

Message Discussion Guide REDEMPITIVE COMMUNITY (Part 2)

The Church at Brook Hills, Dr. David Platt May 24, 2009 Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Connect . . .

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Invite learners to share how the following items have caused them to think differently or become more tolerant of sin:

- Television
- Music
- Government
- Society
- Friends/Family
- School/University
- Local Church

Ask the following question: How has any changes toward tolerance of sin affected the way that you view holiness?

Explain that today we will discuss how tolerance for sin can be prideful within the church and affects the holiness of the body of believers.

Option 2

Ask learners to think about all of the effects of the lack of discipline in our culture. Encourage them to name these effects aloud. Suggest items such as obesity, drug use, crime, lack of academic success, poverty, financial stresses, marriage stresses, relationship stresses, etc. Then ask the following question: How could some type of accountability affect the outcome of these areas in the lives of many people?

Explain that today we'll talk about how discipline within the church is a tool for spiritual growth and holiness.

Review the Message . . .

Why Not Church Discipline?

- "Church discipline is _____ legalistic _____."
 - Church discipline is _____ loving _____...

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- “What about Matthew 7:1?”
 - Keep going to Matthew 7:5...
- “People will leave.”
 - This is God’s church to grow, not ours...
- “We don’t know how to practice church discipline.”
 - Then let’s learn how to practice church discipline...

What is Church Discipline?

- Two Facets of Church Discipline...
 - Formative Church Discipline:
 - Continual training believers receive from the Word in the body of Christ as their lives are transformed into Christlikeness.
 - Restorative Church Discipline:
 - Corrective care taken by the body of Christ in matters of unrepentant sin in a brother or sister’s life.
- One Foundation for Church Discipline...
 - The grace of God.

Approaching Church Discipline...

- We need childlike humility.
- We need a deep concern for holiness.
- We need a passion for the hurting.
- We need forgiving hearts.

Discussion Questions

- Remind learners that the previous three sections were discussed as Part 1 of the church discipline messages.
- Enlist two learners to read Matthew 18:1-15, 21-35. What does Matthew indicate is the primary approach to church discipline?
- Read Matthew 18:15-20. What is the primary goal of church discipline?

Application . . .

- How can we avoid being legalistic in our approach to church discipline?
- Why should we want discipline and accountability in our lives?
- Why is acceptance of discipline so difficult for us?
- How have we minimized the benefits of discipline?

Applying Church Discipline...

- Step One: Private Correction.
- Step Two: Small Group Clarification.

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- Step Three: Church _____ Admonition _____.
- Step Four: Church _____ Excommunication _____.

Discussion Questions

- Enlist a learner to read Matthew 5:15-20 again. Ask how the involvement of people changes throughout the process of discipline in this passage.
- Enlist a learner to read Ephesians 4:29-32. How does this passage address the damage that is done to the body of Christ through gossip and malicious motives?
- What does the involvement of others in the discipline process indicate about God's design for true spiritual community?
- What does the process defined by Jesus tell us about God's Character?
- When is the final action to be taken for a brother/sister in sin?
- What encouragement does Matthew provide for his readers in assuring them that excommunication is a biblical action taken for an unrepentant sinner?
 - For the _____ purity _____ of the church.
 - Church members are _____ accountable _____...
 - Before _____ God _____.
 - For _____ each other _____.
 - Church members must be _____ humble _____...
 - Pride: _____ Toleration _____ of unrepentant sinners in the church.
 - Humility: _____ Exclusion _____ of unrepentant sinners from the church.
 - Church membership is _____ essential _____...
 - The church _____ defines _____ who is a member.
 - Isolation from the church reflects _____ separation _____ from Christ.
 - For the _____ salvation _____ of the individual.
 - For the _____ glory _____ of God.

Discussion Questions

- Enlist one or two learners to read 1 Corinthians 5:1-13. Who is Paul rebuking in this passage? Why?
- How does Paul describe the attitude of the Corinthian church in regard to this situation? Looking at Verse 2, what should have been their response?
- Specifically looking at Verse 9-11, how does Paul differentiate between how the church is to act toward unregenerate sinners of the world and unrepentant sinners in the church?
- How had the church at Corinth exhibited pride by not addressing their brother's sin?
- How did the church's pride hurt the effectiveness of the church and the reputation of Christ?
- What does this differentiation indicate about the purpose of church discipline? About the purpose of spiritual community?

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- What does Paul's clear call for accountability within the body of Christ indicate about the relationship between believers?
- Looking at Verses 6-8, why is removing an unrepentant sinner so important to the body of believers?
- Again, according to Verse 5, what is the purpose even in excommunication?

Application . . .

- Why is discipline a loving action when done in a biblical way?
- How could we disguise gossiping with "spiritual" actions?
- Why do we get satisfaction out of spreading information about another person's sin?
- How can we use Ephesians 4:29-32 as a guide for determining the contents of our speech as we follow Matthew 18?
- What sins should be dealt with on the level of church discipline?
- How can leaving an unrepentant member as a part of the community of believers act as a sickness or disease to the body?
- Why do we sometimes believe that being tolerant of sin is actually beneficial to the body of Christ, whose goal is holiness?
- How does God get great glory in church discipline?