

Fundamentals of Our Faith from the Beginning

Understanding the Church: The Practice of Church Discipline

Matthew 18:12-20; Galatians 6:1-2

1. Practices of formal and visible church discipline.

- a. Misunderstandings:
 - i. Concerning what “sins” should be disciplined.
 - ii. Concerning who should be told.
 - iii. Concerning the role of the church.
 - iv. Concerning the covenant commitment.
- b. Right practices:
 - i. For sin that is sin and hearts that are hard: Matthew 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1; 1 Corinthians 5:11.
 - ii. Tell the church: Matthew 18:17; 1 Corinthians 5:2, 4-5; 1 Timothy 5:20.
 - iii. Commission the church: Matthew 18:17.
 - iv. Keep covenant: Matthew 18:12-14; 1 Corinthians 5:11-13.

2. Products of discipline.

- a. Greater purity.
- b. Greater clarity.
- c. Greater power.
- d. Greater courage.

3. The process of church discipline (Matthew 18:15-17, cf. 1 Corinthians 5:9-11).

- a. When you see someone caught in trespass, go privately to restore him.
- b. If he refuses to listen, take one or two mature members with you.
- c. If he refuses to listen, tell the church so they can speak too.
- d. If he refuses to listen even to the church, put him out of membership and treat him as an unbeliever.

4. Practical matters.

- a. Should this apply to all members of the church including children?
- b. What differences might there be for working this out with children?
- c. What role does the family play when a child must be disciplined?
- d. How should the church treat a child who has been removed from membership?