

First Open Bible 24-Hour Rule

There is nothing more destructive to a church than gossip. Gossip brings people together while alienating others, causing division and strife. Some people are drawn to it. They thrive on it. To make matters worse, many church environments encourage it.

What is gossip?

Definition of gossip is **casual or unconstrained conversation or reports about other people, typically involving details that are not confirmed as being true.**

How does First Open Bible's 24-hour rule apply to gossip?

Gossip is described as speaking to an uninvolved third party about an offense that they have nothing to do with. For this reason, you should not let anyone tell you something negative about someone else without requiring them to be a part of the solution.

When a person comes to you about a concern they have with another person, ask them if they have confronted the other person with their feelings. If not, tell them to take their problem to the other person.

[Matthew 18:15-17](#) NLT

¹⁵ "If another believer^[a] sins against you,^[b] go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back. ¹⁶ But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won't accept the church's decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector."

If you're a First Open Bible Staff or Board Member (spouses included):

We ask that you implement the 24-hour rule because leadership is held to a higher level of accountability. As a leader what we permit, we promote. The way that we handle gossip in the church will start by the example of leadership.

The 24-hour rule simply means that when a person comes to you, as an uninvolved third party, about an offense they have with another person, ask them if they have confronted the other person with their feelings. If not, tell them to share their offense to the other person or *you will within 24 hours. Before you address the other person follow up to be sure they have not already spoken with them.* The purpose for this follow up is to stop offense and gossip from continuing on.

God's Word warns us to stay away from people who gossip and to guard our words when we speak about others.