

Rediscover CHURCH

Why the Body of Christ Is Essential



CHAPTER 6

Is Church Discipline Really Loving?

LEADERS ASK:

- Explain "Church Discipline" as you understand it.
- Have you ever seen church discipline practiced? and practiced as the Bible defines it?

LEADERS ASK:

- Think about the church words we use on a consistent basis...What word is 'discipline' directly linked to?

LEADERS EXPLAIN: If teaching, admonishing, and exhorting is linked to discipling a fellow Christian, then discipline is the correcting part of that process. Think about if you went to school or work and were never corrected in learning or processes of the job.

So in terms of church discipline, it is the process of correcting and holding a fellow member accountable to living in a way that is obedient to scripture.

LEADERS ASK:

- Does anyone know the process of church discipline per Matthew 18?

LEADERS ASK SOMEONE TO READ: MATTHEW 18: 15-20

- Process:
 - The fellow believer is confronted of their sin by 1-2 other believers
 - If they do not repent, then they are to bring the person's sin before the elders or pastors of the church
 - If they are still unrepentant, steps can be taken to removed the person from membership

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- **Points of consideration**

- Grace must be used in every way possible - we must give the person the benefit of the doubt as much as possible
- The person is still able to attend the church (unless civil laws or issues prevent this) but they are not permitted to participate in membership benefits such as communion and leadership responsibilities.
- Leadership should continue to urge repentance from the person for as long as they have influence in their life.
- This passage in Matthew follows the famous passage of the shepherd leaving the 99 to find the 1. Most don't consider that Jesus then goes straight into correcting a member of the flock. So Jesus not only loves the person by showing us we should go after them but also in correcting them.

- **LEADERS ASK:** Should EVERY sin be confronted and corrected in a believers life?

- **LEADERS EXPLAIN:** The author explains, "The baseline is that some unrepented sins make a profession of faith NOT CREDIBLE OR UNBELIEVABLE while others do not (88).

- The key phrase is also it is sin that the Christian is not willing to admit or repent of in their life.
- Another key to repentance of confession of sin, is a church where members have the opportunity and space to feel like they can confess and repent of sin. Small groups, especially LifeGroups, can be very fertile places for this to take place.

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LEADERS ASK:

- We have already discussed what can happen when a member is NOT repentant but what about when the Christian is repentant?
 - Restoration is the ANSWER: The Bible has a lot to say about this
 - Galatians 6:1-2
 - James 5:19-20
 - Luke 17:3-4

LEADERS DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING, Self Reflection Questions:

- Do you feel like our groups and Westwood as a whole is a church that fosters confession and repentance?
- How do you respond when someone confronts you about an attitude or characteristic they feel is not healthy? Are you defensive first?
- Do you have people in your life that you feel like would confront you if you were living in a specific sin?
- If not, why not? Do you find yourself pushing people away more than you allow them to know who you really are?
- Does the thought of church discipline make you nervous or hopeful?
- Why do you think most people who have attended church their entire lives, have not seen church discipline practiced?