

## LEGAL REPRESENTATION

I have witnessed God's merciful work of reconciliation in several marriages where the parties were headed for divorce, and I seek to work towards reconciliation at every opportunity the Lord brings. However, more clients that I have served in divorce cases so far have divorced. Some of those have been on biblical grounds and others have been a party trying to prevent an unbiblical divorce. In all cases, I seek to be a Godly counselor at law and influence my client to seek to be a faithful steward over his or her relationships, finances, and decisions in the matter.

## MY PRACTICE

**By God's grace and mercy, in my service to individuals, families, and churches, I will:**

1. Give biblical and skillful counsel for reconciling relationships and issues and for other decisions to be made.
2. Exhort people to submit to the biblical authorities in their lives and seek their counsel, and together cooperate with the church and other counselors involved.
3. Encourage all Christians involved to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ through these conflicts, seeking to please Him first.
4. Seek the Lord's will through his Word and Spirit, pray for his grace for my clients and their situations, and live, speak, and apply the truth of the gospel to all parties involved.
5. When acting as an attorney\*, provide effective and faithful legal representation.

\* Note that if I have acted as a pre-divorce counselor or third-party facilitator with both spouses, I cannot legally represent either spouse in court, unless the conflict of interest is waived. Referrals to likeminded attorneys will be sought in such cases when possible.

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**Serving Christians, Pastors, and Churches with Conflict Resolution and Family Law**



**Pursuing Peace and Reconciliation While Working for Merciful Justice**

Legal services by Roy Huddle, P.C.  
Non-legal services by Family Huddle, L.L.C.

## Christian Family Law and Conflict Resolution Services



“If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.” Romans 12:18.

## Roy Huddle, P.C.

## CHRISTIANS WITH DISPUTES

- The Bible tells Christians not to take their legal disputes before unbelievers (see 1 Corinthians 6:1-8).
- The civil court's system is adversarial, which usually exacerbates problems rather than resolving them. Fighting is expensive, usually increases conflict and bitterness, and is often unsatisfactory in its results for both parties.

Despite these facts, Christians often choose to resolve their conflicts in secular courts before unbelievers. Why? Possibilities include impatience, fear of loss, worldly counsel, and lack of knowledge of alternatives.

## APPLICATION TO DIVORCE

In serious marital conflicts between Christians, pastors or Christian counselors are usually involved. However, if joint marriage counseling ends, one party often proceeds to find an attorney to start the secular divorce process. Instead, when possible, the couple should continue a biblical process with the help of their church and Christian lawyers as needed.

Are there biblical grounds to divorce? If not, has a disciplinary process been started in the church? Even if there are biblical grounds for the divorce, has the couple considered or been instructed how 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 applies to their situation? What biblical processes for divorcing can be used?

## CHRISTIAN CONCILIATION

Christian conciliation uses God's word and principles to resolve disputes. It is preferable to other methods when the parties are willing because it addresses the heart issues that are driving the conflict, seeks to hold individuals accountable to God's word, and bring reconciliation.

A couple that is divorcing should use Christian conciliation because it is biblical and because it is the best hope for actually resolving the problems that will continue to cause problems for the individuals and children involved. To be effective, it helps for the parties to be willing to search their hearts, confess sin, gently and humbly address the sin of others, and seek to be reconciled in their relationship.

## COLLABORATIVE LAW, MEDIATION, ARBITRATION

If a couple is not willing to use conciliation, then mediation, collaborative law, or arbitration individually or jointly can be used to resolve the substantive issues. The goal of these processes is to reach agreement through communication, negotiation, and compromise using neutral third-party facilitators. Any of these methods can be facilitated by Christians, preferably including a pastor/elder/minister from the party's church, instead of using secular courts. Also, a Christian facilitator can still address biblical principles and heart issues in mediation, collaborative law, or arbitration when there is opportunity.

**Collaborative law** is a process of open disclosure on financial and other issues and often has financial advisors, counselors, or other neutral advisors involved. It is preferable to mediation because it is more of a problem-solving approach.

**Mediation** is required by the courts in almost every family law dispute, but court-ordered mediation normally doesn't occur until after months or even years of litigation. Mediating early before getting into adversarial postures over the issues can make a big difference in both cost and results.

**Arbitration** involves presenting the facts to a third-party decision maker who decides any issues that have not been agreed by the parties. Arbitration

can be combined with mediation and/or collaborative law so as not to make it a separate process.

The court must approve any final decree of divorce for the divorce to be legal. However, this can usually be achieved with very limited involvement from the court.

## PRE-DIVORCE COUNSELING

Despite these better and more biblical alternatives, either or both parties may be unwilling to use them. If so, both parties need to become knowledgeable about divorcing in the civil courts, especially by a Christian who practices family law.

Pre-divorce counseling can cover many issues such as: What can I expect from the divorce process, for me, my spouse, and my children? What will the cost be financially, emotionally, and even physically? What problems is the divorce likely to solve, make worse, or create? What is the likely outcome financially and as to children? The answers to these questions can be eye-opening and encourage an individual or couple to reconsider seeking reconciliation or using a biblical process.

## LEGAL INTERVENTION

What if the conflict is quickly escalating towards legal action because financial matters, living arrangements, or children's issues are already a crises? Sometimes these issues must be addressed before counseling or other biblical processes can occur or continue. The couple can accomplish this through a post-marital agreement or it may be preferable to obtain agreed temporary orders through the court. Either may be used to help make living under the circumstances more workable and allow the time needed for counseling or other biblical processes.