

Church Discipline and Restoration Policy

Approved by Elders: 11/6/02

I. We believe...

- a. Church discipline occurs with the goal and for the purpose of repentance and restoration.
- b. Church discipline ends and restoration begins at the point of repentance.
- c. Restoration can be eventually allowed to the repentant person in most situations.
- d. The active elder board will be fully informed in cases of unrepentance.
- e. The authority to carry out church discipline (beyond Mt. 18:15) rests with the elders.

II. Grounds for Elder involvement in church discipline:

- a. Sexual immorality (1Cor 5:1-13)
- b. Unresolved major personal conflicts (Matt. 18:15-20)
- c. Divisiveness and Gossiping (Romans 16:17-18; Titus 3:10; 3Jn 10; 2Cor 12:20-13:2,10;)
- d. False teaching (Gal 1:8,9; 1Tim 1:20; 6:3-5; 2 Jn 9-11; Rev 2:14-16).
- e. Grave illegalities (Rom 13:1).
- f. Gross neglect of responsibilities within the family (1Tim 5:8).
- g. Separation and/or divorce on non-biblical grounds (Mt 5:32).

III. Levels of Church Discipline:

(Note: These five Scriptural levels of church discipline are not meant to be seen as exhaustive regarding the various things that can be done to turn a person from sin. Constant prayer and the Holy Spirit must guide us to what might bring about true repentance.)

A. Level One: One on one

Those who have firsthand knowledge of the sin in the body of Christ, must reprove him privately (Matt. 5:23-24; 18:15; Luke 17:3). If he repents, you have served your brother and won him.

B. Level Two: Two or three witnesses

If he continues, reprove him with two or three witnesses (Deut 19:15; Matt 18:16). This could happen several times (2Cor 12:20-13:2,10). As long as there is movement, continue confrontation at this level. If he repents, you have served your brother and won him. If he continues (no movement), contact the elder board, a pastor or the Shepherding Team. At least two elders or representatives from the Shepherding Team will investigate the matter and will recommend and (if approved by the active board) carry out biblical confrontation with the full weight and authority of the entire active board (Mt. 18:18).

C. Level Three: Reprove before the church

If he is still unrepentant, warn him of his pending excommunication (Mt 18:17-18; 1Cor 5:1,5,7,13). After prayer, and upon the recommendation of the Shepherding Team, the active elder board will revoke his right and privilege to the Lord's table, and will reprove him before the church (Mt 18:17-18; 1Tim 5:20; 1Cor 5:2).

D. Level Four: Excommunication

If he continues, the elders will excommunicate/disfellowship him (Mt. 18:17; 1Cor. 5:1-5, 2Thess 3:14-15, 1Tim 1:20).). A copy of the statement that will be published to the congregation will be given to him (2Thess 3:14-15). After prayer, and upon the recommendation of the Shepherding Team, the active elder board will proceed to remove their name from the covenantor rolls (Mt 18:17-18; 1Tim 5:20; 1Cor 5:2) and will inform the covenantors of this action.

E. Level Five: Turn away from him

If he continues, turn away from him (Rom 16:17-19; 2Thess. 3:6) and do not associate with him (Mt 18:17-18, 1Cor 5:7,9-13; 1Tim 1:20). Turn him over to Satan (1Cor 5:5). If they go to another church, the elders are obligated to inform the other church.