



Biblical Church Discipline & Restoration

Discovery Baptist Church

PURPOSE: The purpose of discipline is to restore the sinning brother or sister and to promote the purity of the body of Christ. *“Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted”* (Galatians 6:1).

STEPS:

1. Single Confrontation: Matthew 18:15, *“And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.”* Luke 17:3, *“Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.”*

When one has firsthand knowledge of sin, prayerfully go to the person and tell him his fault. This initial confrontation is to be private and personal and seasoned with humility. The Elders of the church need not be notified at this point unless it is sin that disqualifies a person from attending or serving in the church. If the person listens, you have served your brother well and won him.

2. Multiple Confrontation: Matthew 18:16, *“But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed.”* Deuteronomy 19:15, *“A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.”*

If there is no repentance and/or no change in behavior, then you are to take one or two other believers with you so that it may be established by witnesses. An Elder of the church may be called upon to be the witness at this point if no other more appropriate person is available. If the person listens, you have served your brother well and won him.

3. Church Rebuke: Matthew 18:17a, *“And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church.”* 1 Timothy 5:20, *“Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also may be fearful of sinning.”*

If after much prayer and patient communication there still is no repentance or if the person still refuses to listen, then matters involving serious sins (those that severely discredit the name of Christ and unity of the church) must be brought before the church. The Elders must be notified at this point. They may take further action to contact the person to notify them that they will be rebuked either to the church leadership, or in the most urgent of situations, publicly to the church membership. This latter is best done by a letter stating the date and time of the rebuke before the church, the purpose, a prepared statement to be read before the congregation concerning their sin, and a loving appeal to repent before that time.

The prepared statement is read prior to a communion service or some other appropriate time naming the person and discretely identifying their sin. Members are to be instructed to love, pray for and urge the person to repent and be restored. If the person listens, you have served your brother well and won him. In this case an Elder shall be assigned to the person to monitor the restoration period. When the Elders feel the person is fully restored, they may read a prepared statement before the church, stating the person has been restored.

4. Church Dismissal: Matthew 18:17b, *“and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer.”* 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15, *“And if anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame. And yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”*

If after monitoring the matter for a thorough amount of time, the elders determine there is no apparent desire to repent, the person is to be removed from the church. They shall send a letter of dismissal to the person saying that they are recommending dismissal to the congregation. The letter shall state the time and date of the meeting, the purpose of the dismissal, and a loving appeal to repent before that time. Dismissal may include all or part of the following: removal from church membership, a prohibition of serving, and a prohibition of attendance at certain or all church functions (including the regular worship services).

If after dismissal the person listens and repents you have served your brother well and won him. In this case an Elder shall be assigned to the person to monitor the restoration period. When the Elders feel the person is fully restored they may recommend them for membership again.

In cases where, in the process of discipline, the offender voluntarily withdraws their membership rather than repent, a special statement will be read to the congregation before being dismissed by congregational vote. The statement shall say that the member was living in such a way as to warrant church discipline, and during the discipline process the person decided to withdraw membership; members should humbly and prayerfully follow the Biblical instruction in Romans 16:17 and I Corinthians 5:11 to “avoid association with” the person until they repent.