

ADDENDUM

A STATEMENT OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE

PURPOSE

The elders maintain the responsibility to exercise church discipline in order to preserve the church's integrity in theology and moral values. For most church members, the matter of church discipline is not a direct concern. Nonetheless, it is good to know how it is administered. We always work toward reconciliation and redemption, and we are commanded to preserve the unity of the church. Discipline only becomes a factor when that unity with the Lord and the church is threatened or needs to be restored.

In order to be what God wants us to be, we must discipline ourselves to be obedient and holy in our lives.

When members of Christ's body fail to exercise sufficient personal discipline, then those who love them must perform the sometimes unpleasant task of brotherly correction. Numerous biblical passages such as Matthew 18 deal with this task.

There are times when people become dissatisfied in church life. Sometimes the fault lies with the individual, at other times with the church or some leader. Regardless of the origin, the health and life of the church and the restoration of the individual always remain priorities.

GOALS

In church discipline we have seven goals:

1. To obey the Lord and Holy Scriptures (see Matthew 18, 1 Corinthians 5 and I Thessalonians 4 and 5);
2. To protect the church from having to be judged by God for condoning unholy or unjust situations;
3. To protect its members from a leader who has been unwise or unrighteous and to protect a leader from unwise or unrighteous constituents;
4. To preserve church unity and the Holy Spirit's blessing (see Psalm 133);
5. To maintain our testimony before our Christian and unbelieving friends as a people of a biblical lifestyle;
6. To work toward being a church that fulfills its mission and glorifies Jesus Christ;
7. To restore those disciplined to a right relationship with God and the church.

PROCEDURES

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1. If some error, abuse, or sin needs correcting in the life of a member, or an elder, immediate steps should be taken. Sin, discontent, or division cannot be ignored since it disrupts the life of the church in the Spirit.
 - A. In matters which do not immediately imperil other individuals or the entire church, the following procedures should be followed:
 - 1) If a member's behavior is in question, an elder will initiate a discussion with them first.
 - 2) If an elder's behavior is in question it should be brought quickly to the attention of that elder.
 - B. In any serious matter (such as sexual or physical abuse), whether the sin is being committed by a member or an elder, the elders of the church should be informed immediately.
2. If the procedures outlined in step one do not resolve the problem, the entire eldership may be drawn into the matter and recommend a course of action. A member or leader should remember that even though the process begins with as small a group as possible, he nevertheless belongs to the entire church, and all the elders have responsibility to that person.
3. If the individual refuses to properly respond to church discipline, the individual will be asked to refrain from partaking in the sacraments (water baptism and the Lord's Supper). If the individual still refuses to repent, their name will be deleted from church membership and the entire church will be notified of these actions.
4. If it appears that a member has requested withdrawal from membership to avoid or abbreviate church discipline, that request will not be given effect until the scriptural steps of the disciplinary process have been completed. Hence, church discipline may be instituted or continued either before or after a member attempts to withdraw from membership.
5. In some cases, confession to the church, or part of the church, is indicated by Scripture. In other cases, warnings to the church or individuals are called for. In such instances we will seek to obey the principles set forth in God's word.