



Purpose & Plan for Church Discipline

To maintain the health of the church, and the vibrancy of the testimony of Christ through the church, Christ gave instruction in the New Testament for restoring erring believers to a place of forgiveness and fellowship. This process is often referred to as Church Discipline.

Is church discipline a biblical concept?

- Yes, and it is demonstrated and defined in these passages:

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| <i>Mt. 18:15-20</i> | <i>Acts 5:1-11</i> | <i>1 Cor. 5:1-13</i> |
| <i>2 Cor. 2:5-11</i> | <i>Gal. 6:1</i> | <i>2 Thes. 3:6-15</i> |
| <i>1 Tim. 5:19-20</i> | <i>Titus 3:10</i> | <i>Rom. 16:17</i> |

What are the purposes of church discipline?

1. The restoration of the offending believer (*Gal. 6:1; Mt. 18:15; 2 Thes. 3:14*)
2. The purity of the Body and the testimony of Christ (*2 Thes. 3:6; 1 Cor. 15:33*)
3. The instruction of the Body (*Acts 5:1-11; 1 Tim. 5:20*)

Who are the subjects of church discipline?

- Those claiming to be believers in Jesus Christ (*Mt. 18:15; 1 Cor. 5:11*) who are living immoral and/or unruly lives (*1 Cor. 5:9,11; 2 Thes. 3:6*) including sinning elders (*1 Tim. 5:20*), heretics (*Titus 3:10*) and divisive teachers (*Rom. 16:17*).

What offenses demand church discipline?

- All believers are called upon to acknowledge sin, repent, and seek forgiveness from Christ. In the church setting, those sins which are public and bring shame to the individual and the body of Christ must be dealt with.

-- *There are 4 major categories:*

Violations of:

1. Christian Love (*Mt. 5:23,24*)
2. Christian Unity (*e.g., Titus 3:10; Rom. 16:17*)
3. Christian Law and Morality (*e.g., 1 Cor. 5:1,11*)
4. Christian Truth (*e.g., 1 Tim. 6:3-6; Titus 3:10; 2 Jn 7-11*)

- Church discipline is not a vehicle for nit-picking! It is the response of genuine love to the brother or sister who, through habitual sin, evidences that they may indeed have a heart that is hardened, a conscience that is defiled, and a mind that is becoming more and more compromised by sin. This person is in serious trouble, and needs to be rescued by the loving family of the church.



How does church discipline happen?

- If a brother or sister is found to be involved with a certain habitual sin:

Step 1: Private reproof: [Matthew 18:15] The one who knows confronts the one in error; *no one else need know of the problem*. If the sinning brother or sister repents, the process is over having reached its intended goal of restoration.

Step 2: Private Conference: [Matthew 18:16] Two or more concerned brethren confront one in error, pleading with him/her to repent before the Lord.

Step 3: Public Announcement: [Matthew 18:17] The church membership is made aware of the problem and instructed to pray and confront the sinning member, pleading with him/her to repent and return to the Lord.

Step 4: Public Exclusion: [Matthew 18:17] The church is instructed to separate from the unrepentant one (1 Cor. 5:11). This means the sinning person is no longer welcome at the Lord's Supper, or in any situation where the fellowship of the saints is to be enjoyed. The purpose of this step is to show the erring one what it is like to live outside of the circle of God's blessing. The relationship of the church to this unrepentant individual now is reduced to one dimension: a call to repentance and restoration to the Lord.

- At whatever time such repentance and restoration to the Lord occurs, the person is immediately welcomed back to the church.

- As a member of Leroy Community Chapel, you will be placing yourself under the care and protection of the church. This includes church discipline should this ever become necessary to safeguard your spiritual health and well-being.