**Blog 24 Church Discipline**

***Jesus’s*** prescription for the brother who abuses the commands and is unrepentant is, Matt 18:15-20:

Mat 18:15 But if your brother shall trespass against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

Mat 18:16 But if he will not hear *you*, take one or two more with you, so that in *the* mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

Mat 18:17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he neglects to hear the church, let him be to you as a heathen and a tax-collector.

Mat 18:18 Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on earth shall occur, having been bound in Heaven; and whatever you shall loose on earth shall occur, having been loosed in Heaven.

Mat 18:19 Again I say to you that if two of you shall agree on earth as regarding anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them by My Father in Heaven.

Mat 18:20 For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst.

[Through Mat 18:15–20](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2018.15%E2%80%9320) we learn the procedure and authority for a church\* to practice church\* discipline. Jesus instructs us:

1. That one individual (usually the offended party) is to go to the offending individual privately.
2. If the offender refuses to acknowledge his sin and repent, then two or three others should go to confirm the details of the situation.

Repent in the Greek means: to *think differently* or *afterwards*, that is, *reconsider* (morally to *feel compunction*), to change.

1. If there is still no repentance—the offender remains firmly attached to his sin, despite at least two chances to repent/change—the matter is taken before the church\* body.
2. The offender then has a third chance to repent and forsake his sinful behavior.
3. If at any point in the process of church discipline the sinner heeds the call to repent, then “you have gained your brother” (verse 15,).
4. However, if the discipline continues all the way through without a repentant response from the offender, then, Jesus said, verse 17

“And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he neglects to hear the church, let him be to you as a heathen and a tax-collector.”

Notice: This would be breaking fellowship out of love and concern for the person’s soul and the “health of the body”. They are not to be treated like a lost person, but rather shunned to be made aware of the loss of fellowship.

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**What is the Church:**

\* What is the church\* in the scripture?

The first century church\* was a small group of people in a town who came together to worship, hear teaching of the Apostles and obey Jesus. Today churches we see are large organizations or institutions, with big overhead and a plethora of programs.

If I correctly see Jesus teaching, the church should be a group or organization where the work and word of God is being propagated. Size does not qualify them as a church nor does size disqualify them as a church. A seminary trained person is not required to have a church.

I think we should see today’s church\* (institutions) as a conglomeration of smaller fellowship of people bound together in worship, seeking a relationship with Jesus and with a common Christian function, i.e., the first century church. A real church is a group following Jesus. Some of these groups are found within the organization or institutional church and some are found outside the institution.

For the rest of this blog, the church is considered to be the small fellowship of believers following Jesus.

**Mat 18:20:** For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Church Discipline discussion**:

Reason for discipline.

When a body of people are living in proximity to each other, there is always a conflict concerning people who violate the rules of the group. This is why we have police and courts. For a body to stay together and prosper, there must be a uniformity of obedience to the “laws”. We call it today- “The rule of Law”. As Christians, our laws are the biblical commands.

The Old Testament solved the problem with stoning’s.

Jesus gave us a prescription for dealing with “sin in the camp,” i.e. church discipline.

Church discipline is the process of correcting unrepentant, sinful behavior among members of a church\* body. The process has as its purpose the restoring of the sinner to a right walk with God and renewing fellowship among the church\* members. It protects the body by removing the “leaven”.

The phrase church\* discipline has been created by us it is not a

biblical term.

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Notes on church\* discipline

1. Discipline is not a punishment. Discipline is not to punish the person but to get their attention and their “focus”, have them repent and return to God.
2. Discipline is for the rehab of the violator.
3. Discipline is for protection of the people of the church\*.
4. It is hard for church\* discipline to work in an institutional-church\* because
5. The whole body of the institution will not normally back a disciplinary action.
6. The person being disciplined can just go down the street and join another church\* that is more tolerant.
7. People in the institution are afraid of this kind of action.
8. Potential legal implications.
9. Repent in the Greek means: to *think differently* or *afterwards*, that is, *reconsider* (morally to *feel compunction*), to change.
10. The discipline is designed to encourage the person to repent. It is to awaken a person to the consequence of their sin with God and have them repent.
11. I found that once people know you have done this with a companion, they all have a person they want you to discipline. No one can be the “moral sheriff” for the body.
12. If the violator is not in close spiritual relationship with other people, the odds of reaching them is very low.
13. Your family is subject to church discipline directed by you. My family are people I love, ergo I would discipline them and they know it.
14. Church discipline to me is a command. We cannot ignore it.
15. Whatever we “bind” on earth infers they are judged guilty of the sin. Whatever we “loosed” on earth infers they are forgiven.

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The church\* is responsible for the spiritual well-being of its people, not of everyone in the city or the institution. Many members in the institutional church are not believers, therefore “church\* discipline” would not apply.

In the context of church\* discipline, Paul asks, “What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside?” ([1 Cor 5:12](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%205.12)). The candidate for church discipline must be “inside” the church\* and accountable to the church\* i.e., small fellowship group.

Judge in this context means: Properly to *distinguish*, that is, *decide* (mentally or judicially) discern

Paul explains that Jesus saved us so that we might be set apart from sin, free from that which causes “spiritual decay” ([1 Cor 5:7–8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%205.7%E2%80%938)). Christ’s desire for His bride, the church, is that she might be pure and undefiled.

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A negative effect to the body for disobedience to God’s commandments is shown in the Old Testament:

2Sa 12:14 Only, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of Jehovah to blaspheme, this child born to you shall surely die.

When David sinned with Bathsheba, one of the consequences of his sin was that the name of the one true God was blasphemed by God’s enemies….This is TRUE today.

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The two sins documented for discipline in question in the New Testament were:

1. Mat 18:15 But if your brother shall ***trespass(sin) against you.***

What does “trespass against you” mean? What problems fall into this area is not clear to me.

Read Matt 5:23-26. They give you the other side of prescribed response to being “trespassed” against.

1. 1Co 5:1 Overall it is reported *that there is* fornication among you, and such fornication as is not even named among the nations, so as one to have *his* father's wife. These sins are clear to me.

Church\* discipline for sexual violations: All ***sexual improprieties*** in the Bible are cast in a negative commandment so they are easier to detect and confront.

I conclude that the disobedience to negative commands would qualify for church discipline. you will not commit adultery is measurable and observable and usually you can observe when a party has stopped.

We cannot see measurable repentance in all positive commands. i.e. you shall love your wife can be sensed with wrong goings on but not measured. The choice is to confront but not discipline in these matters.

Also, some negative commands are hard to confront. thou shall not lie is measurable but you cannot know if someone has stopped. So, you cannot really have discipline accept in extreme cases.

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A verse that is used often to refute the call to church discipline is in Matt 7

Mat 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

Mat 7:2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

Judge has at least 2 meanings in the Bible.

1. Judge means to evaluate. To discern is ok. This is biblical and is encouraged.
2. The Greek in Mat. 7:1-2 means to condemn, try, punish. Biblically it is not ok.

In the dictionary, Judge means:

the ability to make considered decisions or come to sensible conclusions.

Synonym: discernment, acumen, shrewdness, astuteness,   
sense, common sense,

In chapter 7, the word judge is to condemn, which is prohibited.

Reference Luke 6:37

Application:

* Out of love for a brother(s) do not be hesitant to challenge sin in their life. You owe it to them. And hope they would do it for you.
* There are four biblical discipling steps on the way to confronting a fellow believer on their issue

1. You are to ***encourage*** a person on a matter.
2. If no response, you are then to ***exhort*** the person on the matter.
3. If no response, you are then to ***rebuke*** the person on the matter.
4. If no response, you are to go to the body and then to ***discipline*** the person on the matter

* Sometimes it is valid to call a person out on drifting into sin and especially with the opposite sex.
* Question: Who have you invited into your life to be the person or persons to watch over your soul? (Heb 13)

We need each other during our trip here on earth.

Questions for further study:

1. Did they have discipline in the Jewish Nation? Did the early Church in America have discipline? Does your church you attend or associate with have discipline?
2. Did Jesus ever discipline one of His men?
3. Would you discipline one of your family?
4. Explain a biblical illustration of discipline.

Parting Note:

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Mission statement of the blogs

These blogs are to stimulate your biblical thinking to become Issachar’s of our time.

1Ch 12:32 and from the sons of Issachar, *men* who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do.

These blogs are an attempt to articulate key biblical issues of our day so that we can:

1. Learn and understand the propositions of the Bible concerning our life.
2. We can apply the truth in our life in the sanctification process.
3. Contend/defend against heresy or apostasy.
4. We can draw closer to God.

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