

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Church discipline is one way our church cares spiritually for our people. Every form of church discipline has restoration, not punishment, in view.

Why do we practice church discipline?

- **We take the Bible and the teachings of Jesus seriously**
Heb 12:5-11; Matt 18:15-17; 1 Cor 5:1-13; 2 Cor 2:5-8; Titus 3:10-11; Gal 6:1; Eph 5:11; 1 Thess 5:14; 2 Thess 3:6-15; 1 Tim 5:19-20; 2 Tim 3:5, 1 John 2:19
- **To protect the unity of the body and the purity of the Gospel**
- **We desire for you to take your next step with Jesus**

How is church discipline practiced?

Church discipline largely happens informally as Christians speak the truth in love to one another and point each other to the grace of the gospel. However, due to our fallen nature, there will be times when informal discipline is not enough. There will be times when someone refuses to repent and continues down a path of sin and destruction. In these cases Jesus provides us with instruction in Matthew 18:15-20.

- **Step 1 - Have a private conversation (v.15)** - Rather than gossip, Jesus instructs his followers to address sin privately at first and seek reconciliation
- **Step 2 - Take one or two others along (v.16)** - If repentance and reconciliation cannot be accomplished by a private conversation then more involvement is needed. Those involved should evaluate the response of the one caught in sin and the one sinned against to see if the accusation is genuine and in need of repentance.
- **Step 3 - Tell it to the church (v.17)** - Before making the matter public, the elders will make every effort to provide opportunities for repentance and reconciliation. If repentance does not take place then the elders will communicate what's taken place to the congregation at a member's meeting. The church is then encouraged to pray and reach out to the member who is caught in sin.
- **Step 4 - Remove unrepentant person from membership (v.17)** - If the member who is caught in sin is still unrepentant after the church confronts him or her, then a formal motion will be brought to the church to remove him or her from membership. If the vote passes, then the church will no longer interact with the individual in question as a brother or sister in Christ, but as a non-believer.

When is formal church discipline required?

- **Significant Sin** - "I don't know how you can keep doing this and still call yourself a Christian"
- **Outward Sin** - A sin that has manifested itself outwardly. For example, we will not pursue discipline on someone because we think he or she is greedy. But if it is revealed that this person runs an unethical business then we will pursue discipline.
- **Unrepentant** - If the person continues in unrepentance, formal discipline is the next step.