

COVENANT MEMBERSHIP

UNDERSTANDING HOW WE LOVE EACH OTHER THROUGH CHURCH DISCIPLINE

What is church discipline and how does it fit?

1. Discipline is the mutual protection of believers within a covenant community.
Galatians 6:1-2
2. Discipline is the loving pursuit of wayward covenant members with the gospel.
Matthew 18:12-20

How do we correct the wayward?

1. We go to that person in love and gentleness in order to restore (Matt. 18:15).
 - a. We go alone.
 - b. We go for the purpose of restoration and reconciliation.
 - c. We go in humility (Gal. 6:1).
2. If the person won't listen, we go with one or two others (Matt. 18:16).
 - a. We bring those who are mature (Gal. 6:1).
 - b. We bring them as witnesses.
 - c. They are to "confirm every fact."
 - d. We must accept that we may be wrong.
3. If the person won't listen, we must "tell the church" (Matt. 18:17).
 - a. It is the refusal to listen that has become the issue.
 - b. The purpose of the telling is to restore the sinner.
 - c. The role of the church is to lovingly call the person to repentance.
4. If the person won't listen, the church treats the person as an unbeliever (Matt. 18:17).
 - a. The church is removing its affirmation of this person's membership in the body of Christ. S/he is removed from membership publicly just as s/he was baptized publicly.
 - b. The person is "excommunicated," meaning denied communion.
 - c. The person is invited to hear the gospel.
5. Other passages to consider:
 - a. 1 Corinthians 5
 - b. 2 Corinthians 2:1-11
 - c. 1 Timothy 5:19-20