

THE MARKS OF THE
**TRUE
CHURCH**



Exercise of Church Discipline

Sunday 30th October 2022

Additional Foundation Scriptures:

Ezekiel 3:17-19, Acts 20:26-27, Matthew 18:1-35

Throughout The Marks of the True Church series, we have been reminded that:

- Christ is building His church. (**Matthew 16:18**)
- The Church that Christ is building is not an edifice or physical structure but a group of called-out people. (**Ephesians 1:1**)

Today's text will focus on the third mark of the true church, which is, 'Church Discipline'.

3 Hindrances to Spiritual Growth

Three factors that prevent real spiritual growth are:

1. Little or no real preaching of the word – **1 Corinthians 1:18**; also see **1 Corinthians 1:9**.
2. Improper doctrine concerning the sacraments that is administered among the brethren. **Romans 4:11** shows that the sacraments are an outward representation of an inward reality. The sacraments remind us of who we are and what we enjoy in Christ.
3. Little or no exercising of church discipline - **Matthew 18:17** says: "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."

Why We Need Watchmen

A watchman stands on a tower to see if there is impending danger and warns the people of the enemy's plans.

Those with spiritual responsibilities in the church are “watchmen” appointed by God in the midst of His judgment for the following reasons:

1. God, in His mercy, appoints “watchmen” to warn the church.
2. God marks out the genuine seeking ones who sigh and groan over the sinfulness and evils in the church.
3. God preserves and keeps the genuine remnant of the church.
4. God becomes the sanctuary of the church (**Psalm 90:1** says that ‘God has become our hiding/dwelling place’ (also see **1 Timothy 3**).
5. God promises to bring His elect into the land (the enjoyment of Christ). The watchmen (leaders) bring you into the promises of God and encourage you to stay in God, so that you can enter the enjoyment of Christ.
6. God speaks continually of hope and comfort that is in Christ for the church.

The responsibility of every pastor and ‘leading one’ is to turn you to Christ.

Refusal to remain true watchmen means that God will hold the watchmen responsible. Such a watchman would have ‘blood on his hands.’

In order for a true watchman to not have ‘blood on their hands’, they must preach the word of God and warn of impending danger.

Four Good Reasons for Church Discipline

1. Christ commanded church discipline – see **Matthew 17:15-20**.
2. Church discipline confronts the individual’s sin – see **1 Timothy 5:20**.
3. Church discipline purifies the Bride of Christ – see **Ephesians 5:25-27**.
4. Church discipline keeps the church **The Church** – see **1 Timothy 3:15**.

Lastly...

Church discipline is:

1. Good for the person disciplined.
2. Good for the church members as they see the dangers of sin.
3. Good for the health of the church as a whole.
4. Good for corporate witness of the church. The church should be a breath of fresh air to the world, a true haven.
5. For the glory of God as we reflect His holiness. We must allow the glory of God to radiate through us.

Remember: Church discipline keeps the church **The Church!**