

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Discipline in the church is pretty much shunned. Leaders fear it will cause people to leave their church and many church members, in their ignorance of scripture, feel it is not the Christian thing to do. It is not only a good thing when done properly; it is the right thing as commanded by the word of God. The intent is never to dismiss or condemn. The real purpose is to restore those who have become hardened in their hearts and refuse to mend their ways.

Galatians 6:1

“Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; {each one} looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted.”

We are to admonish (1 Thessalonians 5:14) and even confront (Matthew 18:15-17) when sin is evident and not being dealt with. This is done not only to restore the wayward Christian, but also for the sake of the body – it is a covenant issue. Being one in the Spirit, what affects one, will affect the whole loaf, so to speak.

1 Corinthians 5:6-7

“Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump {of dough}

Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are {in fact} unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.”

Delegated authority has been given the responsibility and authority to directly deal with these type situations. When a person doesn't respond to attempts to restore, the authority must remove the bad leaven for the body's sake. This means putting the stubborn person outside the jurisdiction of the delegated authority and directly under the authority of God, where God Himself will deal with that person. This includes a removal from fellowship (1 Corinthians 5:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:6). If the person is not put out of the body, God does not act, but leaves the situation to the delegated authority He has placed there.

1 Corinthians 5:12-13

“For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within {the church}

But those who are outside, God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves.”

Leviticus 14 talks about “stones” with leprosy that can infect the whole house. Here there is a quarantine period, after which there is an inspection. If the leprosy persists, the stones are removed and replaced by additional stones. If the leprosy spreads, there is a point where the whole house has to be condemned – this is a good picture of what sin in the body can do.