

THE MARKS OF THE TRUE CHURCH



Exercise of Church Discipline (Part 2)

Sunday 6th November 2022

Foundation Scripture:

Matthew 18:15-20

Introduction

The basis of church discipline (CD) is not found in theological textbooks, but it is a command in the word of Jesus to His church as read in **Matthew 18:15-20**.

We also see that Paul enacts the CD we read of in **Matthew 18: 15-20**:

1. The sin is reported and not covered up!
2. Paul (in absence) and the church members reporting the sin, have judged the sin and NOT condoned the sin.
3. Paul and the church then, with the understanding of the authority Christ has given them, now exercise the required discipline. Putting the sinning brother out of the church, when the previous two approaches in 1 and 2 above, have failed.

Private Confrontation

Matthew 18:15 says: “Moreover, if your brother sins against you, go and **tell him his fault.**”

When you speak to the offending brother or sister, this is so that the offending church member may know his sin and own up to his/her wrongdoing. Once the vertical relationship is repaired, the horizontal relationship is naturally attained by the fruit of the Spirit.

If the person hears you, you have gained the brother and no one else needs to know. The result is a private confrontation of sin that provides a covering of love for all parties involved.

Small Group Confrontation

Matthew 18:16 says: “But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.”

If the issue is then dealt with, then there is no need to go any further.

However, if the offending person does not listen, further action must be taken, as expanded below.

Corporate Confrontation

In **Matthew 18:17**, we read: “And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.”

Where the term ‘church’ is used, it is not in the general sense but is referring to the local church. Thus, the matter is brought to the church as a family matter.

*The local church has the authority to deal with sin in the church (see **Matthew 16:19**).*

However, in the case of a brother or sister that is unrepentant and refuses to hear the church, then they should be treated as a ‘heathen and a tax collector’ (see **Matthew 18:17**).

...Like a Heathen and Tax Collector

In this case, all brotherly fellowship would cease.

In the time of **Matthew 18:17**, if you were a heathen or tax collector, the fellowship that you enjoyed with the people of God was limited and, in some cases, non-existent.

Thus, a brother or sister that refuses to listen to their church would lose fellowship with that church.

Nonetheless, we should continue to love, pray, and reach out to such individuals.

Categories of Disciplinable Offences

1. Private and personal sin that violates Christian love.
2. Divisiveness and factions that destroy Christian unity.

3. Moral and ethical deviation that break Christian standards.

4. Teaching false doctrine.

Lastly...

Remember that church discipline is for gaining and restoration.

As a result of church discipline, the church will have a ***genuine church testimony*** in our locality rather than being branded a “bunch of hypocrites” as the world often labels The Church.

Last of all, numerical growth will take place as the healthy church demonstrates a passion for God, a love for one another, a hatred for sin, and a love for their community.