

What is Church Discipline and Why Do We Do It?

Matt. 18:15-18, 1 Cor. 5-6; Gal. 6:1-3, 2 Thess. 3

Subject: We are a local community of saints who have joined together to worship and honor Jesus Christ. So the authority for our beliefs and practices are based upon the Word of God---Christ's Word to His people.

Outline:

- I. What is church discipline?
- II. Who is subject to church discipline?
- III. Where does church discipline take place?
- IV. How is church discipline to be practiced?
- V. When do we do church discipline?
- VI. Why do we do church discipline?

I. What is Church Discipline?

God's people showing love and care for the sinning child of God who refuses to repent or to be restored to obedience!

Matthew 18:15-18
1 Corinthians 5-6
Galatians 6:1-3
2 Thess. 3

Divine discipline shown through His people is not punitive but remedial. The goal of discipline is restoration not banishment.

II. Who is Subject to Church Discipline?

- 1 Corinthians 5:11-13 _____
- Matthew 18:15-18 _____
- 1 Timothy 5:19-20 _____
- Titus 3:10-11 _____
- 2 John 9-11 _____

III. Where does Church Discipline Take Place?

- Matthew 18:17 _____
- 1 Corinthians 5:10-12 _____
- 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 _____

Harmonize this verse with Matthew 7:1-6

IV. How Should Church Discipline Be Done?

1. First we seek to restore: Matthew 18:15-18

Four Steps in Matthew 18

- (1) Tell the sinning brother his sin alone
- (2) Take some witnesses
- (3) Tell the church
- (4) Treat him or her as an outsider

Remember Jesus loved “the outsider.” The disciplined member needs our prayers for restoration and if we should see them, our efforts should be to admonish (2 Thess. 3:14-15.)

*Church discipline is not excommunication in the Roman Catholic sense. A brother is being put “out of the fellowship” of the local church, but we have no authority to determine one’s eternal destiny.

2. Grieve over the sinning brother: 1 Cor. 5:2
3. With meekness considering our own weakness:
Galatians 6:1-2 with 1 Corinthians 10:12.
4. Do it in faithful but humble obedience to Jesus Christ:
Rev. 2:5, 14-16; 20-22; 3:1

God’s Word is the final court of appeal.

V. When Do We Do Church Discipline?

Whenever a child of God refuses to repent of ongoing sin in their life.

The sinning may be in the realm of 1 Corinthians 5:11:

- Sexual Immorality
- Greed
- Idolatry (see Colossians 3:5)
- Reviler
- Drunkard
- Swindler

The sinning may be in the realm of false teaching and a divisive spirit: Romans 16:17-18

VI. Why Do We Do Church Discipline?

Jesus Christ warned the churches of Asia Minor (Revelation 2-3) that if they ignored sin and would not deal with it as He instructed, then He would remove them.

In obedience to the Lord and in the fear of the Lord, we seek to restore sinning saints. Those saints who refuse to be restored by repentance are to be removed in love and in reverence for Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church.

Obey Christ or be removed! (See Revelation 2-3)

Care for the Sinning Christian:

- Not by ignoring their sin
- Not by talking about them
- Not by making oneself an inspector

Pray, grieve, seek to restore them.

Practical Words:

Sinning Christians can be restored by another in private and that is enough. All Christians sin and are able to confess and repent without it ever coming to church discipline.

Church Discipline is the “third step” after efforts have been made to restore. Hebrews 12 along with Proverbs 3 says God “disciplines all of His sons out of love.”

