

SERMON: The Sin of Gossip

Gossip is unconstrained and often derogatory conversation about other people, and can involve betraying a confidence and spreading sensitive information or hurtful judgments.

Research shows that people who gossip the most have very high levels of anxiety. They are generally not particularly popular because they cannot be trusted. Spreading private information or negative judgments is painful to

Why do people gossip?

- To feel superior
- Out of envy
- Out of boredom
- To feel like part of the group
- For attention
- Out of anger and unhappiness

Response to Unwelcomed Gossip

Let's suppose that somebody is gossiping mercilessly about Jane. It's important not to feed the gossip with curiosity, agreement and further questions. It's best to simply change the subject. Here are some other possible responses:

- "I notice that you talk about Jane a lot. I'm curious why she interests you so much?"
- "Let's take a look at it from Jane's side."
- "I am more interested in what you are up to."
- "Let's talk about something more positive or decide what we're going to do this afternoon."
- "I feel uncomfortable listening to negative judgments about people unless we figure out how to help them."