

Seek Reconciliation

Friends in law enforcement tell me that domestic violence calls are among the most dreaded they receive. That's true because they find volatile situations fueled by high emotions and irrational thinking.

Recently, I ran across a study done in the 1990s. In 1994, the *Associated Press* reported that hospital emergency rooms in the United States treated 1.4 million victims of violence or suspected violence. The article asked: Is this all about crime on the streets?

The answer is no. The Justice Department analyzed the data and reported in 1997 that roughly half of these victims were hurt by someone they knew. Among the findings:

- 17 percent of the victims, 243,000 people, were injured by a spouse, former spouse, or a current or former boyfriend or girlfriend.
- 8 percent of the victims were injured by a relative, such as a parent or child.
- 23 percent were hurt by friends or acquaintances.

These figures, which come from hospital emergency rooms, differ from those reported by the FBI's annual Uniform Crime Report, which reflects only offenses reported to police.

God knows that hostile feelings between family and friends are literally dangerous. There is no telling how broken relationships will end.

When we are in conflict with those near to us, God calls us to seek reconciliation as a first priority. Among the reasons is personal safety.



Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift (Matthew 5:23-24).

– Beecher Hunter