

Understanding Church Discipline: Together: A Study of 1 Corinthians

Pastor Tim Allen

Key Truth: God establishes Church Discipline to remind us that we are to remain distinct as His Children, having been delivered by the Blood of Jesus Christ.

Biblical Church Discipline may be defined as, A disciplinary procedure within the local church for the purpose of correcting or expelling ungodly behavior and for preserving the integrity, holiness, witness, and freedom of the Body of Christ. In our day, Church Discipline is often looked on as mean, vindictive, judgmental, and cruel. And certainly there have been abuses in the past. However, Church Discipline is an important biblical and restorative process that God himself commends as the loving approach.

DISCUSS

Read 1 Corinthians 5:1-8 and discuss with the group a statement or concept that stood out to you or impacted you in the sermon on **Understanding Church Discipline**.

DIG IN

1. Problems warranting Church Discipline. (vv. 1-2)

What are the two “Problems” that Paul brings up in these two verses? In what ways is the Corinthian Church committing corporate sin by failing to address the issue at hand?

What are the “Solutions” Paul gives to addressing these two sins?

2. Processes in Church Discipline. (vv. 3-5a)

What are some criticisms the world has given for the Church’s use of discipline? Do you think these criticisms are valid? Why or why not?

In what ways has Church Discipline been abused in the past?

Biblical Church Discipline is a **Spiritual** and **Restorative** process. In what ways is this spiritual and restorative and not merely a punitive process?

Biblical Church Discipline is also a **Corporate** process (see vv. 4-5). Why is it important that the Body of Christ be employed to carry out Biblical Church Discipline and not just a select group of individuals?

3. Purposes for Church Discipline. (vv. 5b-8)

Beyond restoring the individual sinner, Biblical Church Discipline is important for bringing about **Cleansing** and for preserving the Church’s **Witness** and **Freedom**. In what ways does the Passover celebration (see Exodus 12) illustrate these functions of Church Discipline?

The closest New Testament equivalent to the Jewish Passover is the Lord’s Supper (Holy Communion). Why is it important that this ordinance be observed with “the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (v. 8)?

DO

Share with the group a time when you experienced Biblical Church Discipline working positively and restoratively. What do you think made the difference?