

“Church Discipline”

Matthew 18:15

Dr. Cliff McManis

January 28, 2007

Only twice in the Gospels did Jesus mention the "Church" explicitly. Once is in Matthew 16 where He promised He would build it. The other is in Matthew 18 when He commanded believers to maintain spiritual health in the Church by practicing biblical "Church Discipline." The procedure for implementing "Church Discipline" that Jesus outlined is straightforward, obligatory, systematic, and the only recourse for dealing with sin in the Church. When it is neglected or when it is supplanted with alternatives, then the Church suffers. Careful and courageous obedience to it brings God's solutions and blessings.

1. Before confronting sin, give yourself to Prayerful Consideration.

"first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye" (Matthew 7:5)

2. When confronting sin, begin with Private Conversation.

(Matthew 18:15)

"And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother"

3. If the person does not respond, pursue Plural Confrontation.

(Matthew 18:16)

"But if he does not listen to you, take one or more with you, so that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed' "

4. If the sinner continues to resist, make Public Condemnation.

(Matthew 18:17a)

"And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church"

5. If he still resists, implement Purposeful Relocation.

(Matthew 18:17b)

"and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer"

*If the sinner repents at any step along the process, then forgiveness is to be granted, the discipline process stops, and affirmation and restoration is pursued.