



## Maple Grove Fellowship: Navigating Social Issues in a Divided Town

Maple Grove Fellowship is a medium-sized church situated in Cedarville, a midwestern town marked by cultural and political divides. Led by Pastor Sara Williams for the past seven years, the church has approximately 300 regular attendees and has always prided itself on being an inclusive space. However, the societal fault lines have been making their way into the congregation, posing challenges that the church never anticipated.

Three years ago, a racially motivated incident occurred at the local high school, creating tension and divisiveness within the community. As a church leader, Pastor Sara was often asked what stance the church would take. Cedarville started becoming more and more politically charged, and it began affecting church attendance. Some families left the congregation, citing political and cultural reasons.

Last year, the situation escalated when a peaceful protest turned violent near the church premises. Maple Grove Fellowship had always been neutral ground, but the conflict left Pastor Sara and the church board questioning their preparedness for such social crises. They were unprepared to handle the protesters who sought refuge in the church and the counter-protesters who accused them of taking sides.

Pastor Sara realized that the challenges ahead were not just about "disaster preparedness" in the traditional sense but also about preparing for social and community crises. Key questions now loom large:

1. How should Maple Grove create an action plan that addresses not only natural disasters but also social crises?

2. What dialogue needs to happen among the leadership and the congregation about the church's role in these issues?
3. How can they form effective partnerships with law enforcement agencies and social organizations to prepare for potential disruptions?
4. What training and resources are necessary for the church to be equipped for these diverse challenges?

The situation in Cedarville shows no signs of simmering down, and Maple Grove Fellowship must now decide how it will navigate these tumultuous waters while staying true to its mission and values.