

Crossroads Fellowship

“The Lost Art of Maintaining a Healthy Church”

Matthew 18:15-20

Introduction

I The Purpose of Church Discipline

Definition: “Church discipline is the corrective process instituted by Christ Jesus to bring repentance, restoration and recovery to a sinning believer and to protect the church from the corrupting influence of sin.”

- A. To glorify God through **obedience** to His Word - Jn 14:21
- B. To provide recourse/remedy for victims of sin - Mt 18:21
- C. To **restore** the sinning believer - Gal 6:1
- D. To preserve the purity and unity of the church - Eph 5:25-27
- E. To serve as a **deterrent** for others - Dt 13:11; 1 Tim 5:20
- F. To strengthen and grow the church - Jn 15:2
- G. To avoid God’s **discipline** of the church - Rev 2:14-25
- H. To vindicate the integrity and honor of God - 1 Pt 2:12

II The Scriptural Support of Church Discipline

- A. **Relational** examples
 1. Father-Son - Prov 13:24
 2. Friendships-Acquaintances - Prov 9:8-9
 3. Heavenly Father-Child of God - Heb 12:5-6, 11
 4. Shepherds-Flock - 2 Tim 4:1-5; Titus 2:15
- B. **Biblical** examples:
 1. OT examples:
 - a. Hanani the seer - 2 Chron 16:7-10
 - b. Azariah the priest - 2 Chron 26:16-21
 - c. Nathan the prophet - 2 Sam 12
 2. NT examples:
 - a. The incestuous man - 1 Cor 5:1-13; 2 Cor 2:5-11

b. Specific people named:

1. Peter for hypocrisy - Gal 2:11-14
2. Hymenaeus/Alexander for blasphemy - 1Tim 1:20
3. Phygelus/Hermogenes for desertion - 2 Tim 1:15
4. Hymenaeus/Philetus for false teaching - 2Tim 2:17

III The Triggers of Church Discipline

- A. Sins that damage the **doctrine** of the church - Rom 16:17
- B. Sins that damage the **unity** of the church - Titus 3:10
- C. Sins that damage the **purity** of the church - 1 Cor 5:11

IV The Heart of Church Discipline

- A. It is to be done after careful self-**examination** - Matt 7:3-5
- B. It is to be done with **prayer** and fasting - Esther 4:15-16
- C. It is to be done with gentleness - Gal 6:1; 2 Tim 2:25
- D. It is to be done without a critical spirit - Matt 7:1-2
- E. It is to be done without **partiality** - 1 Tim 5:21
- F. It is to be done with patience - 1 Thess 5:14
- G. It is to be done with **love** - Prov 13:24; Eph 4:15

V The Steps of Church Discipline

- A. Step One: **Private** confrontation - Mt 18:15
- B. Step Two: Take some **witnesses** - Mt 18:16
- C. Step Three: Tell it to the **church** - Mt 18:17a
- D. Step Four: **Exclusion** from church - Mt 18:17b

VI The Ratification of Church Discipline

- A. The principle of divine judicial **delegation**
 1. Binding and loosing - Mt 16:19
- B. The principle of divine judicial **approval**
 1. Two or three witnesses provide the basis for:
 - a. God’s sanctioning **blessing**
 - b. God’s sanctioning **presence** - 2 Chron 19:5-6