



Caring Enough To Correct

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. **Matt 18:15-17**

Church discipline is given in order for us to keep the sanctity and purity of the Lord's church. It is a very practical and purposeful doctrine, designed to keep the **purity, power, progress** and **purpose** of the church. How could one be a disciple if there is no discipline? Without discipline we would be left to deal with those who have submitted themselves to the initial call of the gospel, but have refused to allow the Lord Jesus Christ to be Lord of their life. **Discipline** is a vital part in leading believers into a life of **discipleship**. **Church discipline** is the confrontational and corrective measures taken by an individual or congregation regarding **A MATTER OF SIN** in the life of the believer." Church discipline is a program designed for correction and restoration.

I. **"THE WHY" OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

1. To maintain the purity of the body. 1 Cor 5:6-7
2. To gain a brother or sister. Matt 18:15
3. To restore your brother or sister. Gal 6:1
4. To convert a sinner from the error of his ways. Jam 5:20
5. To instill proper fear: 1 Tim 5:20
6. To shame one out of their sinful ways: 2 Thes 3:14-15
7. To produce a healthy faith, one sound in doctrine.
8. To recapture your brother or sister from the snare of the devil. 2 Tim 2:24-26
9. To silence false teachers and their influence in the church. Titus 1:10-11
10. To maintain the testimony of the church. In 1 Pet 2:5-9

II. **"THE HOW" OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

A. THE HEART INVOLVED

1. Restoration should be carried out by those who are spiritual. Gal 6:1-2
2. It should be done in a spirit of humility, 2 Tim 2:24-25
3. It must be carried out without bias, doing nothing in partiality (1 Tim 5:21)
4. It must be done because of love and in love, Eph 4:15, 2 Tim 4:2, 1 Thes 5:14-15.
5. Be sure it is an offense that calls for discipline.
6. Bring the matter before the Lord in prayer before the confrontation takes place.
7. Don't procrastinate. The longer the delay, the more difficult the situation can become.
8. **DO NOT, DO NOT GOSSIP.** We must guard and protect the person and the flock from rumors and a slanderous tongue. The bible speaks of 6 things the Lord hates, one is a lying tongue, another is a false witness, and another is he that soweth discord among brethren, Prov 6:16-19. This is not a time of gossip. Prov 11:13; Prov 18:8; Eph 4:22; Eph 4:29.

B. PROCEDURE

Step 1: Private Admonition/Confrontation: Matt 18:15 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

The first step is going to him and him alone, and telling him his fault. Please remember, this is not about you getting someone told. This is about you gaining your brother or sister. That will help you to approach them a little differently. Tell him his fault, and if he shall hear thee, you have gained your brother. No one in the congregation has to know about it. It is only between you and I. There is no need to take it anywhere else.

In some situations the sin is apparent and there is no question, but we must allow for the possibility that we have misjudged or have wrong information. We must listen to the other person's side of the story and seek the facts in the interest of truth and fairness.

If the person fails to respond, warn them that, according to the instructions of Scripture (Matt. 18:16), you will have to get others as witnesses and return with them to deal with the problem, which is step 2.

Step 2: Public Admonition/Confrontation #1: Matt 18:16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

If the first step fails, take witnesses to further attempt to gain your brother and to strengthen the effect of the discipline. This step is a reference to Old Testament practice of the Jews for settling a dispute, Deut. 19:15. Witnesses may include spiritual leaders or those with good spiritual reputation, so that if it has to be brought before the whole church it can be firmly proven and established.

These initial private contacts provide opportunity for loving admonition, correction, and forgiveness. On the other hand, if this second step doesn't produce proper results, whereby he hears you and the witnesses, then you move to step 3.

Step 3: Public Admonition/Confrontation #2: Matt 18:17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

If the second step fails, seek reconciliation and restoration through the congregation. The congregation has the responsibility to (1) Hear the accusation, (2) Consider the evidence for it, and the progressive attempts to rectify it. And (3) Determine the guilt or innocence of the one charged. And upon coming to the conclusion one has sinned, try to bring the offending brother to repentance. If this doesn't work, the local body of believers is to proceed to step 4.

Step 4: Withdraw Fellowship: Matt 18:17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

All other steps have been exhausted and the brother in the transgression fails to take heed in steps 1-3. Jesus says if this happens; let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Those are common titles for those who were known to be rebellious to God and his people. The Jews were forbidden to fellowship with them in order to protect the congregation from sin. Rom. 16:17-18 teaches to mark and avoid those who walk contrary to the doctrine.

Additional scriptures for study: 1 Cor 5:4, 5, 11, 13, 2 Thes 3:6 14 15, 2 Tim 3:1-9, Titus 3:10-11 and 2 Cor 2:1-11, Matt 5:23-24; Matt 6:12-15, Luke 17:3-4.