

The 10 Legal Commandments

1. Honor Christ by following his example of attraction over compulsion. “Evangelize and when you must, use words”.

Legal Principle: You do not have freedom to practice your religion at work. Your right is to be free of religious discrimination, and in rare instances, to be accommodated in your work schedule because of religious requirements. Your duty to your employer includes the duty not to discriminate against or harass other employees because they do not share your religious beliefs. In this regard, the standard is not what you believe to be harassment, but what a reasonable person in the position of the other employee would consider harassment. That is, your intention is not the test, but the perception of the other person.

2. Honor Christ by honoring your employer’s work schedule and devote yourself to that schedule exclusively during work hours. (Honor your employer’s time).

Legal Principle: Your employment implicitly requires you to give your best efforts and your exclusive attention to your employer’s interest during work hours. In effect, your employer has bought your time and energy for its exclusive use during the hours you are paid. (Of course, your attitude and behavior while during your work can be one of excellent worship and active prayer.)

3. Let your “yes” be “yes” and your “no” be “no”, that is, honor people’s boundaries if they decline an invitation to join your Saddleback WorkPlace Connection small group.

Legal Principle: Repeated solicitations in the face of consistent refusals will eventually become “harassment” and will likely draw a complaint of discrimination.

4. Honor your Employer’s “No”, and do not threaten or attack your employer if your request for Saddleback WorkPlace Connection small group time/place is restricted or denied.

Legal Principle: The employer is permitted by law to deny employees the use of its premises for anything other than work related activities. If the employer does make the premises or work time available for religious meetings or purposes, it must do so indiscriminately, allowing persons of other persuasions to meet on equal terms and with equal opportunity. Therefore, an employer is entitled to decline a meeting opportunity proposal, or to set limits on such meeting opportunities if granted.

5. Examine the plank in your own eye before attempting to remove the speck in your co-worker's eye. Avoid using scripture as a club to batter homosexuals, advocates of "same sex" marriage, "household partners", atheists, Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, new age cultists, Buddhists, Hindus, or Islamists.

Legal Principle: "In your face" efforts to convert resistant or indifferent people at work are not just offensive, but will expose the employer to charges of discrimination if the employer does not intervene to stop the behavior. Using scripture to point out how people are "living in sin" will also be viewed as offensive and possibly harassing in violation of law.

6. Be in the work place, but not of the work place. The Employer is to disclaim that Saddleback WorkPlace Connection small group is mandated, expected, or even necessarily represents the Employer's views.

Legal Principle: To avoid charges of discrimination, the employer must be neutral and impartial toward all employees, including those who disagree with Christian doctrine and practice. Avoid any suggestion to anyone that work conditions will be easier or better for persons attending your small group.

7. In all things, including Saddleback WorkPlace Connection small group, strive for harmony with all people of all religious or non-religious views, insofar as it is possible for you and do not exclude non-believers from your Saddleback WorkPlace Connection small group, or seek to silence them if they express non-Christian or anti-Christian views.

Legal Principle: Your small group is not a church in the sense that it can define its membership and select its participants according to membership criteria. Any employee should be permitted to participate, or choose not to participate, as he or she may decide, in order to avoid charges of discrimination.

8. Do not form cliques or demonstrate preferences to the exclusion of non-believers during regular work hours, especially if you are a supervisor or manager.

Legal Principle: Although it may be natural to be more helpful to people we like or know better, a manager who spends more time training, visiting, assisting, socializing, or complimenting people in her "small group" risks being perceived as favoring those persons because of their religion.

9. Do not press for special indulgences to pursue religious purposes unless there is no other possible way to practice a doctrinally mandated religious practice.

Legal Principle: Court decisions have given employers broad discretion to deny requests for time off to pursue religious objectives. The test is whether the accommodation produces “undue hardship” on the employer’s business operations to allow a person off to attend religious worship services. Almost any inconvenience in scheduling will be deemed “undue hardship”. Therefore, do not demand adjustments in your employer’s work scheduling to allow your small group to meet.

10. Do not “steal” your employer’s time or resources for Saddleback WorkPlace Connection small group purposes.

Legal Principle: An employer’s “assets” include virtually everything within its work premises or electronic network. Your work time is an “asset”, as are the computers, software, internet, emails, telephone system, storage systems, network, photocopy machines, and intangibles such as product and service information not generally known to the public. You cannot use these assets for your personal purposes, including the purpose of religious meetings at work, without the employer’s express consent. That means you are not to use your employer’s email or time to distribute notices of the next meeting. You are not to use the company’s photocopy machine or paper to reproduce information to be used by your “small group”. You are not to use your company’s word processor to draft an outline of meeting topics for the “small group”. You certainly are not to use your company’s storage system (including laptop) to download or store materials you intend to use in your “small group”. You are not to research a topic for your small group on the company’s internet, even after work hours. These are only some examples. In sum, the definition of your employer’s “property” is much broader than you probably thought, and using that property without consent is a form of “misuse” that could result in discipline.