

Church Discipline

- I. What is discipline? To train, bring under control, impose order
- II. God disciplines us because He loves us (Prov 3:12; Heb 12:4-11)
 - A. God disciplines us for our own good that we may share in His holiness (Heb 12:10)
 - B. Discipline seems sorrowful at the moment but later yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness (Heb 12: 11)
- III. The Church is to discipline its members (I Cor 5)
 - A. Paul rebuked the Corinthians for becoming arrogant - exhibiting indifference to the gross immorality of a brother (I Cor 5:1-2)
 - B. The Corinthians were instructed to remove the wicked from the flock (I Cor 5:2, 7, 13)
 1. The act of withdrawing fellowship is discipline intended to shock the offender To his senses and thereby return him to faithfulness saving his spirit (I Cor 5:5)
 2. Sin must be removed from the flock of God to preserve purity; like leaven to dough, sin can corrupt the whole body (I Cor 5:6-7)
 3. In withdrawing from an offender, we are not to associate with him
 - a. We are not even to eat with such a one (I Cor 5:11) - we have no fellowship
 - b. This is done so that the offender may be put to shame (II Thess 3:14)
 - c. We are not to regard him as an enemy but to admonish him as a brother (II Thess 3:15)
- IV. What was the first recorded act of discipline in the Church? (Acts 5:1-11)
 - A. Ananias and Sapphira sold property and lied about the amount of proceeds given to the Apostles for the work of the Church (Acts 5:1-2)
 - B. Peter said that in so doing they had lied to the Holy Spirit/God (Acts 5:3-4)
 - C. Both were struck dead by God (Acts 5: 5, 9-10)
 - D. As a result, fear came upon the whole Church, the Apostles were held in high esteem, and the Church grew (Acts 5:11-14)
- V. What are some of the causes for withdrawing fellowship from the brethren?
 - A. I Cor 5:11 says do not associate with any so-called brother who is an immoral person, covetous, idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler
 - B. We are to turn away from those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teachings of God (Rom 16:17; II Thess 3:6)
 - C. Reject a factious man after a first and second warning; such a man is perverted and is sinning being self-condemned (Titus 3:10-11)

- VI. What actions are expected from one who has been disciplined? (Acts 8:22-24)
 - A. Repentance - turn away from sin (Acts 8:22)
 - B. Pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:22)
 - C. When Simon sinned he asked for the prayers of others (Acts 8:24) – ask the Church for prayer

- VII. What is our responsibility to the one who returns to faithfulness?
 - A. The Church imposes punishment when it withdraws from a brother/sister.
 - B. When one returns to faithfulness, we are to forgive, comfort and reaffirm our love for them lest somehow that person be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow (II Cor 2:6-8)
 - C. We are to restore sinners in a spirit of gentleness (Gal 6:1)
 - D. We are to forgive our brethren as often as they repent, knowing the mercy, love and patience that God shows to each of us in forgiving our sins (Matt 18:21-35)

- VIII. Jesus Himself outlined the process for approaching a brother in sin (Matt 18:15-17)
 - A. If a brother sins, go to him and reprove him in private - if he listens you have won a brother (v15)
 - B. If that brother does not listen, visit again but take one or two witnesses (v16)
 - C. If then he still refuses to repent, take the matter to the Church (v17)
 - D. If he does not listen to the Church, dis-fellowship him (v18) - be as a Gentile or tax-gatherer

- IX. Even the elders can be disciplined (I Tim 5:19-20)
 - A. Accept no charges against an elder without multiple witnesses (v19)
 - B. If he continues in sin, then publicly rebuke him so that others may be fearful of sinning (v20)

- X. Jesus said if we have wronged a brother, fix things before offering worship to God (Matt 5:23-24)
 - A. To be “right” with God, we must be “right” with our brethren.
 - B. If we are not willing to forgive others, then God will not forgive us (Matt 6:14-15)