian. For me personally, I had to learn to forgive one day at a time. For instance, I would wake up on Monday and have to forgive, but then Tuesday would roll around and I was still wrestling with the hurt. I had to learn to forgive every day until I had completely forgiven the wrong.

Now listen, I am fully aware that forgiveness is hard. But the truth is that forgiveness is not optional for Christians. Jesus says, "*But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins*" (Matt. 6:15). This is difficult to hear. Remember all the wrong that you have caused against God, and remember that you have been forgiven. Forgiven people forgive!

4. Find a faithful partner.

If the situation is not resolved, confide in a faithful partner. I love loyal friends! I really like friends who have my back no matter what comes my way.

In the midst of hurt, remember that there are others who still have your back. Confide in these people privately—not as a point of gossip, but as a point of confidence and help! When you have confided in this partner, take them with you to resolve the issue.

In Matthew 18:16, Jesus says, *"But if they (the offender) will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."* A faithful partner can help you deal with the issue!

5. Resolve your own past.

When you are addressing the hurts committed against you, it also might be a good time to address those that you have hurt. Maybe there are some people in the church you have hurt, and you need to get it cleared up.

I had to do this. The reality is that while I was hurt in the church, I personally had also hurt others in the church. Jesus says, *"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?"* (Matt. 7:3). Review your past ... has there been anyone that you have hurt? If so, get it cleared it up.

6. Commit to always act in love.

One of my driving factors in ministry is love! I know that I have been hurt by the church, so I am committed to helping the church be more loving. I want to be more like what Paul describes in 1 Cor. 13:4-7: *"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."*

I need to act in complete love moving forward!

7. Repeat the process.

If you have been hurt by the church, remember that you will probably get hurt again! We are human, and we make mistakes. When hurt happens, do not run or flee the church. Simply walk through the above process and then repeat it again! One day soon, we will be a place of no more hurt. Until then, however, let's commit to keep moving forward in forgiveness.