

STEPS TO BIBLICALLY COMPASSIONATE CHURCH DISCIPLINE

- Section 1: This church has a biblical duty to exhort the body of Christ to biblical truth and to living lives consistent with God's Word. This duty includes the humbling and sorrowful duty to chasten or discipline those under its authority who espouse doctrinal error or who knowingly ignore the direct commands or prohibitions of Scripture.
- Section 2: The church shall at all times abide by the Scriptural methods and spirit for handling the matters of discipline (See section 7).
- Section 3: It shall be the practice of this church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist troubled members. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for reconciliation rather than punishment (see Section 8). If the need for church action in the area of discipline should arise, the matter will be dealt with in truth, humility and love according to scriptural principles laid out in Galatians 6:1-2, 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15, & Matthew 18:15-20 (see section 7).
- Section 4: Members who are under discipline by the church, as defined in the previous paragraphs (as defined by section 7), forfeit and waive the right to resign from this church. Resignations from membership are possible **only** by members who are in good standing and who are not under any disciplinary action.
- Section 5: The church is authorized and responsible to communicate the specifics of a disciplinary matter to other churches whenever the person being disciplined has not repented, has not been restored, and is thought to be participating in another church without full disclosure of the disciplinary matter.
- Section 6: The members of this church agree that there shall be no appeal to any court because of the dismissal or because of public statements to the congregation at the fourth or fifth stages of church discipline.
- Section 7: Statement on the biblical process of compassionate church discipline with 5 stage diagram
- (a) Church discipline is commanded by Jesus Christ for the benefit of both His church and the sinning believer. It is a right and privilege every member of this church should expect to be exercised in his own behalf and in the interest of other members.

- (b) Whenever sin comes to the attention of a member of this church that member is expected to go to the sinning member privately and seek his or her repentance (Look to peacemaking document to decide whether to approach a brother / sister about their sin or to overlook it).
- (c) If the offending member will not hear the appeal a second or third member is to accompany making the same appeal for repentance (restoration).
- (d) If this appeal is not successful the matter is to be taken to the pastor and elders / will again appeal to the offending member.
- (e) If they are not heard by the offending member the entire church will be told the member has been appealed to about his / her sin. The elders are to use their best judgment in deciding how much detail about the offense should be shared with the congregation. The congregation then has the responsibility to appeal to the offending member whenever opportunity arises and to cease all other interaction with them except for the express purpose of restoring the offender through repentance.
- (f) If the offending member does not hear the appeals of the church he / she is to be removed from the membership of the church and it will be the conclusion of the church that he / she has failed to show signs of being a true believer (repentance / faith / love) and is therefore outside the church of Jesus Christ.
- (g) If the offending member chooses to remove his membership from the church at any time during this process it will be noted in the church minutes that he has apostatized from the church and such action may be communicated to any church he subsequently seeks to join.
- (h) Upon repentance, at any time during this process, the offending member will be received with joy, forgiven of the offense, and restored to full fellowship with the church.
- (i) If that repentance is seen to be a first time regeneration by the elders and the repentant offender, he will be asked to attend partial or all of a new members class and will be required to go through baptismal counseling, followed up by immersion in water in front of the body as a sign of his true conversion. All of this will be required before he can enter again into full fellowship because is coming back as a new believer, rather than a repentant or restored believer.
- (j) Biblical mandates for the above practice in the church:

- Jesus gives us the procedure for biblical church discipline / peacemaking: Matthew 18:15-18
- Discipline begins with personal admonition: Romans 15:4; Colossians 3:16
- Seek to restore one who has fallen with gentleness: Galatians 6:1-2
- Seek to save an erring sinner: James 5:19-20
- Forgive and restore one who repents; love him: 2 Corinthians 2:7-8
- Do not fellowship with one who will not repent: 1 Corinthians 5:11
- Purge out the old leaven: 1 Corinthians 5:1-13
- Excommunication is necessary sometimes: 2 Thessalonians 3:14
- Jesus commends the church for faithful discipline: Revelation 2:2; 1 John 2:19
- Jesus rebukes the church that does not discipline: Revelation 2:14-16
- Paul rebukes the church that ignores sin: 1 Corinthians 5:1-7

(k) Please see section 8, **the church discipline diagram** on the following page.

Section 8

Discipline begins and ends with the individual
(all subsequent church discipline aims at producing self-discipline)



